

Articles by and about AikidoKids!

AikidoKids! Article by Alex T.

In the Aikido kids class, there are a lot of different colored belts. But what a lot of people don't know, is that all the different colors are just a form of the traditional white belt. I guess its like how white light splits into all the colors of the rainbow. What I'm trying to say is, no matter what age or rank, we're all learning and we should treat each other equally.

AikidoKids! Article by Poli

Aikido is really fun to do and teaches you things at the same time. It teaches me to focus and helps me concentrate on my school work and homework. My Aikido teachers have told me about "zanshin," which teaches me to be aware of my surroundings no matter where I am. I like Aikido because it teachers me to defend myself without having to hurt anyone else. Like when a girl at school hit me, I grabbed her wrist before she could hit me with the other hand a second time. I am glad I joined Aikido Kids at the Center. I want to teach other kids Aikido when I go up a few ranks.

Aikido is Wonderful by Justine

One of the things I look forward to the most on the drive to Aikido is the wonderful people who go there, too. I don't just mean the kids class teachers, I mean Sensei, the kids, and the adults. It's a great feeling to know that there are so many supportive people at Aikido to help teach each other the martial art.

Another thing that makes Aikido special is the unique teaching methods of each kid's class teacher. Mathew's one of kind look on life inspires the kids. Joe, how if your having a problem knows exactly what it is and knows who to fix it. Claire who is always proving that being small and having a low sense of gravity is an advantage in Aikido.

In the end, one of the amazing parts of Aikido is how many people that help to make it special for everyone.

Zanshen and the Board of Review by Brian M. (an AikidoKids! parent)

I've been fortunate to watch and occasionally participate in the kid's aikido class during the past year. My six-year-old son Will began the class last year, and he just tested for the children's rank of yellow belt. I was aware that Will had improved since he first began. For example, he has appeared more aware of his personal space when playing with other kids, and I think his coordination has improved. Still, I was nervous that he was going to be asked to perform aikido in front of a board, even if the board contained someone as kind as Claire Conway. Will did remarkably well, and I was incredibly proud.

His ability to work closely and cooperatively with the other students, and to pay attention to his movements surpassed my expectations for him. What's more, I saw him do things like readjust his stance and hands in a fashion that allowed him to take another student's balance. He didn't gloat at his success in a competitive fashion, but simply reversed roles, and allowed himself to be pinned to the mat in turn. I can't begin to calculate the lessons that such practice instills. After new belts were awarded, the yellow belts played shikko tag with ukemis (Will's favorite) and I had thought his testing was done.

When we arrived home, I was focused upon cleaning the house for some upcoming guests, and I thought a bit about what I was going to feed Will for lunch. I hopped out of the car and began walking, barely aware that Will was moving behind me. Suddenly, Will grabbed my arm and said, "Dad stop!" I had come within two feet of stepping on a three-foot long rattlesnake.

I don't know if Will would have noticed the snake prior to aikido, or if he would have been aware enough to realize that I wasn't going to stop walking without his intervention. However, I like to think that the truest test of his burgeoning aikido skill happened not during his board, but after he left the dojo.

Thank you Claire, Joe, Matthew and others who have helped teach my son in the Children's Aikido class.

What I Have Learned From Practicing Aikido

by Elijah

Aikido has taught me to tolerate people who I might otherwise dislike. When I blend with my uke, the two of us have to move as one person combining motion and energy. When I am attacked in the dojo there is no place for anger, I simply step off the line and happily receive the attack. When I am confronted outside of the dojo I imagine that I am in the dojo and accept the attack without anger thereby deflating the attacker.

Aikido: An Antidote to Anger Poisoning

Lauren

When people get angry, they also get stupid. As an example, one New Years' Eve my sister and I spent the entire day arguing. From early in the day to past midnight, we scowled at each other, sneered, yelled, and generally behaved like idiots. We both got so mad—under both definitions of the word—that we forgot what we were arguing about. We were both surprised to realize that this holiday ruining argument had originally been about the colour of the tablecloth.

Anger makes the sunniest vacations terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days, turns the simplest of situations into wars, and gives the nicest people fangs and red eyes. If there was no anger, there would be need for Aikido, because people would not be going around attacking other people, and people wouldn't keep a fight going by returning fire, but you can't put things back into Pandora's Box. Aikido can turn anger into something positive, without hurting anybody.

Before anyone starts throwing punches, most fights start with an argument, which is very similar to a fist fight. Grab attacks are intended to control someone, just like some comments in an argument. For most people the object of any dispute is to reach a particular goal, whether that is respect, a feeling of power, proof of strength, or even just to be right. For someone who has done Aikido—and understands it—the object should be to understand the person, and to keep both themselves and their attacker from getting hurt.

Insults and hurtful words are like punches and strikes, so we respond the same way. Instead of retaliating, which can be easy to do when we are angry, we get out of the way. We don't yell, roll our eyes, or take offense, just take a deep breath and relax. Then we blend; calmly try to see from the other person's point of view. Take their center by taking away their reason to be angry. Without sarcasm, say something honest and important that shows you understand their point of view. Be patient and help them calm down. Once they are calm and thinking rationally again, the technique is finished, because your attacker is no longer a threat, and you both can solve the problem.

Aikido is an effective antidote to the adverse effects on the brain typical of Anger Poisoning, a serious medical disorder that I made up to describe the insanely stupid behavior displayed by angry people. Although Anger Poisoning itself is made up, the concept is not, so try to relax whenever you have the urge to yell words that you probably shouldn't use at somebody. Instead, follow the three steps of the Aikido anti-argument strategy: Get out of the way, blend, and take their center.

So remember kids, to avoid Anger Poisoning: Be smart, Don't start, and Stay with Aikido!

Kids Roll
by Leonard

When you are first starting Aikido as a kid, one of the most exciting things you learn how to do is to roll. This is not only fun, but it is also useful. I asked some of the kids in Aikido how they used rolling outside of class. Some of the answers I got were quite surprising.

I asked several of my classmates this question. The most common answer was when falling -- off a bike, when running or skate boarding. Another interesting answer I got was while playing soccer, to dodge around people. But, by far the best answer was while in a Peter Pan play. The person who did this was supposed to be firing a cannon and while pretending to be thrown back did a backwards roll rollout to create the illusion of a painful fall. I roll while running to give myself a challenge or just for fun around the house.

I think that rolling is one of the most practical and fun things you learn in Aikido. I also think more people should learn how to roll in case they trip. It is especially important for kids to learn this skill, because they seem to fall down more. Rolling is fun and useful.

AikidoKids! Article

by Corbin

Many people use the techniques they learn in Aikido to help them say fight or rather not fight their way out of a conflict when things get rough. I don't use aikido techniques like most people do. Not to say that they haven't helped me when I was in a tough place. I use the concept of aikido in my life. I have learned from my teachers that if you oppose negative force then all you do is create more negative force. That is not the way of aikido. Aikido was made to circumvent problems and help you out of them. I use this concept when I get in a fight with my brother (tends to happen a lot). Rather than meet him head on and say "no you're wrong" I say "how about this instead". By not meeting the energy head on you stop the energy all together. So when someone is saying something or doing something negative rather than yelling or fighting all I have to do is go along with it. Not give in, no support you point, but rather just do it in a way that is not opposing but greeting and accepting. Aikido was invented for this very reason rather than fight just subdue without injury so that you can get away. This is "harmonizing" and is centered on. When you harmonize with an attacker you avoid and altercation and that is even more valuable than being able to win.

AikidoKids! Article

By Willy

I used Aikido a lot in two places, New York and San Francisco. In New York the best way to get around is in the subway system. In San Francisco the best way to get around is with the cable cars. When the cars are crowded you have to stand up in them. When the car starts it lurches forwards and many people (including me) lose their

balance. I found that standing in hanmi gave me a lot more balance. The wide stance can be hard to manage in a crowded car, but even a small hanmi can really help.