

**AIKIDO AND THE POWER OF HARMONY IN
THE TRANSFORMATION OF EGBERT**



An Aikido Story for Children

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The Transformation of Egbert

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Introduction

This story was written almost 25 years ago. I had read a book for children about the martial arts. Its focus was the child who had been beaten finally getting strong enough and beating the bullies.

What I was learning in Aikido was proving so valuable for me that I decided maybe I could share something of it. So I wrote this story.

Chas did the first few drawings 20 years ago. It took me the last 20 to finally get him to do the rest of the drawings. That's my fault really, not his. And then it took me five years to get it into digital form.

We just finished adding the last four pictures. So here is the book that I have been waiting so long to share with you.

Aikido & The Power of Harmony: In the Transformation of Egbert.

Please feel free to send it to anyone or send people to the web site where people can download it for free.

<http://www.extraordinarylistening.com/books.html>

It was Friday and Egbert was mad. He was mad at his parents. Why didn't they name him something else?



He was mad at himself for being a chicken when the other kids teased him.

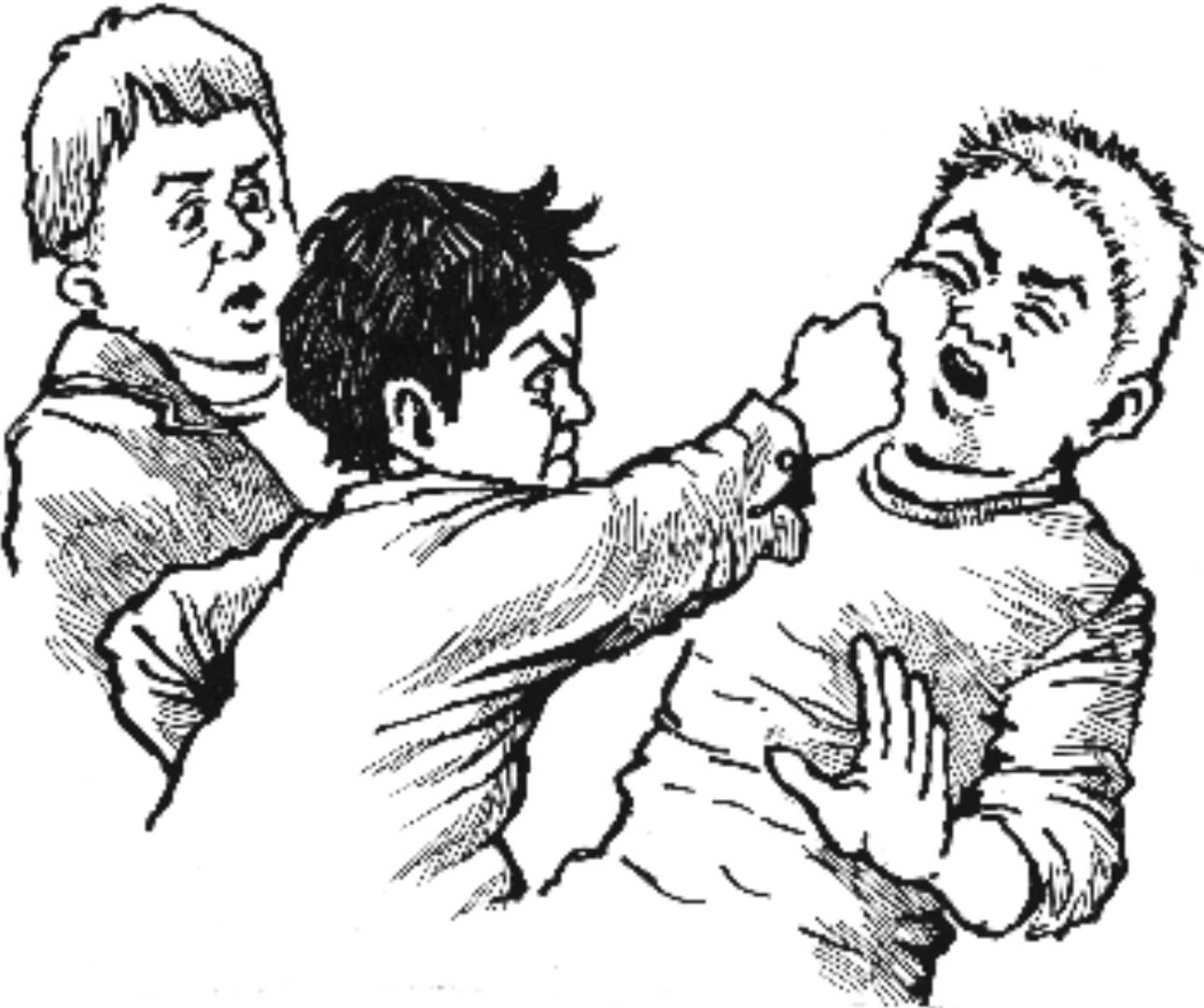
He decided the next time anyone made fun of his name, he would punch them.

It didn't take long. At lunch on Monday, it started again. Two boys walked by where he had gone to sit alone. One of the kids called him "Egg Salad". Then the other called him "Yolk Bert" because he was yellow. Then the first one said, "If I had a name like Egbert, I'd change it".

He was mad, but he was scared because they were both bigger.

When the second boy said "What's your mother's name? Chickenbert?" Egbert totally lost his temper.

Before anyone could believe what he'd done, he jumped up and hit the boy and knocked him down.



Both of the children were stunned. By the time the boy stood up and had recovered enough to be angry, a teacher came over and Egbert was taken to the principal's office.

He had to stay after school because the principal didn't think calling someone a name was reason to hit them. That was only the beginning of his trouble. He missed the bus and had to walk home, alone. Guess who was waiting for him?

The two boys he had fought were waiting for him. A friend had joined them. The one he had hit had a black eye.



Now Egbert was really scared. He started to run. He could hear their footsteps getting closer behind him.



Suddenly he felt a hand grab his shirt. He struggled to get free but couldn't.

The three kids stood around him. His heart beat so hard it sounded like drums to him. The one he had hit stepped closer.

He pushed Egbert with both hands so hard Egbert fell down.

He was afraid to get up. He wanted to cry and might have when he heard someone yell, "Stop it!"

Egbert and the three boys turned and looked at the girl who said it.



She was bigger than Egbert, but not much, and smaller than the two bigger boys.

She walked into the circle in front of Egbert. One of the boys yelled, “Get lost!” and tried to push her away.



Just as he did, she turned quickly to the side and pushed down on his arm. To his surprise, he found himself on the ground.

She took a step back but didn't seem scared. "Leave him alone!" As she said it, one of the other boys grabbed her by the arm.



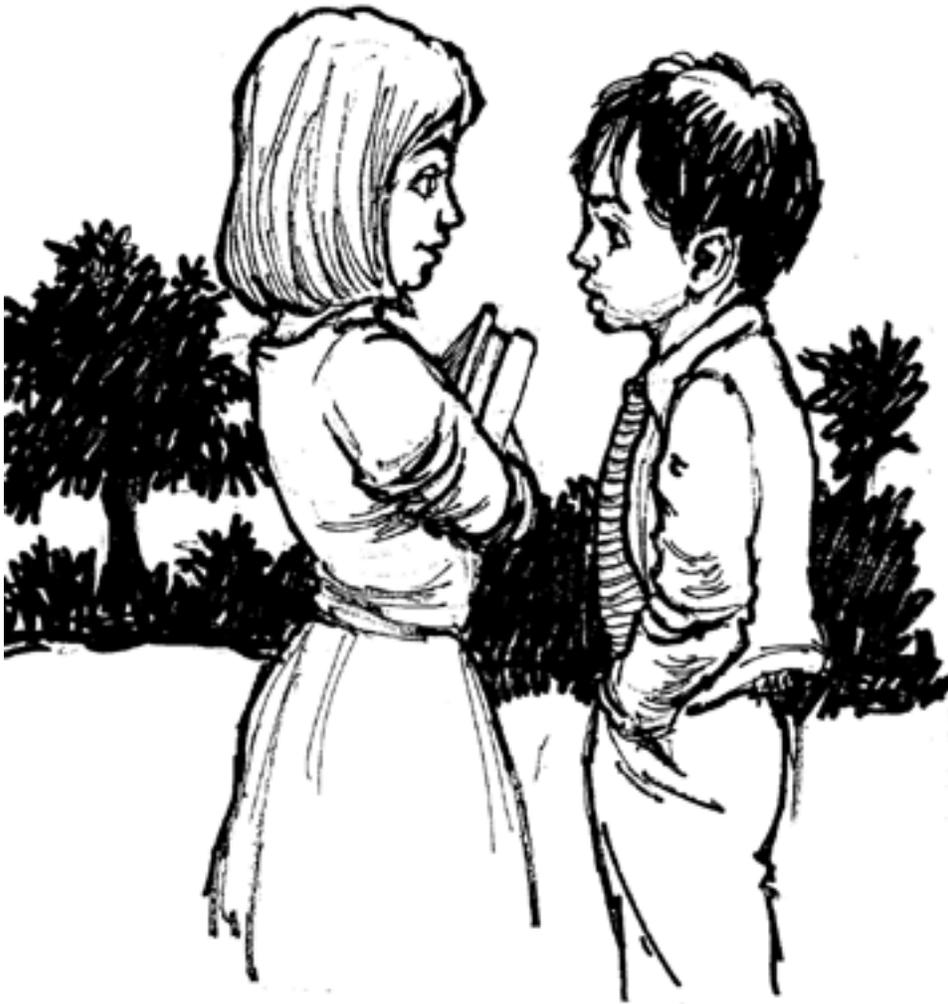
She quickly grabbed him with her other hand and, turning in a quick circle, ducked under his arm and threw him down.

The boy yelled in pain as he fell, but when she let go the pain stopped

The three boys looked at her and then at each other for a second. Then they looked at Egbert who was standing and feeling a lot braver now. They looked at each other again. And then they ran away.

Egbert was glad to be rescued, but he was embarrassed to be saved by a girl, when he was so afraid. "Thank you" was all he could think of to say.

She told him her name was Sue Anne and asked him his name. As they walked, he told her the whole story.



Finally he asked her how she had done it.

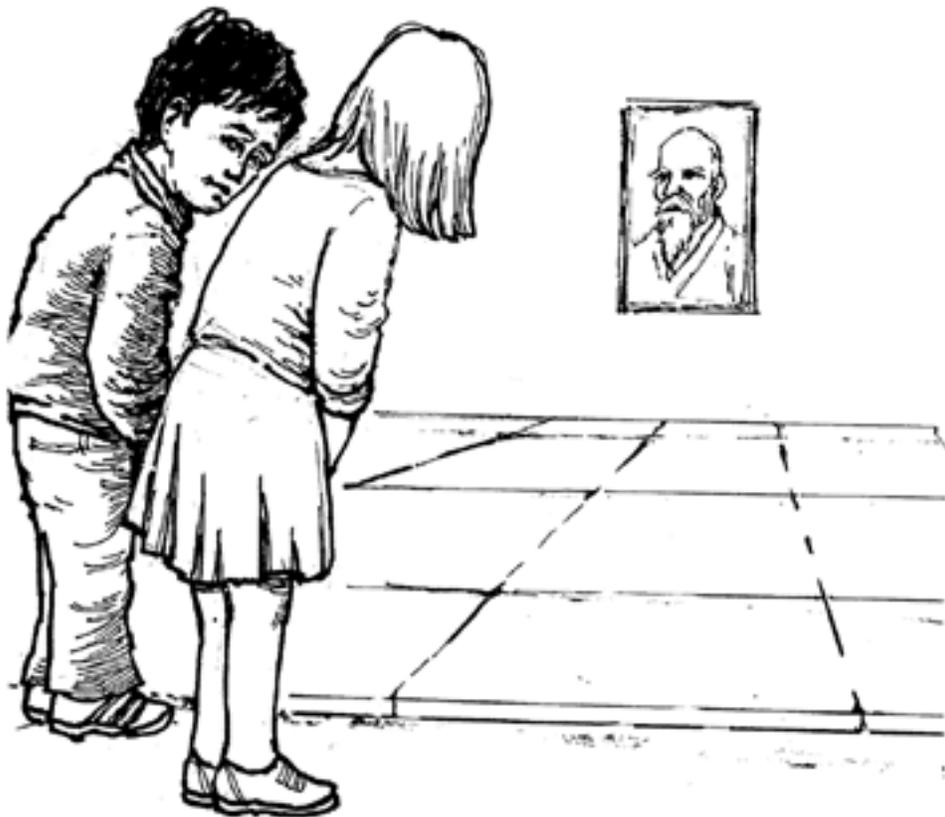
"I study a martial art from Japan called Aikido" she said. "It teaches you how to protect yourself without fighting back. I was just on my way to class when I saw those boys picking on you".

"Oh" she exclaimed, "I just remembered I've got to hurry. I'm probably late already. Do you want to come with me?" she asked.

"Sure" he said. So they ran to Aikido school.



When they got there, she showed him how to bow and told him it was proper to bow when entering and leaving the 'dojo', which was the Japanese word for school.



She bowed toward a picture of a man. She said it showed respect to O Sensei, the man in the picture who had invented

Aikido. Egbert bowed as she had done and they went into the dojo.



"That's the teacher" she said pointing.

"His name is Bob, but we call him Sensei which means 'teacher' in Japanese."

She introduced Egbert to everyone. The teacher told him he was welcome to sit and watch the class, which was about to start.

The children sat very still in a straight line. The teacher sat in front of them and they all bowed to O Sensei to start the class. Then the teacher turned and bowed to the students and they bowed to him.



After some warm-up exercising, they practiced rolling. Egbert was impressed with how smooth it looked and how easy they all made it seem.

Then the teacher showed a technique.



After he demonstrated, the students bowed to him. Each student took a partner and after bowing to each other, they tried to do what the teacher had shown.

When a student would lose his balance, instead of falling down, they would roll and come up standing and balanced.

Egbert thought it was amazing. He could tell right away that Sue Anne was one of the best students.

It looked so effortless and soft. He wouldn't have believed it was real if he hadn't just seen Sue Anne show how well it worked when you needed it.

After class, Sue Anne told the Sensei and the other students the story of meeting Egbert. The look on the teacher's face showed how proud he was of Sue Anne.

Then he asked Egbert if he wanted to try Aikido. He gave Egbert a form for his parents to sign.

The next day Egbert came back with the money for the class and a letter saying he had his parents' permission.

Bob, the Sensei, taught him about relaxing and centering.

He explained to Egbert, "When we get angry or scared, we lose our center."

"When we get uptight we do foolish things." "We lose our balance, not just in our bodies, but in our minds as well."

The Transformation of Egbert



They practiced centering and relaxing their weight downwards and their partners tried to push them over. When they were relaxed and centered, they were strong. But when they resisted and pushed back they always lost their balance.

Egbert was doing so well the Sensei teased him and Egbert lost his balance. They did it over and over until he could stay calm and keep his center.

Then they started rolling. Right away Egbert got dizzy.



It took several classes for him to learn to relax and center when he rolled. Then he was able to roll all the way around the room and stand up without losing his balance.

Besides learning how to roll and fall in class, they learned techniques for grabs and punches and kicks and finally for 'randori' which is group attack.



When school let out and summer started he went to two classes every day during vacation. He was lucky because once school let out he would not see those boys again until fall.

He wanted to learn so he paid attention to the teacher and focused his mind as he had been taught.

The teacher taught him well because he was such a sincere student.

Mostly the teacher taught that fighting leads to more fighting and that a fight could often be avoided by a calm, loving attitude.

“People usually respond to being treated with respect, especially if you can keep being respectful when they treat you badly.”

Egbert was a little embarrassed that he had lost his temper and hit that boy for calling him names.

Finally fall came and school started. The very first day, the boys who had bullied him saw him.



They went right over and started to tease him. He was glad he had learned how to relax and center. He just stood and looked at them. He didn't get mad.

Finally he said, "You know you wouldn't like it if someone made fun of you or your name or called your mother names. Well, neither do I. So I lost my temper. That's why I hit you."

"But I'm sorry I didn't know how to handle your teasing any better. I'm sorry I hurt you. It didn't make me happy to hurt you, and I don't think hurting my feelings made you happier."

"Maybe we can get along better this year. Anyway, that's what I hope." Then he walked away.

The boys just stood there. They were more shocked by the way he had acted than they had been by being thrown down by a girl.

The next day one of the boys came over to Egbert and asked him why he seemed so different. Egbert told him about Aikido.

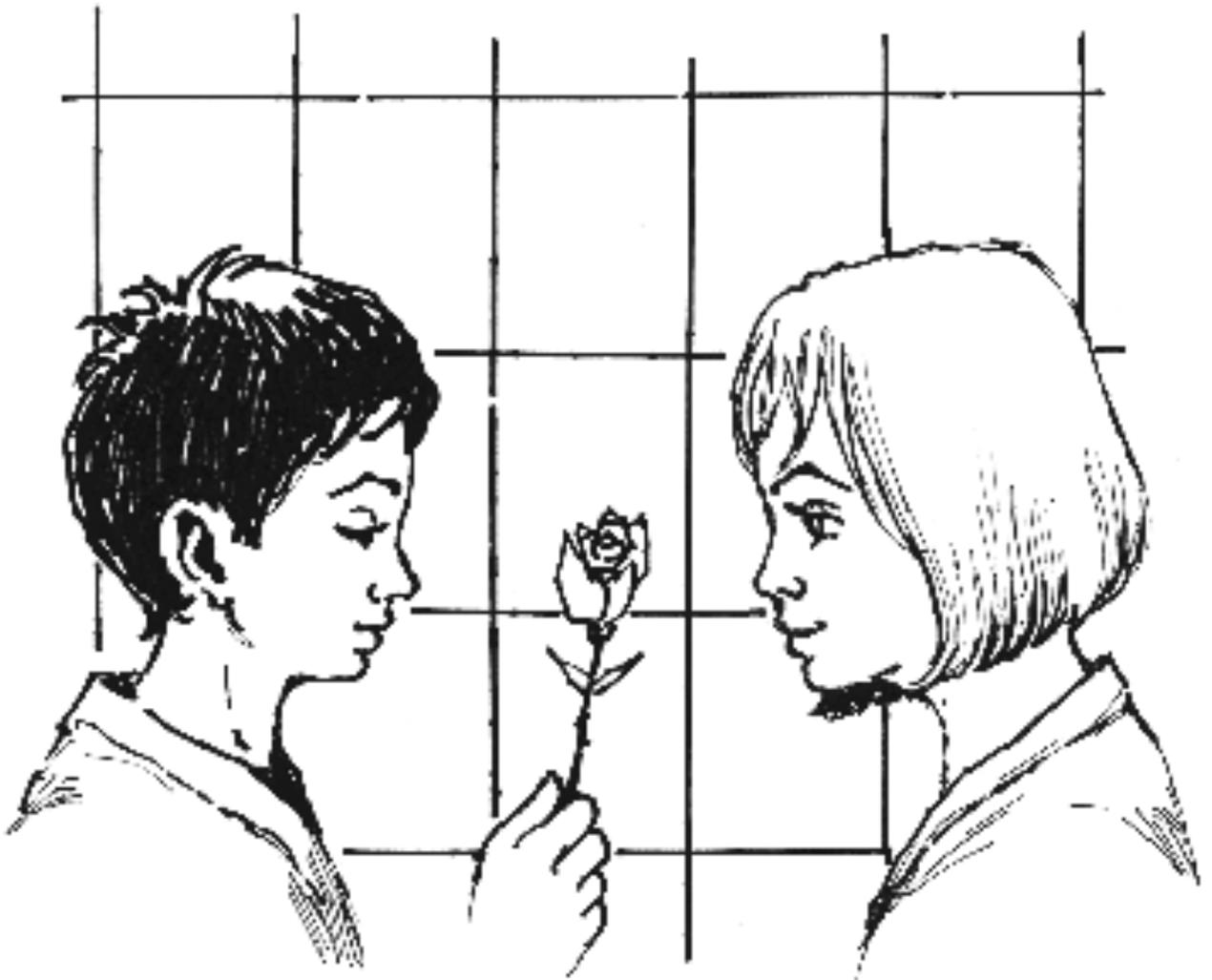
A couple of days later, the three boys showed up at the dojo to watch class.



Both Egbert and the teacher welcomed them. They liked it and asked if they could join the dojo. The teacher told them if it was okay with their parents, they would be welcome.

When they came the next day the teacher had Egbert and Sue Anne show them how to roll. By the time they had been training a couple of weeks, Egbert had become friends with each of them.

The next Saturday Egbert got to take his first test. He brought two flowers. One he put in a vase under the picture of O Sensei. He passed his test with flying colors.



After he finished he brought the other flower over to Sue Anne and gave it to her. "Thank you" was all she could think of to say. They both smiled at each other.

Words of the Master

“ There is no enemy of love. There is no discord in love. Aikido is the realization of love.

It is not for correcting others; it is for correcting your own mind.

The secret of Aikido is to harmonize ourselves with the movement of the universe and bring ourselves into accord with the universe itself.

I want considerate people to listen to the voice of Aikido. It is not for correcting others; it is for correcting your own mind. This is Aikido. This is the mission of Aikido and should be your mission.”

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

The Founder of Aikido

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