

Founding Principles of Aikido

Aikido means "The Way of Harmony with the Spirit" and is considered a non-violent form of martial art. However, don't be fooled. Aikido when used correctly is very powerful often are able to block and neutralize strong attacks and counter them with an equal force.

Morihei Ueshiba, now known as O-sensei to the world of Aikido, founded the martial art. O-sensei is a master of Jujitsu or unarmed combat, Kinjitsu or sword combat, and sojitsu or spear combat and studied philosophical and religious teachings.

Because of the religious and philosophical foundations of Aikido, principles of the martial art include ways to harmonize with the ki or spirit within oneself and the bigger spirit of nature. Among the principles of Aikido include oneness, circular motion and ki.

Among the philosophical teachings of Aikido, one of the more basics and more important is learning to control oneself. Maintaining an inner balance is necessary to harmonize with others enabling to control an opponent's attack or applying an effective technique. Self-control is the key to achieve and maintain harmony.

The Principle of Oneness is another basic principle in Aikido. An aikidoka must learn to become one with any situation. Becoming one means having an attitude of respect for all things and situations, friend or foe. By training to become one with every situation, harmonization will follow and it will become possible to execute Aikido techniques, movements and forms accurately and efficiently.

Harmony also means synthesis. And the spiritual circle which is a foundation of all Aikido techniques synthesizes everything. Aikido is a combination of circular movements. Its techniques and movements revolve around the concept of circular motions. When an opponent attacks, the aikidoka uses a circular motion of the lower abdomen to control the attack and execute Aikido techniques to counterattack.

It is said that defense is the greatest offense. In Aikido to defend properly an attack, one must learn to move away from the range of effectiveness of the opponent's attack. However, as you try to defend by getting out of the opponent's effective range, you must also try to maintain your own range of effectiveness in order to counterattack efficiently.

You won't be able to give an effective counterattack if you stepped too far away

from your opponent. Similarly, being too close would definitely lessen the effectiveness of your techniques. Everything will depend on the situation. As an Aikido practitioner, you must learn to determine how to avoid your opponent's range while controlling your own in various situations.

Finally, the Principle of Ki involves believing that every thing in the universe is governed by a force or spirit. Ki is also the energy and our life force. Ki is the force that binds the mind and the body. It is the energy that harmonizes us to our surroundings. By learning to control our Ki, we will be able to unify our mind and our body maximizing efficient movements and execution of Aikido techniques.

Aikido focuses on the distance, motion, speed, and projection of an attacker. By using blending, spiraling, and extension techniques, the attack will be neutralized and by using one's centeredness and hips, the same amount of force can be applied to the attacker. In Aikido, the spiraling and circular movements reflect what the martial art is: a fluid and flowing movement of spirit and energy.