

## Aikido Questions and Answers

- 1. What were you looking for when you began training in Aikido?*
  - 2. What about Aikido keeps you training now?*
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1. I began training when my son suggested I try Aikido during a discussion about me trying a contact sport.
2. I continued training during the hard times because of my Aikido mates; and I train now because Aikido is my history.

~J. Robinson~ 5th dan

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1. I signed up with a friend, as we had both been attacked on the street in Denver and were interested in self-defense training.
2. There are days when I have no idea why I keep training, and days when I know that Aikido training has saved my life on many levels. Aikido provides a complete path of practice, including physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual components opening opportunities to fulfill my maximum potential as a human being. Dave Lowry, in "Sword and Brush", offers an essay on the character Shugyo, austere training. He writes that there comes a time when it is no longer possible to stop training without psychological damage – I have sometimes joked that librarian is what I do, and Aikido is who I am. It's not really a joke. At whatever level you choose to practice, you will benefit.

~Sharon~ 4<sup>th</sup> dan

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1. I was always interested in martial arts; I thought they were beautiful. I also was looking for a way to exercise that didn't involve running laps or having balls thrown at my head. And perhaps most importantly, I was looking for confidence, and for protection. When I was in middle school (and the first year of high school) kids were pretty mean to nerds like me. Being able to fight back (verbally or physically) was something I wished for a lot. I was very shy and terrified of being taunted for being quiet and smart (it may seem silly, but in middle school, reputation is everything to you)--and then on top of all that, I found out I was gay. And because I was already so terrified, I figured it would just be one more excuse for other kids to torment me. It was after I found that out that I decided to study a martial art. I wanted protection from those who would show prejudice.
2. I continue to train because I still think Aikido is beautiful--but in addition to the visual beauty of it, I've become acquainted with beautiful feelings. It leaves me feeling balanced, relaxed, energetic, and joyful. It lets me love my fellow students like a second family. And it's given me an entirely new outlook on people who try to treat me badly, whether for my brains or my sexuality. Before, I wanted to defy them, and to fight them, and was filled with anger and fear; now, I see no reason to fight. I have learned that the greatest victory is the spiritual victory--that as long as I rise above hate, as long as I live without fear or shame, and to love who I am, I don't have to be part of that conflict. I have already won.

~Amelia~

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1. I practiced most of the martial arts sports including floor wrestling, also I practiced with private lessons martial arts and self defence with different instructors.

I did not know what is Aikido, when I watch the training of Aikido, I thought they play act. After I practiced few classes, I found that Aikido is the most powerful martial Arts, I decided to continue my practice in

2. Aikido is great for any one, child, boys, girls, even for old women or old men like me. Because it does not need any effort or muscle to overcome the attacker. It gives you self confidence in the street to protect any one with you.

~Kamal~

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1. I saw a demo by Sensei where I exercised and it looked like fun throwing somebody around and being in control and you didn't have to be strong or big to do Aikido.

2. Its a challenge and I love it and I like being able to control my partner most of the time. I am also learning to control me.

~Claire~

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1. I was looking for a different martial art, without so much ego in it. The other thing I could notice was the extreme beauty of the movements, I could not believe that something so elegant could be so effective.

2. The philosophy, for me represents the most important thing in Aikido, without that we don't have a goal, and it would be just like every other activity. We are trying to reach the unreachable and that's what drives me, I know that my training will never end, and that always will be room for improvement. Also I'm very interested in the evolution of the Art, sometimes we see Aikido and we don't even notice just because it didn't look like Ikkyo or Iriminage. Aikido for me is the ultimate goal in Martial Arts.

~Aldo~

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1. I was looking for safety and balance. I wanted to be prepared as I have some negative influences in my life. I wanted to feel confident in handling any situation that might come my way.

2. I still feel the same way. So I continue to train. I really appreciate the spiritual aspects of Aikido as well.

~Aleta~

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1. I was looking for a martial art that was a self defense and also something that I could use in every day life to bring balance and harmony into my life.

2. I love to train with different people who also study Aikido. I feel that it makes my training better as a student and also as an instructor too.

~Joe~

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1. I'd been reading books about eastern religions/spirituality and aikido was mentioned often. It was said to be the most spiritual of the martial arts. I stored that tidbit in the back of my brain. Then I read "The Way of Aikido" by George Leonard. I had one of those "a-ha!" moments. Aikido was the right endeavor for me to take and it was the right time. I picked the dojo that had "traditional" in the name and when I talked to the sensei and walked in the door of the dojo and saw smiles on the faces of people training, I knew I was in the right place.

2. I keep training because of the physical, emotional, and spiritual challenge. I love knowing that I can train for the rest of my life and will always have something new to learn. I love the beauty of the art. I love the way I feel when I'm training. I love the spiritual energy in the dojo. I keep training because it gives me amnesia for an hour or two. I can be immersed in nothing but aikido.

~Kim~

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