

## Featured Senior Instructor, February 2019



### **Kahlil Johnson**

Truckee Aikido, Truckee, California  
Division 2

Aikido came into my life in 1989. I was a senior at the University of California at Santa Cruz where I was taking a class called the Psychology of Conflict and its Resolution. Our text books were the Art of Conflict by Tom Crum and The Peaceful Warrior by Dan Millman. At the end of the quarter our professor told us Aikido was offered at UCSC. January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1990 I showed up wide eyed for my first Aikido class with Jerilyn Munyon. I never looked back. I couldn't believe it was possible to resolve conflict without anyone feeling wrong or being on the short end of the stick.

I was impressed that women could hold power, move with grace and laugh with joy all at the same time. Sensei Jerilyn was my introduction to Aikido at UCSC but being that I graduated I set out in search of local Aikido and found Aikido of Santa Cruz. It is here I met so many inspiring senpai and senseis and found my primary teacher Linda Holiday Sensei. Since those early years Aikido has played a major role in my life and the directions I have chosen. Along the way I have been strongly influenced by Mary Heiny Sensei, Kimberly Richardson Sensei, Motomichi Anno Sensei, and Richard Strozzi-Heckler Sensei among so many other wonderful teachers, senpai and students.

Truckee Aikido is located in Truckee, California which is a community of outdoors people who love the mountains, being in nature, and adventure. We are a small committed group in the adults class and have a new and thriving kids program. Our highlight is hosting an annual retreat on Lake Tahoe every September.

I use Aikido in every aspect of life, from being a mom, to running a business, to navigating relationships.

My biggest teacher in the last eight years has been my son. He brings me incredible joy and challenges me daily. All my aikido skills of connecting, blending, listening, setting boundaries, compassion, and endurance are tested frequently. I have no idea how moms survive without the training I have had, and I am grateful for the years of Aikido awareness and practice under my belt.

## **My Most Memorable Aikido Experience**

I can't say I have one most memorable moment on or off the mat. For me it is each time I step on the mat and feel myself relax and move freely with my senpai, peers and students that gives me deep joy and restores my being.