

State-Shifting: Developing Embodied Resilience with Aikido

Yondan Demonstration by Michelle Keip 3/17/18

At Aikido of Ashland

With Gratitude to Michael Friedl Shihan

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from difficulties. It is not a trait. Rather it is a process involving behaviors, thoughts and actions which can be learned and developed in anyone. Resilience involves cultivating flexibility and balance and Aikido offers a powerful and enjoyable way to weave these qualities together into body-mind-spirit wholeness.

“Depending on the circumstance you should be hard as a diamond, flexible as a willow, smooth like flowing water or as empty as space.”

O’Sensei, Founder of Aikido

My Yondan will demonstrate various ways we practice state-shifting among the 5 States in my Aikido teaching with adults, older children and Samurai Sprouts. The 5 States correspond with progressive, developmental levels of consciousness. Aikido empowers our capacity to move with ease among the states and cultivates our compassionate acceptance of other people and ourselves, no matter which state we may be in.

In brief, the 5 States are:

1. Victim/ caught/ wake-up call/ Earth
2. Duality/ fight/ alignment/ Water
3. Blending/ resourceful/ curious/ Air
4. Aiki/ joining the Energy/ being an instrument/ Fire
5. One with the Universe/ Empty of Self/ Space

At the Santa Cruz Aikido retreat last summer I was deeply touched by these words Friedl Shihan spoke in his class, “Taking responsibility for your own training and your own way in Aikido is perhaps the most difficult.” For me, preparing for Yondan has been my most difficult training thus far. When Sensei gave me the assignment to show “my Aikido”, I began a deep review of my experiences in Aikido since I began training on 11/3/81.

I’m grateful for the Yondan opportunity to express “my Aikido” both in writing and in demonstration. My demo will show how I integrate spiritual principles with embodiment in my teaching. My essay, *Making the World Safe for Children: Cross-Pollinating Aikido with ACES*, shares my passion for empowering and protecting children. May my offerings benefits all beings and help grow peace on Earth.