

Featured Teacher, February 2021



Jay Gitterman

Aikido West, Redwood City, California

I began studying Aikido in 1991, at a small, satellite dojo of Aikido West. The teacher was Molly Hale Sensei, then a new Shodan. Her graceful demonstrations of the movements, and intimations of the underlying philosophy had me hooked instantly. I was also attracted to the idea that you could continue practicing and improving throughout your life, unlike so many other activities with an athletic component.

After a few months there, which included learning to roll and fall on concrete covered with indoor-outdoor carpeting, I began training at Aikido West with Frank Doran Sensei, where I have remained ever since.

Among other things, practicing Aikido has taught me patience—how to progress at something that cannot be learned quickly but requires years of sustained and focused repetition. I also

continue to learn how to maintain a relaxed state in a situation of conflict or difficulty, something which has no end of applications in the rest of life.

I enjoy traveling to seminars, something Doran Sensei has always encouraged, and like the challenge of incorporating additional perspectives into my practice and teaching.

My Most Memorable Aikido Experience

There have been too many wonderful times—hanging with Aikido friends, sudden epiphanies at seminars, moments of honor (as well as embarrassment) to pick a most memorable one, so I will just recall two: being introduced to train with an instructor as a brand new Shodan in the Doshu's class during a dojo trip to Hombu Dojo, and participating in a demo with Doran Sensei at the first Aiki Expo in Las Vegas.