

Featured Senior Instructor, March 2019



Ron Bonomo

Aikido in Sparks, Sparks, Nevada
Division 1

I started aikido training about 26 years ago at the old Aikido Co-op on Linden Street in Reno. Initially I began training as a way to supplement my mountain biking and snowboarding. It wasn't long before I quit both in order to focus on aikido. In fact I remember buying a season pass to a local ski resort and thinking right after my first run that I should be in the dojo training. I didn't go again.

Over the years I have been lucky enough to be present for many opportunities for learning. Pat Hendricks, Pat Cassidy, Wolfgang, Bill Witt, Kayla Feder, Hans Goto, Hao Newens, Frank Doran, Robert Nadeau, Senseis' have all been instrumental in my growth as an aikidoka. The list is actually quite extensive and would perhaps cover pages of names. Certainly one of my greatest growth periods came under the tutelage of Vince Salvatore Sensei in Reno. As uchideshi I was encouraged to observe what teachers outside of the style were doing and incorporate it into my technique, either as an understanding or a functional part of nagawaza or while doing ukemi.

Recently I took on the labor of love and started a small dojo in Sparks Nevada with my wife Cristina and my daughter Leni. We have a small group that is happy to learn and experience the “why’s?” of training. Why do we move a certain way? Why engage? Why develop particular principles? Our answers are usually found in the idea that clear intention leads to the integrity of the position followed by improvement in the movement.

My most Memorable Aikido Experience

I have so many experiences to choose from. Perhaps it was when I was uchideshi with Hitohiro Saito Sensei. I had previously injured my wrist while training so severely that I was unable to even hold a bokken properly. At an evening taijutsu class I was working with a senior student and was having difficulty with morotedori kokyunage. Sensei paused the class to speak of kimochi and how that may be more important than even good technique. Upon resuming practice the senior student grabbed my forearm so strongly that I felt the bones touch. I responded with “Is that all you have?” He may not have understood exactly what was said but he did understand the intention. He grabbed again much harder, as if that was possible, and I moved cleanly around the center of the connection. All the while Sensei laughed from the shomen at the interaction.

I learned three things for sure that day! First, feeling is just as important as any other part of the art. Second, Sensei spoke English better than he let on. Thirdly, things are not always as they appear.