

Featured Dojo-cho, October 2001



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When I was in college in Indianapolis, Indiana I saw a demonstration of Aikido on a television program. I had always been fascinated with Martial Arts, but had never seen anything with the graceful and powerful movements. I never took the time to train in any form of martial art. Many years later in 1988 I saw Aikido again on television, and this time I went looking for a Dojo. I talked to several instructors in different schools then I looked into Aikido Ai of So California. I came in while a children's class was going on and I talked to Sensei Frank McGouirk, and from the time I shook his hand I knew that this was the man I wanted to learn from. I started assisting teaching children when I was a 2nd kyu, continued to teach children and adults in many classes for Aikido Ai up until my wife took an early retirement and we decided to move from California.

I moved to Albany, Oregon in September 2002, and there was not a local Dojo in the area where I could train. Sensei McGouirk suggested that I should open my own school and I eventually did in February 2003. At first I had about 10 students, made up of 2 adults and 8 children. Currently I have 9 adults and 17 children and classes 5 days per week. Many of my students have disabilities, (Attention Deficit Disorder, Autism, CP and I even have a student who is blind.) It has been an exciting and educational time trying to find different ways to get through to all of these exceptional

people. What I have discovered is that if you believe in something enough, you will find a way to make others believe also.

My most Memorable Aikido Experience

I was in my house in So California one Sunday watching the TV, when my wife ran into the room and told me to come quick, because "they" were beating up Joey. I ran out with her thinking that some of the kids on the block were fighting. When I got outside I saw a group of 5 men beating on my neighbor, who was curled up in a fetus position on the ground. There were also about 15-20 other people, men women and children standing around cheering on the beating. I ran over to the men who were beating my neighbor and as I approached I yelled, "Back off!" To my surprise they did and I went and pulled my neighbor up off the ground and over to his drive way. No one ever did any more toward him or me except to call names or other such silly things. The thing about this incident is that this has happened one other time with five other men beating on one man many years before. The most important thing that I have learned from the many teachers that I have trained with in Aikido is that a calm mind and body in the face of danger creates strange reactions in people who are trying to act aggressively. In both incidents I saw a calm mind and body turn violence into confusion and then into dissipation.