

Aikido In The Modern World

In today's modern world of increased world tension & violence, world wide instantaneous communication via personal mobile phone and television together with the internet providing access to knowledge and facilities previously unobtainable but now available to all, it is hardly surprising that we are becoming a society that is not only overweight through a lack of need to move away from our computer terminals to receive information / news or even buy our food but are also bombarded by influences that affect our personalities at a deeply psychological level.

We are truly living in an environment where, if we want it now we can get it now, without waiting, with ease resulting in instant gratification but annoyance if we don't get it.

It is hardly surprising therefore that traditional physical activities that require an individuals dedication & commitment for a period of time that is measured in years, are in decline. As I get more and more people asking "how long would it take to get my black belt" or "do I need to be fit" or "do in need to come every week" I firmly believe that Aikido falls within this bracket. It is therefore our role as Aikidoka to "promote" the art not only as a martial art but as a solution to life in the modern world. Aikido is a martial art and a philosophy system that can dramatically change your way of life. The student who practises Aikido needs to be both patient and diligent in his instruction and training, working at their own pace, overcoming physical and psychological barriers, perfecting themselves as individuals through technique. This takes an amount of personal commitment and dedication in terms of regular attendance to achieve, but the results are worth the wait. Many Aikidoka benefit by increased fitness and confidence through physical practise and burn off their aggressions / tensions as a result. The benefits don't end there. The increased fitness and loss of tension create a sense of well being (likeing of ones self) and the knowledge / confirmation that you are perfecting your technique creates satisfaction, especially when this progress is confirmed by the instructor. The giving of ones self for Ukemi also helps as it promotes comradery and a willingness to help others whilst loosing the fear of confrontation, created when invading peoples personal space, through the physical contact required in normal practise. In essence the student becomes tolerant of their fellow students and the events that happen around them helping to create a well balanced individual in an unbalanced world.

Obviously these few short words don't go anywhere near to explain what Aikido can do for the individual in the sort of dept that it deserves, but it is a start. As Confucius once said "*a journey (no matter how long) starts with but a single step*" That single step in Aikido is giving your self permission to have the time to practise, the time to be dedicated, to have commitment, the commitment to change your life.

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