

Touch For Health July, 1987

AIKI IN TOUCH FOR HEALTH

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In 1979, I addressed this meeting on the use of KI in touching. In that presentation, the emphasis was on learning how to use a lighter touch on the points. Today, I am now ready to present formally some more principles of AIKI. These particular principles have to do with being centered within ourselves.

AIKI-DO is literally the way of harmonizing with the universal energy. As a martial art, one of the earliest practices we experience is how to move and turn from our center. Outwardly this movement is simple in appearance — a simple gliding step forward and pivot. Yet many find this movement difficult to master, not because it is difficult in and of itself, but because they move from all other parts of their body/being, except their center. What then is our center? Where is it located? How can I “use” it?

Our center, as we teach in AIKIDO, is an infinitely small point located about two inches (2") below the navel. When we are at our center, we move in an unitary manner. Our posture becomes relaxed and more in alignment. You may also begin to experience a mental shift as you focus on your center. This shift can be perceived as expressing an inner confidence. This last is important to all we do in AIKIDO, for without this inner sense of confidence, many of the arts become little more than techniques. Anyone can learn techniques with sufficient practice. To have the confidence to use them is another thing altogether.

To perform with confidence means we move from within our center. As you begin to practice this, you may feel uncertain what it is you are doing. The two practices below are designed to help you experience this.

1. Put all of your attention into your head and shoulders. Now have someone gently push down and back on your shoulder. Do you feel “off balance”?
2. Now allow your attention to be focused at your center just below your navel. Again, have your partner push gently down and back on your shoulder. Do you feel more stable this time?
3. For additional solo practice, repeat the tensing of your shoulders and begin to walk around. Note how this feels. Now re-focus on your center and walk some more. Do you notice a difference between the two walks?

This simple practice can lead you to some very profound changes in how you perceive yourself. As you learn to relax more at your center, you begin to exude a quiet confidence which others will respect. Your movements become more certain and fluid.

Another principle of AIKI is to extend our awareness. When we extend our awareness we become more integrated into our environment. As we become more aware of our place in our larger environment, we receive information at all levels. This information is connected to the flow of life which surrounds us. Being able to extend our awareness into this flow allows us to adapt to situations seemingly before they even happen.

This becomes important in doing muscle testing because sometimes the muscle response is not all that clear. It is at these times being able to extend our awareness is helpful. As we test and are tested we are able to establish a flow to the testing. Anytime we feel a break in this flow, we can be certain there is an imbalance in the muscle being tested.

Experience this for yourself using the following practices:

1. Focus only on the "correct" positioning and "proper" pressure for the subscapularis muscle test. Now test/be tested with this focus. Note how you felt as both the tester and the testee.
2. Extend your awareness from your center by "touching before touching". Allow the arm to be in the subscapularis test position and test/be tested. How did you experience the same test this time?
3. A daily life practice of extending your awareness can be to feel you are shaking hands with someone before you even clasp their hand.

The benefit of extending awareness is multifold. The primary and most immediate benefit is your awareness of your environment is heightened. A side benefit of this is the increased awareness others will experience of you. The daily practice of this is crucial to the development of it as an "unconscious skill". Start small and simple, reminding yourself throughout the day to extend.

These two simple and basic practices from AIKIDO are helpful to building and moving with confidence through your daily life. They are especially helpful in TOUCH FOR HEALTH. I trust you will empower yourself by using them.

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