

The Endless River

Aiki-Dialogue and the Flow of Meaning

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Introduction:

**Communication
and the
Creation of the World**

When our communication works our lives work. In the world of human interaction, our effectiveness in achieving any mutual outcome comes down to our skills in communication. Effective negotiation allows us to create resolution out of potential conflict. Clear open communication allows people to coordinate an undertaking that would be impossible for an individual or for a group that had difficulty communicating. Simple efforts in understanding and improving communication enable large changes in the world we create together.

Communication is the foundation of the world we experience. The data we draw from experience communicates with our awareness. Our awareness communicates with our banks of thoughts, feelings and memories. The meaning we make is communicated to our cognitive mind. Our ideas and strategies are then communicated into actions. Often we communicate our action through speaking our message as words in what we generally think of as a verbal communication. Our actions also communicate a message intended or otherwise.

Most of us think of communication, as how well we are understood by others or how well we understand them. This study includes and emphasizes our communication with ourselves and evolves to explore communication with the whole of creation. Our communication with ourselves creates our state of being. Our communication with others, which creates the quality of our relationships, is based on our state of being. Our internal communications are as important as our external communications. They are in fact one system.

We experience, think about our experience, translate our thoughts into language and speak or write the words. Then we expect someone else to receive the words and translate them into thoughts – the same thoughts – and from there understand our experience and insight. Do you believe in miracles, because communication, when it works, is a miracle. We take it for granted until it doesn't work. Then the world breaks down between people and nations.

Communication offers a key point of leverage for creating harmonious relationships and a beautiful world. The principles we will explore in this book open doors to creativity in communication. When the process is conscious it can work for us. When it is unconscious instead of being creative we are at its effect.

Aikido and Dialogue are resonant disciplines for making the creation of our world a divine process. Aiki-Dialogue is the practice of using both disciplines to reach a level of self-knowledge and universal alignment that creates a beautiful world. When our communication works our lives work.

Aikido, Dialogue & Zanshin Ryu

Zanshin means extending attention. I creatively translate it as ‘attention to the total interconnectedness throughout time-space’. Ryu is the term for a school, style or approach to a study. After naming my school Zanshin Ryu I realized it did not mean anything to most people and so failed to communicate. Since I use the word listening as a generic term for paying attention I chose The Listening Institute as an English translation.

The process of awareness we study I have come to call Extraordinary Listening. Our work is the development and expansion of Aikido and Dialogue and their applications to all facets of life. We approach the arts in the spirit of inquiry. We teach Aikido through Dialogue and Dialogue through Aikido. We are committed to the development of innovative applications of both arts to explore new domains of consciousness and life.

Dialogue and Aikido are evolving arts and sharing of ideas a part of their evolution. The arts develop creativity, the ability to create our lives, personal and professional, in ways that allow us to complete our bestowed mission. I share this book as a map created through inquiry with others. Though we must transcend the limitations of this or any description, the arts of Aikido and Dialogue can help to deepen our understanding.

“Understanding is the best thing in the world!” song lyric

The royal ‘we’ refers to Chris and myself as well as to those of us who study and practice together in both the dojo, Aikido school (AikidoofMarin.com) and in a network of consulting firms applying the principles of Aikido and Dialogue to leadership and business development.

(ZanshinRyu.com, ExtraordinaryListening.com, QuantumEdge.org)

R. Moon

“Winning means winning over the mind of discord in ourselves.

Rely on harmony to activate your manifold powers and create a beautiful world.”

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei, The founder of Aikido

“I'm suggesting that there is the possibility for a transformation of the nature of consciousness, both individually and collectively, and that whether this can be solved culturally and socially depends on Dialogue. That's what were exploring.”

From the book *On Dialogue*, by David Bohm,

I.
Dialogue
Communication
&
Energy

The energy of the universe is inter-connected. Everything affects everything. Aikido and Dialogue are disciplines that catalyze a shift from seeing parts to seeing systems, from perceiving separate objects to perceiving a unified field of interdependent relationships. Aiki-Dialogue combines the best of both worlds and moves the study from conceptual to experiential, from theory to practice.

The shift of the scientific paradigm from the Newtonian machine to quantum dynamics parallels a shift taking place in human consciousness. As we move from primitive thinking, to increasingly sophisticated understanding, our perception of the world changes. The insight that 'matter is energy' is moving us as a culture, and our cultural paradigm, from seeing things to seeing relationships, from seeing action (cause and effect) to seeing transaction (interaction of one system) The Newtonian view sees us as separate parts of a giant machine with an external creator. As long as we identify ourselves as separate from the rest of the creation and especially as separate from the divine force, we futilely search for peace and harmony. When we identify as the whole harmony needs neither to be sought nor created. It is.

Our state of being is the foundation of our communication generating what and how we communicate. The transaction between our being and our communication in turn generates the quality of our lives. The appearance of matter, everything in existence, including thoughts, ideas and feelings, forms out of energy. Attention to our energy state affects our being. We can shift our state of being with a simple shift of our attention. A shift in our state of awareness can begin with the quantum realization that everything is energy. A shift in our state of awareness occurs when we relax allowing our weight to pour into the earth.

The dictionary defines communication as: to make common, to share. Communication takes place on many levels, verbal syntax being one of many channels that operate to exchange energy and make it common. The complex dynamic of forces in a relationship, makes description with linear two-dimensional language, inadequate at best. Communication doesn't happen through the words alone. Communication doesn't happen only in the mind. It is a transmission of energy, of spirit. Every facet of an interaction is communication, not only the intended message. Communication includes the meaning of the person receiving it. It's not what they mean. It's not what they say. It's what you hear.

Communication is a sharing of energy. In the 'communication' of an organism with its environment, each transactionally affects the other. As an organism

interacts with its environment including another organism, the interaction changes both. The transaction creates an interdependent loop that is transacting with a larger system of evolving change. A transaction implies the process of a system in relationship. The process can be described from the point of view of two separate aspects exchanging something. Or we could choose to describe the process as the relationship between two aspects of one system. Depending on the description, a different worldview arises. As a result of my worldview we make a description out of which we create a (life) strategy, driving my choices of action.

The description we operate from and our skills of interaction influence our lives in unseen ways. Once we describe an experience in words, they become the record. The meaning we give them informs our memory. Unless we have a conscious practice using words to express ourselves turns around on us. We think we are using words. Actually our transaction with words forms our meaning.

We make a communication as if our only responsibility were to transfer the data. We don't see the interdependence of our communication of mood, status and inclusion as if these aspects were off the screen. If someone treats you a certain way, you respond according to the meaning you make. You evaluate the relationship and treat them a certain way, some of it intentional and some habitual. However we interpret each other's actions, positively or negatively, we tend to respond in kind re-enforcing a reciprocating echo. If we see each other's actions as supportive we are likely to support each other. If we see each other's actions as detrimental, we are likely to see each other as enemies regardless of each other's intentions. Over time our relationship becomes historical like the Greeks and the Turks, the Hootoos and the Tootsies, Israelis and the Palestinians or the Catholics and Protestants in Ireland.

Commonly when someone treats us well we take it for granted. When we are treated poorly, resentment smolders for a long time. If the world were as intent on returning the positive as it is on revenge for the negative, there would be peace on earth. The prospect for world peace rests with our communication.

When we communicate, we are limited in our ability to know how what we transmit is received. We fail to account for our worldview, our operating system, because we don't see it. In turn we fail to allow for the worldview of our partner in communication. Since we value data and describe experience so differently, misunderstandings happen easily.

The quality of our communication with someone expresses and generates our relationship. The words we choose, the tone of voice that we use with someone

affects their mental vibration, mental brain wave pattern, their emotionality and their thought process. We affect each other's rhythm and mood by our own. We act without seeing that in our communication with our environment, we create a reality that defines how we will interact. We are either escalating or de-escalating conflict and tension. We either lock ourselves into a mood or, if we have the vision and skills, change it by setting up our life experiment differently.

We have an internal conversation with ourselves. This conversation, usually unconsciously takes the form of us reinforcing our descriptions until we believe them without question, until we see them as fact. This mode of inner dialogue holds us to our beliefs. A similar dynamic is at play in our external conversation with our family, friends and associates, our tribe and perhaps a larger community consisting of neighboring tribes. Rarely do we seek a state of dialogue with ourselves and each other where we are challenging our perceptions and opening the mystery.

Thinking develops thoughts; perceptions of reality based on established synaptic connections from the past. We make meaning through a predetermined system of value based on thought. A computer's operating system tells a computer's central processing unit how to make meaning out of the data input. Through observation we can develop awareness of our thought process as an operating system that defines how we make meaning out of experience. Meaning unconsciously based on the past fails to leave room for creativity to breathe.

Through our stories, how we communicate the meaning of experience to ourselves and others, our internal communication can change the reality we create, the field of relationship and our transaction in it. Open dialogue empowers us to create meaning that is coherent and in harmony with itself. Coherent meaning empowers us in handling the unfolding of change. Aiki-Dialogue holds the power to re-create the world.

Dialogue: What it is!

The term dialogue is an old one. In general usage dialogue describes speaking to share knowledge and implies a spirit of learning. However, the word used in the past is fundamentally different from the study herein described. The essential difference between the general use of the term as open conversation and our usage is the specific quality of attention to thought as a system.

The modern discipline of Dialogue was developed to a high art by David Bohm, a nuclear physicist and J. Krishnamurti, a teacher of philosophic wisdom, from India. The skills of analytic thinking and ongoing collective inquiry that Bohm

brought from the scientific community combined with Krishnamurti's spiritual inquiry created a unique form of Dialogue.

To differentiate between the more general usage of the term dialogue, meaning open discourse for learning, and the specific discipline of 'Dialogue' which emphasizes paying attention to how our system of thought transacts with perception, thinking and meaning, we capitalize the term.

The discipline of Dialogue refines human communication, opening doors to the creation of a new future. When we approach an inquiry in a state of presence with an open mind, aware of our system of thought, new meaning creates itself. To describe this process, Bohm coined the term '**relevation.**' Relevation implies that when the system is in a state of harmony, what is relevant elevates into consciousness.

The discipline of Dialogue explores a going beyond present knowing. When we operate from thought we function out of memory. Dialogue catalyzes a shift from thought into thinking; from knower to learner, from assuming we know to an exploration of the unknown. The discipline of Dialogue frees our thinking from the bounds of thought both personal and collective.

Inquiring into how we create meaning enables us to see the incoherence of thought as a system. Creating a state of coherent thinking means, our thoughts hang together harmoniously with each other and our environment. Bohm described coherent thought like a laser. A laser has tremendous power that incoherent light does not have. When our thinking is coherent we can focus it effectively, rather than have our thought energy dissipated by conflict, both internal and external. The power of a group of people who can think together has excitement and power. In the spirit of Dialogue we seek incoherent thinking to reconcile the incoherence instead of reactively defending it.

As we notice our propensity to repeat habituated thoughts, feelings and actions, we can infer things about the system of thought at play. By doing so we open the door to creating new operating systems. We open possibilities to operate in present thinking, instead of past participles, possibilities to operate beyond systems. If we are aware of thought as a system, we can create new solutions rather than succumb by default to thought structures that are no longer current or effective.

The power of thought influences how we create our experience of reality. When it is totally unconscious, we end up victims to our thought processes. We are not aware of how programmed we are genetically, socially, and neurologically into patterns of thought and perception, though we may think very well, even creatively within our system of thought. Unaware of the programming, it

controls the meaning we make. Seeing through thought as a system is the doorway to freedom.

Dialogue, learning how to think coherently as well as learning think together and talk together with others, allows the collective creative power of intelligence to function. Collective intelligence functions beyond the power of the individual members of the pool. Open inquiry unfolds the power of collective intelligence.

Dialogue illuminates the limitations of incoherent thought. It enhances awareness and dissolves the limitations of habitual thought patterns. The new perception created generates seeing and thinking in new ways, individually and as a society. Community implies the product of an ongoing process of communication.

Social life is communication. The quality of our lives together echoes the quality of our communication. As a developing society we seek a way of talking together that supersedes the individual, without diminishing the individual. A healthy culture creates ritual and support to allow for both individual growth and the individual's contribution to the growth and understanding of the tribe. Connecting and maintaining the linkages between each sacred individual and a sacred whole requires intention.

Historical Perspective

Every culture and society engages in communication. Without communication neither exists. From around the globe, groups and cultures have brought and continue to bring different dialogic proficiencies. The collection of conversational styles and practices echo the mindsets that created them. The Quakers have a tradition of speaking when the spirit moves you. Greek philosophers spent their leisure on their porches and endlessly discussed the nature of reality. Both Buddhist scholars and students of the Torah use a similar method. Though styled more as discussion and debate, the spirit and essential purpose of these exercises was dialogic, focused toward learning and discernment rather than the defense of a fixed attitude.

Native Americans have the tradition of the talking stick. An object was simply passed around the circle. The holder spoke until finished. The others yielded the floor and gave their attention. No one owned the gavel. The power of meaning flowed, recognized as a shared creation. The circle created the container of communication.

Primitive cultures, though lacking modern verbal refinements, often understood intuitively about people living together. They knew that we exist inter-dependently. They lived from the experience, as distinct from the thought, that

we are all part of the whole and that we exist in relationship to each other and the whole.

In the modern world, technologically connected as we are, people commonly feel isolated from each other. We have lost our rituals for our connection to the earth and from our own process of thought. We pay taxes into a common pool. Shouldn't we be contributing to the positive aspects of human connection?

Aikido

As Dialogue focuses in the verbal realm, Aikido opens an inquiry into the mystery through movement, through the somatic and kinesthetic realms. Aikido is a modern martial art developed in Japan during the twentieth century. Though based on ancient martial arts dating back to the 15th century, Aikido is a new and unique form. The founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba, also called O Sensei meaning great teacher, lived from 1883 to 1969.

Aikido translates as, "the way (do) of harmony (Ai) with the spirit/energy (Ki) of the universe." The power of harmony resolves conflict and creates maximum effectiveness through harmonious relationship. Inner harmony echoing in a harmonious relationship with the universe is the aim of the practice of Aikido. We lose energy to resistance. Aikido is a way of development, of bringing our experience and action into harmony with the whole of creation. Through a unified resolution of seemingly opposing forces energy becomes an available resource for creativity.

We create harmony internally by centering, by unifying mind, body and spirit by connecting the attention with bodily felt experience. When the aspects of our being operate in harmony, we consonantly operate in harmony with our outer environment.

In the physical practice one partner, called uke - one who falls, supplies the energy in the form of an attack that represents any change or pressure. The other person, called nage - one who throws, responds by joining their energy and motion into a harmonious relationship with that of the attacker. Once they have joined with uke, they can begin to lead uke's energy and motion. The interaction usually results in a throw or a pin. These can be dramatic or painful but are designed to neutralize not damage the receiver. Aikido's spirit is that of loving protection. The physical practice shows a visible form of the principles. They apply equally in the invisible and the divine realms.

When mind, body and spirit unify a centered grounded state is created producing presence in the moment. Presence simplifies experience and creatively generates infinite possibilities. Experience without focus must respond to circumstance. The difference in power between a unified and

fragmented state can be easily confirmed on the Aikido mat in physical practice.

My Aikido instructor Sensei Robert Nadeau, studied with O Sensei the founder of the art. Bob said O Sensei would come into the dojo on occasion and not execute a throw very well. Then he'd step back and do his process of Aikido — chant, meditate, unify mind, body and spirit — and he'd come back out and the attacker would go down. Sometimes he'd deepen the process another notch, and hit a level where he wouldn't touch them physically and they would fly. Bob also said the first time O Sensei threw him, he didn't feel anything till he hit the ground.

O Sensei would go through a process, a shift of identity. It wasn't that he would go off to the side and learn new techniques. The ability to tap the power of the universe relates to the identification of the self. O Sensei made a distinction between 'Ueshiba of Aikido' the master, and 'this old man,' who would muff techniques and would have bad moments on the mat. Each was a different identity, a different domain. People get lost in their study of mastery. They think the old identity is going to get strong; they think this frightened little person is going to gain power. If you want to get power, you are in an entirely different domain than when you are power.

Bob said it was incomprehensible watching O Sensei handle four or five black belts. Here was a four foot eleven, eighty year old man and he's throwing guys across the room like they were nothing! Then he would get off the mat and bump into a wall. At first Bob kept seeing the same person, but he began to realize that O Sensei was saying, "It's not the same person. 'This old man' is not 'Ueshiba of Aikido'. I've aligned a new relationship with energy. "I've shifted to another domain of identity when Aikido shows up." The intention to shift state whether we practice Aikido or Dialogue is meltdown of an isolated identity to the sense of connectedness with all of creation. Either we reinforce and rigidify a separated individual, or operate as part of a larger participation.

Power means one thing to someone beginning their study, someone who doesn't understand how they fit into the whole. Power means something altogether different to someone who feels their relationship to and participation in the universe and the forces that sustain and transform it.

Often when people begin to study personal mastery, they think their familiar identity is going to get power. Aiki-Dialogue transforms the idea that, you as a separate entity are going to get power, into the realization that all of creation is

nothing but power. As a separated entity, we cannot see how the energy of our lives flows within a larger system.

“They want heaven, they don’t realize they are heaven.

**One who understands the secret of Aikido has the universe within
themselves and can say I am the universe.**

**When you bow deeply to the universe it bows back; when you call
out the name of the divine it echoes inside of you.”**

O Sensei

“Ask and you shall receive; knock and it shall be opened unto you.”

Aikido and the martial arts, yoga, zen and meditation, science and religion, all paths potentially open doorways to explore the mystery of the divine. Our relationship to the divine has implications regarding the creation of our lives individually and collectively. As we change our alignment to the energies that source life possibilities open. If we oppose these forces their power holds us captive. If we fail to move with change we are condemned to lives of pressure and resistance instead of peace and harmony.

When we identify as connected to the Universal energy, we think, speak and act differently than from our limited identity. Harmonizing with the energy flows of life uses less energy than resistance. Once you’re in the declaration that you are more than who you seem to be, the universe starts to explore that postulate - to open, to unfold. Whatever you think is true becomes your truth.

Warrior’s training generates a quality of spirit, a willingness to face fear. Some people cover their fear with aggression. This is the world of win-lose. Castaneda relays the teaching of Don Juan that to an ordinary man everything is either a blessing or a curse, whereas to a warrior everything is a challenge. Aikido is based on the oneness of creation. We can’t see where the movement will take us, while we’re in our fear. If we continue moving into a positive flowing experience, resolution comes about naturally. It’s inevitable. It’s the law of the universe.

“When an enemy tries to fight with me the universe itself, he has to break the harmony of the universe. Hence, at the moment he has the mind to fight with me he is already defeated. There exists no measure of time - fast or slow.”

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

Aiki-Dialogue - A Path of Spiritual Inquiry

Verbal communication is energy. Both follow common laws. We exist within a universal field of energy. A state that identifies with the totality, rather than the fragments, creates meaning that resonates harmoniously with the whole of creation as would a coherent system of thought.

Aikido and Dialogue teach authenticity and exploration as an alternative to self-limiting, defensive reactivity. The best defense is a good offense. Our best proactive strategy is to be who we are, positively and authentically, rather than defending against change or treating new information as an assault on our fixed position. Authenticity in relation to change produces a natural harmonious blend of the personal and the universal.

We all face change whether relational, professional or financial. We are all aging and facing the body's changes. Aiki-Dialogue implies a warrior's path of spiritual inquiry. Rather than seeing change as either a blessing or a curse it unfolds as an opportunity to create new meaning. Aikido develops the strength, courage and the willingness to blend with the flow of unfolding change. Dialogue develops a spirit of inquiry and self-reflexivity. Without both, 1) the willingness to blend 2) with the spirit of inquiry - new data, new energy and the ongoing force of change are avoided, resisted, discredited or subsumed to serve our existing order of meaning.

Aikido and Dialogue are like two paths up a mountain that come to the same peak. Aikido emphasizes the unification of mind and body. Dialogue develops the coherence of thought and action. Like Aikido, Dialogue can be seen as more than its practice. It is a combined study of intention and effective action, a way of life, a way of being. The term, “Aiki-Dialogue” describes the creation of a state of awareness that expresses the intention of a unified field of being. Aiki-Dialogue implies development of the aspects of being - mind, body, spirit - as a unified whole. In Aiki-Dialogue the unified field of being produces a unified field of meaning.

We choose to look at both systems of study in dynamic interaction. In a sense, Aikido is physical Dialogue and Dialogue is verbal Aikido. Aikido changes

life from a struggle to a dance; Dialogue transforms fixed thinking into an inquiry.

We approach Dialogic practice in the same spirit as we approach the study of Aikido. In Aiki-Dialogue we seek to communicate verbally from the same state, the same depth of presence, unified in mind, body and spirit, we apply on the Aikido mat for physical technique. We use what we learn in the physical realm to create listening with a deepening sensing and total attention. Aiki-Dialogue explores allowing as yet unformed meaning to form, of itself, in the flow between us.

A whole being, sharing meaning with someone else who is centered present and attentive to habitual and defensive reactions, communicates new possibilities. A unified state of being creates dialogue free of dominance by the intellect, emotions or any of the parts over the whole. The loss of access to any domain - body, mind, spirit - fragments and diminishes the power of the whole. Attention to feeling connects all domains into unified presence. Coherence enhances capability.

The techniques are not the art. Knowing the techniques of Dialogue, of inquiring, of suspension, not agreeing or disagreeing, like knowing the techniques of Aikido, is not the end of the study. The techniques only guide the beginning of the exploration. When we find ourselves repeating learned technical form, what is known must be sacrificed to new learning.

Caution on the use of technology –

Techniques are not helpful unless they come from a consciousness where we are connected with the divine energy in ourselves, and that energy in another

- Marshall Rosenberg, founder of NVC.org

In Dialogue it is a red flag when we hear ourselves repeating a theme over and over. The theme may be appropriate but are we conscious or robotic? Are we attending to our state of attention? The study pushes the edge of the envelope of awareness. Art recycles the known into new exploration.

We tend to discount what we don't understand. Structures of thought from the past block our ability to value new data intelligently. We severely limit possibility when we value new information based only on what we know. We

must find a creative relationship to the fact that we do not know and cannot. We can only extend the limits of our understanding.

When the unified energies of a system join together, something new starts to form, a new creation, the unfolding of creation itself. The creation of new life can only come out of unification. Male and female unite to create life, neither one can do it by themselves and both are changed in the process. When mind, body and spirit unify, harmonious power unfolds.

In both Aikido and Dialogue, we accept and support our partners in being who they are. In Dialogue, we include each other's meaning in the pool of meaning. On the Aikido mat, we blend with our partner's energy and movement. Aikido and Dialogue come alive when the known and the unknown are brought together, when the flow of meaning moves in harmonious relationship to the universal Ki.

The discipline of Dialogue studies suspending our assumptions. Aikido releases the postures that form our state of being. By doing so we open a door. Without the discipline of awareness and the self-reflexivity it engenders, most of us act on our assumptions as if they were facts. We hold to our beliefs with religious fervor though we could rarely prove them. We hold to our state of tension as if it were precious. To go beyond our limited thinking, seeing the whole as it is, requires letting go of our holding patterns and questioning our cherished beliefs. We defend our beliefs them under the guise of faith. If we're secure in our faith why fear challenging views and opinions.

Staying in inquiry, open to the whole, instead of defending beliefs requires a state of continuous courage. When we enter, full body, mind and spirit, into the question of what is true, courage includes facts that seem inconvenient to what we assume to be true. We either face our fear of the vastness of the universe or live in resistance and denial. We must be open to change and the unfolding. To do otherwise would be akin to trying to stop the planets in their orbits or the burning of the sun.

We need both courage and skills to negotiate the exponential rate of unpredictability the future brings us. A culture of freedom to inquire creates the ground for learning. Creating that freedom of inquiry is the challenge we face both within ourselves and in our commonly held beliefs, descriptions and social institutions

Dialogue Versus Equifinality

Based on past experience, we behave a certain way and we think we know what to expect in the next experience. If the last relationship was painful, we

will likely take a protective approach as we enter the next relationship. Then, we experience any relationship through our filter based on past relationships instead of being open to experience the new relationship as it is. Our power diminishes dramatically when we fail to see our set, (how we enter a situation, the attitude and expectations we bring) as an active factor participating in creating the outcome.

The formations of our culture are so ancient that we cannot see them and so recent we haven't yet noticed they exist. Culture includes unseen effects of mostly unspoken agreements that guide how we will think, feel and act. How many different overlays are there? Family, national, the old country, religious, political, social, work group, peer group, close friends . . . all vying for a position of value.

We may be aware other people are manipulated through propaganda or influenced by social pressure. Most of us prefer to think we are not. We like to think we are independent thinkers creating our own thoughts, unaffected by any of this. Our thought patterns have been absorbed, without our knowing it. That is in part why the effects of our system of thought can be so insidious.

We are virtually created by the thought structures of our time in our culture. (I say virtually because it is mutable. The being is a construct of the imagination.) The collective mind sustains culture. We cannot affect thought at its core, thinking we create our thought ourselves. Seeing our thinking forming as part of a whole system of thought develops conscious influence. We are freer through seeing our limitations.

In our consulting work, we have had a unique opportunity working in start-up companies; to see how quickly old systems reappear. Although in a start-up there is not yet an established culture, the people in the start-ups usually come out of other companies. Immediately their cultural assumptions from previous experiences re-appear. Even given a new start, old patterns of thought reassert themselves. This is the meaning of equifinality. Insanity has been defined as doing the same thing over and over and expecting the results to be different.

Equifinality means, in the end it all come out the same. Even when we have an opportunity for a new beginning we generally recreate a situation of similar quality. We divorce someone or quit a job only to find similar problems in the next experience. The system may change but without conscious attention the structure of thought and what we value or hold true, how we form meaning remains mostly the same. We might wish for relevation, but mostly it is repetition.

Thought exists as a system on both the personal and collective level. At both levels, without enough energy, creativity defaults to repeating past meaning instead of exploring what could be learned. How often does anyone attempt intervention, whether as a consultant to a company, a parent trying to teach a child or any of us trying to change a friend or our spouse, even ourselves, only to have it fail or reinforce the problem.

Einstein said, “We will not solve a problem from the same level of thought that created it.” Practice, in freedom from the known, must intentionally expand beyond our beliefs about reality. If we look we can see thought's limitations. Look but don't do anything too quickly. Because our first reaction tends to come from the same mindset we are trying to correct.

We are interested in enlightenment, increasing the light of perception. When there is more light people see things previously unnoticed. New possibilities open. Practices of awareness to explore thought structures and mastery of state affect our conscious participation in the creation of meaning. Under pressure, stress reactions and repeating known patterns happen by default. Relaxation, release, opening to the unknown, must be practiced intentionally. Relaxing the fixed level of tension in both the muscles and structures of thought require zanshin, ongoing attention to practice. Like breathing, once in the morning is not enough.

“Thought observed is thought changed.” David Bohm

“You can learn a lot just by watching.” Yogi Berra

Through practice we learn to unify the seemingly diverse aspects of our beings. Connecting mind, body and spirit into a single field functioning with unified intention is the path to power in the creation of the life we want to live. The founder of Aikido described it as completing our bestowed mission. The principles and teachings of Aikido and Dialogue re-enforce each other to give us the power to create meaning in harmony with our human and divine natures.

Dialogue: How Do You Do It

Dialogue is a process for learning. Once we experience the spirit of Dialogue any number of people can engage in it. We can maintain the spirit of Dialogue alone, though with a group to reflect our thinking back to us, it is easier to see thought as a system.

I don't see a limit to the exploration. The inquiry of Dialogue extends to infinity but the first step in the journey begins by simply intending the exploration. (I). Induction - invite a group of people to think and talk together. (II). Inquiry - ask what interests you. (III). Relevation - follow the exploration without having to know where it is going or why. Balance attention on both the process of how we speak as well as the content of what we say.

Bill Issacs founder of DIA-LOGOS, and the M.I.T. Dialogue Project, identified three simple guidelines for Dialogue to help people begin the process. Though a skilled facilitator can be of great value, these guidelines can help people come together simply without the need of an expert or high priest. The three simple guidelines he differentiated are: Suspension of Assumptions, Collegiality and Facilitation. we offer these simple definitions of the terms.

- **Suspension of Assumptions:** We hold our assumptions up to scrutiny to see beyond them and open the space for new perceptions. If we can talk openly and challenge our assumptions with out threat or defensiveness, we can explore together the way we hold fixed positions and defend them without noticing we are doing so. Suspension in our usage does not mean stopping. It implies hanging out our assumptions to make them visible for further inquiry.
- **Collegiality:** We hold each other as colleagues. We gather to create a learning environment rather than engage in debate. Pay attention to the tone of your encounter. If you sense learning diminishing and being right increasing, the awareness can help you return to a more Dialogic tone. We don't want animosity nor do we want over-politeness. What we want is authenticity and spontaneity in a spirit of learning together.
- **Facilitation:** We use facilitation to move the tone of the dialogue to one free from self-protective reservations and barriers and to maintain a willingness to look at and be coached on our process. Facilitation simply means we share openly how we see the process. To do so we must pay attention to the tone of our communication and the assumptions contained in our thought process. Otherwise we get lost in the content and the conversation defaults into discussion, even if it is a friendly or creative one.

A Collection of Definitions

The following are a collection of definitions gathered from a series of sessions:

Aiki-Dialogue develops an intense energy of listening to oneself and others speak what elevates as most essential and true at each moment.

Aiki-Dialogue studies how we make meaning and the larger implications of human meaning and valuing.

Aiki-Dialogue shares meaning through words, thought and through disciplined attention.

Aiki-Dialogue heightens awareness of our thought processes.

Aiki-Dialogue disciplines attention to experience thinking beyond opinions and assumptions.

Aiki-Dialogue expresses the forming of one's deepest and most immediate experiencing.

Aiki-Dialogue explores the inter-play between perception and meaning.

Aiki-Dialogue illuminates and frees one from self-protective reservations and barriers.

Aiki-Dialogue dissolves what is known and opens the door to not knowing.

Aiki-Dialogue differentiates fragmented awareness vs. awareness of the whole.

Aiki-Dialogue practices speaking from a state of mind - body unity.

Aiki-Dialogue opens to a larger pool, to being informed by a larger process.

Aiki-Dialogue develops and expresses a reverie, a sense of reverence for the whole.

Aiki-Dialogue enhances thinking as distinct from thought.

Aiki-Dialogue explores direct experiencing and continual inquiry versus accepting unquestioned, old concepts and descriptions.

Aiki-Dialogue enables dissolving the glue that rigidifies the building blocks of our personalities to allow a more consciously created human experience.

Dialogue is an: Opening
Gathering
Floating
Sensing the whole
Connection
Transformation
Change
Inquiry
Release
Koaning Together
Unfolding
Electrical Currant of Meaning
Anarchy
Experiential Paradigm Shift
Discipline of awareness / Yoga of Consciousness
Social Meditation
Collective Intelligence
Synergy - the whole is greater than the sum of its parts
Channeling - tapping into universal intelligence
Attuning to the Whole
Field Activism - facilitates a shift in the field
Council Process - self organizing open flow of meaning
“Listening to the whisperings”
From On Dialogue

"Our thought is incoherent,
when it does not produce what we intend."

"The purpose if there can be said to be one,
might be stated as;
we come together to learn to talk together
and to think together."

"Shared meaning is the basis of culture
We absorb a great deal of that meaning
unconsciously at the tacit level."

" an 'intense energy' of listening 'freedom from self protective reservations and barriers"

"a stream of meaning flowing among and through and between us; . . . out of which will emerge some - **new understanding.**"

"It's something creative. And this shared meaning is the glue' or cement' that holds people and societies together."

"We are not playing a game against each other but with each other. In a Dialogue everybody wins."

David Bohm, *On Dialogue*

II.

Aiki-Dialogue

in

Three

Easy Lessons

Aiki-Dialogue In Three Easy Lessons In One Easy Page

I.

Induction

The focus of attention

Presence / Rhythm

Alignment

Feel where you are

II.

Inquiry

The recognition of attraction

Wonder / Harmony

Adaptability / Non-resistance

Harmonious relationship

III.

Inspiration

Relevation of the whisperings

Creativity / Melody

Unfolding Meaning

Share who you are

Aiki-Dialogue In Three Easy Lessons

I. Induction - The focus of attention

The first stage of the Aiki-Dialogue process begins with deepening each individual's state of presence to align a common center. The practice of *feeling where you are* induces a state of authenticity and spontaneity. The practice develops the ability to include somatic awareness and its intelligence, while functioning in the mental and verbal domains. A unified field of awareness expands through each individual and through the whole of the group.

Induction happens in a group through a magnetic pulse as everyone's attention focuses together. Induction includes everything that has led to the opening moments of Dialogue, from the first idea to the moments as the circle gathers and separate people become a focused group. Induction is comparable to that moment when everyone in a choir is warming up and at the conductor's cue; they all come together as one sound.

The first principle includes feeling where you are mentally, emotionally and spiritually. *Feel where you are* tight or in resistance to the flow of meaning through the group. *Feel where you are* relaxed or where the energy is flowing freely. Feel where you are in space, feel where you are in relationship to other people. *Feel where you are* in relationship to the rhythm of the group and each member as a representative of the whole.

Induction brings us into larger and subtler dimensions, feeling relationship to the group and to the whole Creation. Focusing our unified attention makes it possible to sense with our combined intelligence and perceive beyond our individual limitations.

You Can't Get There From Not Here

PRESENCE/RHYTHM/FEEL/SENSE

Aiki-Dialogue In Three Easy Lessons

II. Inquiry The recognition of attraction

The second stage of Aiki-Dialogue is each individual seeking the perception that attracts the greatest interest and creating a field of inquiry. *Inquiry* implies engaged non-resistance, wonder moving in confluence with experience. Accept your feelings and thoughts and those of others. Learning means adapting to change by aligning with meaning as it unfolds.

Any resistance you bring into a situation increases resistance. Resistance makes the subtle whisperings of the unknown difficult to hear. The essence of Aikido is non-resistance. In Aikido the attack represents the force of change. Don't resist, staying on the line of the attack opposing the energy, either being pushed or pushing back against. In Dialogue do not resist another's meaning or yield to it. In Dialogue non-resistance means allowing wonder. Inquiry does not oppose anyone's description. Aiki spirit enters in & and joins with the attacker's direction and energy. Emotionally *inquiry* creates *harmonious relationship*. Excitement, anger, frustration, enthusiasm, sadness, enjoyment arise. Accept the feeling and receive it as guidance. Aiki-Dialogue expands our understanding by including everyone else's.

If another person reacts negatively to a suggestion, don't oppose their reaction or try to convince them. Work with them to understand the expanding implications. Enter into an inquiry together. Use their input as energy to generate new meaning.

Fixed in opinions learning stops. Dogmatic thought, without inquiry generates an attitude of defensiveness and right and wrong, rather than one of learning. It captures attention rather than freeing it. *Inquiry* positions us to learn together creatively. When energy is not lost to friction or opposition, it frees our awareness. All our attention can be focused on generating solutions and positive action. Through inquiry the doorway opens to the third principle -- *relevation*.

The enemy of truth is not lies. It is convictions.

LISTEN/HARMONIZE/BLEND/LEARN

Aiki-Dialogue In Three Easy Lessons

III. Inspiration Relevation of the whisperings

The third stage of the Aiki-Dialogue process is sensing unfolding meaning. As we deepen our inquiry what is relevant elevates into consciousness. Each individual speaks their truth of the moment into a larger pool of meaning. Each of us has a unique view of the world. Each of us brings something special to share. When everyone's contribution is valued a richer flow of meaning appears. Make your contribution.

The first two stages engender the third. The group must be: (1) in a self-aware, self-reflexive state of focused attention, present, centered and grounded; and (2) in a state of inquiry, operating in confluence with the diversity of meaning, in harmony with the mystery. Without resistance or defensiveness, all energy can be focused on developing meaning that encompasses and expands the whole of knowledge.

Most people want to jump to the third step without attending to the first two. When you operate from a state of conscious awareness and non-resistance, you contribute authenticity and spontaneity. You make your own meaning and thereby a contribution of unique value. No one else hears the whisperings quite the same. Once we are present and full of wonder about the reality of the moment we open the possibility to lead change, to think, speak and act in new ways. *Feel where you are*, as a group, create an *inquiring harmonious relationship* with the unknown, and *share who you are* by allowing your experience to relevelate.

CREATE/CONTRIBUTE/LEAD

Dialogue

I. Induction

Induction Feel where you are

Induction

THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION

Induction is similar to the moment when everyone in a choir is warming up and the conductor raises their baton and the group of individual voices comes together as one. Induction describes the centering of attention that brings a person to a state of unified focus. The process implies coming into a focused state of attention, where body/mind/spirit function as an integrated, unified field of being. It describes a shift from distracted and fragmented awareness to a state of clarity, focus and heightened awareness. Induction brings a group to a state of cohesive attuned attention that takes the focus of our attention and intelligence beyond an expression of meaning, into a collective reflection of meaning. Induction means leaving the world as you know it and surrendering into something not yet known.

A melody can induce a certain mood. A memory can induce feelings that include physiological changes in hormones and electro-chemical signals. Induction identifies a process that transforms who we are. It changes the way we think and act. Like refining the focus of a magnifying glass to start a fire, attention can be focused opening the possibility to function at a peak operating state. How does an individual, group or culture induce its full focused state of power or function from a larger unified collective state?

The simple process of breathing consciously shifts our state of awareness. So does feeling, relaxing, opening and focusing our attention into the moment. Shifting states of awareness creates a new selection of data points creating a new description of the world. By shifting what we focus our attention on, reality changes. By shifting attention, we change experience.

Induction can begin as simply as the first time one person invites another to open a space for dialogue. It matters little whether they set a time in the future or begin to speak immediately. The way we come together sets the tone of the dialogue. Induction is the attraction of someone who will listen and consider.

The process of induction if honored allows everyone to enter freely. When a group of individuals comes together energy builds. Subtle resistance naturally occurs as each individual gives up some degree of sovereignty to become part of a larger intelligence. Resistance creates a tentative entry into collective

identity and inquiry. It is a process. Harmonize with it. People in a group automatically sense for the subtle clues about what the group expects. Tension whether forced or discounted affects the space and the quality of the Dialogue.

The depth and flow of meaning we share pivots on the level of respect and inclusion. Both stages, of (1) getting present with one's self, and (2) merging with the feeling of the group, enhance the Dialogue. If we relax, blend with and allow the unfolding process, the individual and group meanings form together effortlessly. There is a natural timing to the unfolding of the Dialogue.

The pulse of developing interest draws us together. The attention of the individuals connects with the whole group. There is almost always a little flurry of activity as the pull of induction increases. Someone may speak to give voice to coalescing the group, but no one controls the energy. Rather we align to the energy and give space and time for it to unfold.

The power of collective intelligence supersedes what an individual can do alone. A dialogue group can be like a band playing together. Playing alone is one thing, but another thing happens when a group of musicians comes together and hits the groove. Though as people, we have many places of resonance, we are incredibly different. The differences in meaning create tensions like notes played together. The differences can create beautiful and haunting harmonies or cacophony and dissonance. Listening is the key to playing music, sharing Dialogue and a harmonious life.

We run into tensions in every facet of life's relationships. In most ordinary conversation tensions are avoided, resisted, misunderstood, left undifferentiated, or "worked out". In music, tensions are explored for new harmonies. In Dialogue they are explored for new meaning. Defensiveness is merely a red flag signaling the need for suspension and exploration. In Dialogue we hold sacred, that nothing is sacred. We can talk about anything.

Maya / Illusion / Re-presentation

There was an experiment with a primitive tribe. They had not learned to see movies. All they saw was light on a screen. We learn to see. We learn some ways of seeing but not others. The problem, for most of us, is that as soon as we see energy as an object, it ceases to be dynamic. What we see becomes a thing. We don't see light on a screen; it becomes a movie. Once the world becomes things instead of flows and fields of energy the world changes forever. Our descriptions and meaning become fixed.

Our descriptions of the world develop over time in conversations with others. In the same way we train ourselves to walk, we train the eyes to see and we train the mind to perceive in pre-determined ways. We interact with our environment, social and physical, based on our descriptions. We learn certain functional ways of connecting the dots - the points of awareness that form an individual's description.

As soon as we see a person in a certain way, we lock them into a stereotype: "so and so is nice (or not), so and so is smart (or not)." We tell ourselves what we see based on what we know. If someone we like shows poor judgment we say they were having a bad day. If someone we don't like does the same thing, it confirms our perception of them. Then we believe it. That is where we get into trouble. We hold similar rigid descriptions of ourselves and limit what we see as possible. The rigidity of perception, like the earth's gravity, can be hard to escape.

We learn to identify objects. We fail to understand that what we recognize is a re-presentation by the sense of sight. Light is turned into bio-electrical energy that is relayed to the brain. The image we form in the brain is scanned against what we know, other familiar images. The representation of experience is translated into meaning based on the connections made assessing past experiences and descriptions. We think we see reality (a movie). We see meaning we have created out of thought as a system (light on a screen).

The Hindus speak of the Dance of Maya, the dance of illusion. We live in the illusion that perception is real, that matter is solid, that we are separate. The quantum, the energy potential, 'appears' as a particle and produces the illusion of solid matter. We train our eyes to see matter and discount the less tangible, less visible experience of energy. Materialism implies losing touch with the divine power of creation and accepting matter as the basis of reality. We know the mystery exists but we either avoid it or default, into a fundamentalist approach to religion without inquiry, or science without spiritual awakening to divine energies because we cannot measure them.

'In the East,' there is a concept of an energy force that creates, permeates and sustains the unfolding of life and creation. Different cultures call it by different names. In Japanese they call it 'Ki'. Ki' means energy, the unifying and activating principle of existence. Through this window everything manifests out of universal 'Ki'. 'Ai' means harmony. Ai-ki implies harmonizing our lives with the energy unifying and activating everything. Everything is related. Everything is connected to everything. The word universe means the one that is all, one system in which everything participates.

The transaction between energy and perception creates what we experience as the formation of reality. Ancient Hindu teachings pointed to the same unity of observer as one system with the observed. David Bohm described fragmentation in thought as the cause of our problems, the inability to see and live from the coherence of one system. He taught about incoherent light being brought to coherence in the study of lasers and the implications this study has for thinking. Coherent thought has power unimaginable to one whose thought is incoherent.

The incoherence of the struggle in Bosnia, is one representation of the incoherence of the way that we humanoids act. We pick it because of our involvement there. We could pick almost any human conflict; from any couple to any national or religious struggle. In Bosnia, the economy was destroyed and the country was mined. The warlords made money, but most of the people who engaged in the conflict only ruined each other's lives and their own in the process.

In both Bosnia and Cyprus people of different ethnic backgrounds lived together for decades. Suddenly neighbors turned on each other in the most violent abuses. Bosnia may seem less important to most of us because we're not in the Balkans. And, it may not be at this minute, that we are going to do a lot about Bosnia. But, the same dynamic of fragmentation, at play in every world conflict, is going on in our own system, and we can do something about that.

When our thoughts are fragmented, they conflict with each other. Then all our energy forms thought out of a conflicted modality. Resistance increases fragmentation. As water flows downhill impeded only by fixed obstacles, once we see the incoherence of thought, thinking organizes meaning into coherence, impeded only by fixed thoughts.

Dialogue allows us to raise the light of awareness on the incoherence of thought as a system. Opening our inquiry makes it possible to see, disassemble and re-connect our patterns of meaning. Dialogue with others, commonly focused, illuminates the limitations of incoherent thought. Dialogue uses our collective intelligence to creatively reassemble the data points in a coherent and empowering manner.

When we awaken to our experience, creativity flows. The shift is easily accomplished. Breathe and feel, relax and allow. The difficulty is maintaining the attention in a constant ongoing flow. The concept of zanshin means continually connecting the whole of our attention to the total situation. Like

any ideal, zanshin is the victory a spiritual warrior aspires to, no matter how the battle looks at the moment

Presence

The quality of attention unfolds from our state of presence. Dialogue develops and expresses a reverie, a reverence for the whole. The ongoing question regards whether we will function out of intention or default. Will we repeat established design or intentionally, attentively, creatively and courageously allow evolving form to emerge?

We deepen and enrich Dialogue through an ongoing attention to the inter-play between perception and meaning. Dialogue unfolds the process of meaning, of consciously forming one's deepest and most immediate experiencing through words. The study of meaning is difficult because we study meaning through making meaning. Seeing the limits of our system of thought is difficult because we look at our system of thought through our system of thought. The process affects itself as it happens. Dialogue includes noticing how language not only describes but also forms experience.

The physical practice of Aikido enriches the Dialogic study. Because Aikido gives such immediate and tangible somatic feedback to our state of presence, the training develops an awareness that informs the Dialogue. Through physical feedback we can develop a centered unified state that becomes the basis of our state of being for Dialogue.

Presence in the Dialogue, developed through Aikido practice, transforms operating as a fragmented being with fragmented thought, to a an aligned state. Presence means mind, body and spirit are all present in the here and now. The ability to unify mind, body and spirit produces coherence with the larger universe. A unified field of awareness perceives thought in its relationship to the field of perception. Zanshin, listening, ongoing attention creates the ability to adjust to the changes in life's energy each instant. You can't get there from not here!

“Yesterdays technique won't be good enough today and today's technique won't be good enough tomorrow.

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

Get present with whatever is going on. Pay attention to what you are feeling. Connecting with experience engenders a shift. Resistance to feeling holds thought locked into a fixed position. As soon as you open to feeling, inevitably the energy of feeling flows. Feeling dissolves history. Feeling gives birth to the movement of life as an ongoing flow.

There are stories of South American tribes who took power plants - psychedelics- and the spirits of the plants would speak to them and teach them about their healing properties. Those people are dialoguing at a level that most 'civilized' minds might have a hard time conceiving. Assumptions that we don't see prohibit us from listening to a plant.

The ability to explore, learn and grow depends directly on our state of being. Because the state of being decides what will be valued enough to even be considered in the equation.

Honest Feedback

Wouldn't you rather have someone speak to you, regarding a difference with you, than to someone else about you? If all we do is talk about someone else, it only engenders bad feelings. Look at the positive when you receive negative feedback. Reframe the critique as a gift. You may not appreciate what they are telling you but at least there can be a sense of gratitude that they are telling you not someone else about you. Perhaps, you wish they would be gentler or more respectful by your definition, but at least they are here telling you instead of talking negatively to someone else about you.

We have facilitated Dialogues in situations where people weren't getting along, where the lack of harmony was palpable. When we talked about it in a Dialogic mode, learning took place. As the understanding grew, the situation and relationships got better than before we got into the controversy. It is a gift when someone will honestly say what they have on their mind. Once the Dialogue begins peaceful reconciliation can result from the exploration. When we talk with each other, more importantly when we listen, there is an increase in understanding and acceptance. Even difficult issues, can find unexpected resolution.

II. Inquiry

Inquiry

Harmonious relationship

Inquiry

THE SPIRIT OF ATTRACTION

What interests you? What do you wonder about? Wonder questions valuing and values questioning. What are the questions that could change your life?

Inquiry brings the attention of an individual or group into the spirit of exploration. Inquiry dissolves the boundaries of the known and expresses the natural desire for learning to go beyond itself. The process of inquiry connects us with what is possible and beyond. Learning can be as important to life as caloric food. Survival depends on learning. Learning develops life's possibilities. If we fail to explore the process of creating meaning we are stuck in the content of the meaning we have made. Inquiry implies stepping back from how we are seeing allowing us to view a larger field of potential. Developing the spirit of inquiry, life fills with wonder.

Dialogue inquires into the content of thought, what we know, and the epistemological process of thought, how we know what we know. By watching how we process information, we can follow tracings that teach us about thought and the shapes it takes. Once we see thought as a system we generate the possibility of transcending its limitations. Repeatedly questioning the habitual and reactive structures of our thoughts and the way we value information, makes visible how the structure of thought channels our thinking down familiar paths.

We tend to value data depending on whether it supports an established view, an established ordering of meaning. The personality values certain data for survival. It devalues and excludes other data. The structure of the personality may respond to the unknown with fear, inhibiting learning. The avoidance of inquiry gives fear and aggression increasing power. Fear restricts the spirit of wonder from expanding the boundaries of what we know. Without a spirit of inquiry, if new data threatens what we know or even more, who we think we are, we are more inclined to devalue the data rather than question the meaning we have assembled.

The development of inquiry, questioning the meaning we make of the input we receive, opens possibilities of re-significating, re-assigning value. As we begin to challenge and question perceptions, we look at things normally taken for granted as well as things ignored. A spirit of inquiry allows us to perceive with a different attention, tuned to notice new aspects and relationships and assemble new realities. Inquiry allows the influence of spirit.

The universe seems so vast and dynamic that it easily overwhelms us. As we approach the vastness and the ambiguity of the unknown, frightening though it may be, we can't help but want to peek over the edge into the infinite. Only in those moments does creative learning occur.

The Disturbance of Dialogue

New learning destabilizes how we give value to our lives. The ambiguity of going into what we don't know or understand can be both exciting and disturbing. When the structure of what we know, value and perceive begins to shift and dissolve the disturbance feels anywhere from uncomfortable to terrifying. Fear makes it seem easier to go back to what we know than willingly cross the shifting sands of learning in the quest for knowledge.

If we are going to seek the whole of creation, we have to let go of what we have. Nadeau Sensei said, "You have to put down the quart to pick up the half gallon." There's always that instant, when you let go of a smaller view, that you have nothing, when you are alone without ground in the vastness. It is necessary to let go of any size perception you hold to engage a larger one. Most people grab the quart again; they feel the need to hold onto something they know.

It is scary to be lost. People like to know. Entering the unknown takes and develops great personal power. Power is developed through intention. Ability is developed through practice. Handling the fear of ambiguity is a learned skill. The failure to exercise a skill, like failure to exercise a muscle will cause atrophy. Handling ambiguity is a necessary skill for an explorer.

The propensity to stay with what we know feels safe. That is how it felt to the fish that stayed in the water as the inland seas dried up. When the inland seas dried up there was a great risk in NOT exploring new environments. And make no mistake plenty of the ones who experimented with dry land didn't make it either. But we never learn without a willingness to enter into the unknown and face the ambiguity. We will never understand more about the universe or improve our relationship with the universe without inquiry and the knowledge it produces. Learning dies and knowledge turns stagnant if every time someone says, "How about if we check to see if the earth goes around the sun?" We say, "Lock him up. Shut him up!"

In a question of science the authority of a thousand is not worth the humble reasoning of a single individual.

Galileo Galilei

There are plenty of places in human experience where the smallness of the human mind asserts itself in rigid certainty. What are we afraid of? If it's true, it's true; if it's not, it's not. We are not just talking about fourteenth century Europe or people out there. We are talking about each and every one of us. These stories show our human propensities. It is not religion that is the problem. It is the dogmatic hold the system of thought exerts on people's thinking. Inquiry is about being open to new information within our own experience, within our systems of thought. It is an absence of power that creates fear, not the unknown. The universe is OK with it self.

Disturbance seems a natural component in changing our identity. In that process disturbance has value. Resistance does not. Resistance compounds the difficulty of change. If we flow with the disturbance it minimizes the discomfort. We are pretty comfortable in our familiar descriptions. We feel less comfortable around ideas that challenge rather than reinforce our assumptions. Until our understanding sees its own limitations, unless we challenge not only our assumptions but the system of thought thinking about those assumptions, we may change the content of our thinking but not the order of valuing, not the structure of thought.

We might talk together about the most exotic topics, but without being reflexive to the structure and fragmentation of thought, a new and meaningful understanding of value will not occur. The study has the possibility to disturb the structure of valuing, of meaning. It costs conscious attention and intention to think beyond structures formed from past thinking.

The creative process is not at war with the past. Creativity doesn't prohibit us from using known thought structures should we choose to do so. Inquiry seeks freedom from the usual tendency of thought to follow only known pathways. Inquiry seeks the best possible solution to a problem. The spirit of Dialogue, seeing thought as a system, gives us a doorway beyond our known pathways into the totality of creation.

The modern view of the individual emphasizes our selves as separate and distinct from one another. Individuation is an important part of our development. However development is incomplete if as individuals we fail to see our lives as part of a larger environment and culture. Without the biosphere, the universe, all the forces of creation - "we do not exist."

When we identify as one system with the unfolding situation, the power of harmony appears. Otherwise, it's something else: if you are a separate entity, unbalancing somebody else on the Aikido mat or convincing someone in a Dialogue session, it's the dance of Maya (illusion) not the dance of Shiva (the transformer), not the Universal Spirit unfolding itself. It's one identity against something else. A fragmentation of thought has taken place. When our identification is fragmented, we exist in conflict.

Aikido training teaches centering, in motion under pressure. Centering allows us a point of reference in an ever-changing sea of energy. When ambiguity is met with dynamic presence, it creates wonderful possibilities. The Chinese character for 'crisis implies - when danger meets opportunity.'

We are learning to communicate in a realm of subtle distinctions. Understand and develop a tolerance for the ambiguity. The disturbance and confusion signal change, unless we grab the quart again.

Diversity, Disturbance and Frustration

Dialogue doesn't always feel good. The unknown can be quite disturbing. We make the distinction between disturbance and frustration. Often people are frustrated by the disturbance. The disturbance is of great value it allows us to create new order. Frustration shows up too often as resistance to the disturbance. Often, people find the disturbance uncomfortable and the ambiguity frustrating. Learning to live through the disturbance and ambiguity opens the possibility for new ways of thinking. If we stay engaged, if we can tolerate the ambiguity, we learn. Change unfolds and the process comes to be experienced as exciting and fun. To let meaning unfold takes practice, discipline and courage. Learning is a developed skill.

Only through practice does the pupil make the material their own.

The I Ching

Diversity challenges established structures. If we want to see beyond the structures of our culture and system of thought, one of the most valuable gifts is someone who thinks differently. Whereas if we aren't interested in the incoherence of our thought, we try to avoid the disturbance of things that challenge our existing order. A fixed self-protective attitude makes it frustrating to talk to anyone who thinks differently.

As different as we are there is no solid line between any of us and the rest of the energy in the Universe. As carbon units, we are all part of one system. At the same time each one of us is unique. Our uniqueness fulfills the larger scheme of diversity. Open to diversity, celebrating it actually, learning and growth are natural, inevitable. Resistance not only keeps us from listening, it drains our energy further limiting our power to learn.

“Resistance is so stupid.”

Suzanne Spence

A group of fundamentalist golfers will unquestionably accept certain assumptions, for instance that golf is the best game ever created, that would not be accepted without question in a group of non-players. Imagine how differently the conversation would evolve if several anti-golfers were added to the group.

If we want learning and challenges to our thinking we should gather as diverse a group as possible. Bohm encourages getting a large enough circle together that you don't have group-think going on, enough people that they won't all politely live inside the descriptions they don't agree with. Imagine if a mixed group racially, in gender and profession; i.e. jazz musicians, steelworkers, a couple of middle aged white men, (and don't get me wrong some of my best friends are middle aged white men), some magicians, surgeons, salesman, revolutionaries, business leaders, some clowns and ok several fundamentalist golfers; came together to Dialogue, as distinct from a small homogeneous group. The differences in assumptions would clash immediately. They would, if they could listen to each other, have multiple opportunities to see how differently they form information into meaning.

Diversity adds to the power of the dialogue circle as it adds to the value of our lives together, if we are listening, connecting. The differences create the disturbance necessary to move us out of familiar perceptions. A diverse environment creates new ways of seeing, out of which something new can emerge.

Diversity causes us to challenge assumptions because people see the world differently. The disturbance is of great value as our solid thoughts come unglued and a doorway opens to the formless essence of being. Only if we are resistant to change do we find it frustrating. Only if we are insecure do we argue. Aiki-Dialogue transmutes the energy of frustration into the energy of learning and growth. Learn to enjoy the disturbance. It is a natural part of the induction and inquiry.

Open Dialogue

New answers can only come in a spirit of inquiry. Can we live here together where everyone's needs can be spoken into the whole and considered in relation to the whole? Dialogue can be a way of exploring the collective power of our intelligence. To open beyond what we know we must see our resistance for what it is, a thought, nothing at all.

The universal potential is infinite, the identity we recognize limited. When the unknown pressures our smaller identity, instead of indulging the conditioned response of fear train to open the exploration. Aiki-Dialogue trains non-resistance and inquiry instead of feeling like we need to control challenges to our perception. In a Dialogic approach discomfort is okay. Aiki means harmonizing with the energy of discomfort. Aiki-Dialogue trains developing a harmonious relationship with the inevitable tension that occurs in learning.

When a business team in development, questions their processes, the work can look like it is dissolving into chaos. When we question our values in life the same thing occurs. We resist inquiry even when what we produce is not what we intend. We are afraid to put down the quart to pick up the half gallon. So most of us continue with the same business structures, with the same organizational structures, with the same economic structures and the same system of thought even when we feel dissatisfied and frustrated with what they produce. Dissatisfaction signals possibility, if we are listening.

Chaos theory teaches that the size of our viewpoint is critical to understanding the system we observe. Most systems look like chaos if framed too small until our view approaches the size necessary to see the larger picture or system at play. When we get to a larger view, order begins to appear. When we shift to a larger viewpoint then what we see takes on another level of meaning.

The exhortation to 'be big about it' implies that experience is mediated by the size identity from which we operate. If we stay in our small identity, we won't get to the size needed to see the whole. If we resist change, and growth is change, we will never reach the next level of knowledge and understanding. By opening into the ambiguity of the seeming chaos, our vision reaches the size needed to operate effectively.

We commonly assume everyone who is sane or intelligent sees the world like we do. Anyone who doesn't is disregarded or criticized. On a tight day, when the tension of resistance coils in on itself, we get self-righteous. In that state we are trapped. There is no room for inquiry. From a large enough point of view my truth is simply the way we make meaning out of experience. From a more inclusive

level of consciousness, everyone is right. We feel what we feel. Any path to awareness development, Aiki-Dialogue being one, takes us to a larger view, beyond believing our description of our experience as absolute truth.

Everyone who is calm and sensible is insane.

Rumi

Do we value learning or security in what we know? Do we want to explore the unknown or stay with our established beliefs? Do we believe our knowledge could be improved to everyone's benefit and are we willing to take the risks involved?

We act according to how we predict events are going to unfold. Since we do not know the future, in order to design strategy we must predict reality through inference. When we go beyond our knowledge, we can't know what is going to happen. Like Columbus in order to sail to the edge of the world, we need a vision of something more than is known. We need to see a larger view of possibility.

The limitations of knowledge produce a view of the unknown as seeming chaos. The assumption of chaos dissolves when we acquire a large enough view to encompass the next larger pattern at play. Centering, unifying mind, body and spirit allows us to release our fixed identity and open to the next level of our identity, in doing so a larger view is attained. The insight of each pattern must be yielded again to the edge of knowledge to produce the next opening. Inquiry produces a continually regenerating world of evolving meaning.

There are a lot of tools that can help get a better wrench on our psyches. But, if someone wants to go beyond the known, wants to deal with the unknown, seeks experience beyond fixed meaning; harmony and inquiry create a powerful doorway. When we train a spirit of open presence and inquiry, information is not devalued and filtered out according to what we already believe. The power of Aiki-Dialogue processes information in the spirit of attraction. Harmony allows us to learn from instead of avoid wonder. Wonder opens the imagination, the feeling of interest.

**The correct analogy for the mind is not a vessel that needs filling
but wood that needs igniting - no more - and then it motivates one**

towards originality and instills the desire for truth.

Plutarch

Entering the Unknown

We form a world view out of our personal experience. Thought describes our experience filtered through the lens of perception and valuing. What we value and how we describe our personal experience to ourselves reinforces thought as a system. We order our descriptions and assumptions into the beliefs we call knowledge. We hold on to our knowledge and defend it.

Conversely, in dialogue we come with the intention of having all our answers questioned. We intentionally challenge our order, to disturb what has become an unconscious process of thought. We chose to learn, to renew our perception, instead of defaulting into habitual, defensive thinking.

Everyone who trains gets better. Training a warrior's spirit enables us to intentionally stay present and creative in a situation, where we might normally check out or freeze up. Similarly, Dialogic space creates a cool environment that enables us to talk about things that are uncomfortable or otherwise un-discussable. If we withdraw our energy - cut *Ki*, - then we can't talk about tough or delicate issues, and frequently of course, they are the significant ones. By focusing on learning instead of defending the past, the process 'keeps all beings in a state of constant growth and development'.

Any change in perception means disassembling and reassembling thought structures that took a lot of energy to create. Naturally we encounter resistance. Giving up the comfort of thinking we know allows growth and learning. Instead of defending against the unknown, the process of learning requires entering the unknown. Otherwise we gain only additive knowledge that doesn't disturb our present descriptions or change our existing order. Learning is a warrior's challenge.

How do we transcend the limits of our own thought? Patience is a virtue. New meaning takes time to form. If we create new meaning we use words in new ways. Notice what happens in thought when words are used in ways you don't understand.

Somatic experience and a continual flow of inquiry are fundamentals of Aiki-Dialogue. Aiki-Dialogue seeks direct experience not based on image or history. By suspending our assumptions rather than having to look through the lens of the past we connect with our immediate sensing. In that spirit the group mirror can help us see our assumptions, recognize familiar tracks of thought for suspension and seek the bounds of perception. The reflection of others can help us distinguish repetitive thinking from pure knowledge and new learning.

The Aiki Dialogues

Learning exists on the edge of what we are able to perceive. If we close down or disconnect, the process is impeded. Constantly refocusing our awareness on listening to the whole, helps us stay open and engaged. What at first seems like ambiguity leads to the revelation of the whole. We can learn to recognize and accept the feelings of discomfort upon entering the unknown. Recognizing feelings and thought patterns that occur when we look into the vastness frees us from their invisible control helping us find new ways to explore the wilderness of the unknown.

Thinking in ways that take us out of our limited thought patterns leads to exploration and growth. Presence through centering, affecting and unifying the mental, physical and spiritual dimensions, is so fundamental to this concept that we emphasize it with the term Aiki-Dialogue.

In chrysalis

a caterpillar enters the unknown;

comfortable or not,

it is the only way to become a butterfly.

III. INSPIRATION
THE REVELATION OF THE WHISPERINGS
THE MESSAGE OF CREATION

Relevation

Share who you are

Relevation

Relevation, a term coined by David Bohm, to describe a state of dialogue where what is relevant elevates into consciousness. The spirit of attraction produces a flow of meaning.

By opening awareness to subtler feelings, by differentiating experience to finer levels, new perceptions appear. In the process old perceptions are configured in new ways and a new internal landscape begins to take shape. Creativity does not come about through trying to force it to show up, not by efforting to create new ways of seeing. Creativity is a guest who must be invited by opening the lens of perception and receiving, even more, welcoming the input.

"Sink-Open! Why manage stress when you can lead change." Chris Thorsen

By repeatedly 'sinking open' (relaxing to the downward sinking force and at the same time opening to the upward rising force) and 'listening to the whisperings,' a state of deepening presence evolves. The brain wave pattern changes creating a different state of perception, out of which, what is relevant elevates into consciousness. Relevation occurs naturally in a system that is calm/relaxed and open.

Any rush of energy can fill the mind with thoughts. The voices can be so loud that it is hard to hear the whisperings. Sitting meditation quiets the mind. As the mind quiets the brain wave slows and shifts to another state of activity. The different states of brain wave are quite distinct and scientifically measurable. Alpha state (7-14 cycles per second) receives more input and a broader band width. Beta state (14-28 c.p.s.), which is faster puts out more but misses subtler data points and assembles a sketchier picture.

Both meditation and sword mastery seek to be able to awaken a state without thought. Seeking a state of no mind, an often-misunderstood term, was the basis of the art of Zen and where it aligned with the warrior's path. In both disciplines, no mind meant death to how we know the world, a transcendence of the identity and of the separateness of the ego. In the warrior's domain developing a clear calm effective connection between the functions of mind, body and spirit, with nothing in the way, meant immediate effective response to surprise.

The practices of silent reflection, meditation and centering, calm the normal chatter of the mind and allow transmission of our deepest experience into speaking. When one's system functions out of a grounded centered state where

mind and body unify, a natural and seemingly larger intelligence begins to show itself.

A surfer rides an energy wave. In surfing, it's a matter of relationship, of how one positions oneself on the board in relation to the wave. As energy beings, we ride universal power. It is not our power to control yet when we become part of the power, then we have access to and can make use of it. Maybe more importantly as creativity emerges, we can have fun with it.

“The force controls your actions yet it obeys your commands.”

Obi wan Kenobe in Star Wars.

Choosing to listen in a Dialogic mode, attuning the awareness so that a coherent understanding and transmission emerges the spirit of attraction draws attention to what is most immediate and true in that moment. Relevation allows the voice of spirit, the intelligence of the energy of the universe. Intelligence that emerges through relevation supercedes individual and collective thought. If we close the doors to habitually repeating the known, new ideas and new ways of thinking appear.

*When the inner dialogue stops
the world collapses,
and extraordinary facets of ourselves
surface*

Casteneda's Don Juan

Shared Inquiry, the Whisperings and the Power of Collective Intelligence

We come together to explore greater powers of thought and memory and to enhance our ability to see and hear. No two people abstract reality in the same way. What we can see together expands when we come together as colleagues in learning. Our energies enhance one another. In discussion our ideas separate us, the spirit of right and wrong dominates and a genetically coded defensiveness, that often shows up as arguing to convince, blocks learning and exploration. With collegiality we collectively share the meanings we create. A larger pool of meaning is formed. The possibility of interconnections increases

exponentially. When we open our attention to the unknown the mystery relevates in our lives.

Paying attention to the process of thought maintains self-reflexivity in our inter-acting allowing us to think and act consciously rather than robotically. With self-reflexivity, when we see these processes in action the boundaries between individuals soften and become permeable enhancing connectedness and enabling us to think together effectively. Connection aligns strategies that meet the needs of the total being and a sustainable society.

Playfulness, having fun with imagination and ideas without having to be right, opens the door to creativity. If the first painting has to be a masterpiece we cannot start the exploration. We need to give ourselves space for wonder, play, exploration, learning and the guidance of sprit. Unless we can open the domain of the unknown first, new ideas don't get invited. Until, unless we can allow the ideas that may not work at first, we will never be able to create out of the unknown. Without allowing imagination we can never create innovative design. Creativity requires a quiet space of non-judgment to re-develop the skill of play.

A spirit of play sanctions the power to create with out judgment. In the brainstorming mode, we play with ideas that have no reality whatsoever. Then, perhaps, some of them take on substance and may eventually become formed. Then these ideas —like democracy, which was an absurd idea at one point, just like the earth being round and women voting were once considered absurd — keep evolving through someone's willingness to make them up, consider them, imagine them and act as if. That is what O Sensei did with Aikido. His 'openness to the kami' changed his relationship to the univesal energy, and techniques would show up out of the divine realm. The edge of the unknown calls to us all. For most of us the voice of the known is so loud the voice of the divine sounds like whisperings. Unless we attune our listening, it is easy to miss.

Releasing ambition

**Slowing down,
contemplative, restful, opening,
time in nature,
listening
without having to hear
the whisperings
of the creative force
that
permeates the creation.**

The Aiki - Kami

In Japanese, the word “kami” describes the divine spirit. Kami represent the divine spirit of everything in the manifest world, like the spirits of wind and rain. The ‘kami’, fields of thought energy, for technology, business, society, education etc. show up as the elegance of innovation that occurs in any field. O Sensei spoke of the Aiki-Kami, the divine spirit of Aikido, as the source that taught him the art.

The Hopi describe “kochina”, as the spirits of given entities. There is a kochina for the grasshopper and one for the deer etc. The bodies of all the deer together, made up the body of the deer kochina. Picture the spiritual teachers, Jesus and Buddha and O Sensei et. al. as all being embodiments of the kochina of spiritual wisdom.

Leadership training should train people to live and lead an opening, deepening, creative dialogue. We need leaders, not just to lead new thoughts. We need leaders to lead new ways of thinking. Leadership of the spirit, a phrase coined by my business partner Chris Thorsen, is an expression of the guidance into the

natural harmony between the individual and the force of creation. A great leader is a great follower of their own true spirit. They lead in sensing what is.

The world needs spiritual leaders. We need people who can lead others in opening to the leadership of the spirit. We don't mean here priests who interpret reality for others, that may describe another need. We need mystics meaning people who lead others into their own exploration of the mystery.

If, as leaders, teachers and parents, we don't model exploration, how can we expect the people who associate with us and look to us for inspiration and guidance, to move beyond their system of thought and self-defensive barriers? For people to take this step requires a great deal of courage. The Japanese term for teacher -Sensei- means one who has gone before. Those who have been there can serve as guides. Obvious but in order to have been there, you have to go there first. First we must make the exploration ourselves. Then we can help each other further that exploration. Once we live in the spirit of exploration our lives inevitably serve others who are interested.

Cultures tend to operate inside of their contextual reality. The modern discipline of Dialogue offers us the potential to move beyond ours. For us, moving from the information age, into the unknown, if we sense for coherence in our disconnected thought, we can reach a new level of sophistication in terms of making meaning.

We see society moving from the information age into what we term the age of value. It implies valuing information in new ways that create a new ordering of the overlays of meaning, allowing us to completely transform economics, culture and society into a coherent system.

Coherent Thinking and Reconciliation

David Bohm repeatedly mentioned the concept of coherent thinking. He defined it somewhat by saying, "Our thinking is incoherent when we end up with an outcome that is different than what we intend."

For instance, we study Aikido with the intention to improve ourselves. All too often, impulses take over the attention and we lose awareness of process. What we end up focusing our attention on, is throwing someone else down on the mat. Or we intend to engage in Dialogue and learning but instead of watching our thoughts and suspending our assumptions, we slip into trying to defend and convince. In business we should be of service to our customers and ourselves in a way that creates wealth. Too often, profit and self-benefit take precedence over caring for the economic and physical environment. Education should develop creative and innovative thinking that improves our lives. It devolves

into learning what someone knows as if it were not only right, but unable to be questioned. It re-enforces an authoritarian dynamic instead of creating beautiful minds.

We get so intent on what we are doing; we forget why we are doing what we are doing. The feminine why centers the purpose of action. If the masculine how dominates, strategy goes askew. Yin and yang make a system together. Cycling the why with the how, sustains the Dialogue. Balanced attention creates a coherence of action. Attention to thought and the way we create meaning makes it possible for individuals and teams of people to increase the value of their work and their relationships. When we transform the quality of our communication, we transform the quality of our relationships. When people open to studying their system of thought, transformation into greater coherence happens effortlessly, naturally.

In our consulting work in the area of leadership and team development, we coach individuals and teams to become more coherent (to hang together) and thereby more effective at what they intend. In one start up team thrown together at high speed, we were creating a new industry. No one on the team knew the path. The job had never been done before. The first time the team gathered the leader asked us to teach the basic principles of Aiki-Dialogue. The tone of learning and exploration sustained the team's quality of communication through the extreme challenge of creating something new that served the customers, investors and employees. Coherence empowers an organism, an organization, a culture, or a society.

Dialogue generates a quality of interaction free in feeling and open to creative paths. Harmonious relationship is a fundamental principle of the universe, as disconnected as we get from it in our fragmented thought systems. As meaning evolves to greater coherence, transformation of what is possible can happen in the world as a whole, transforming life as we know it.

Once we see the incoherence of our lives it becomes painfully obvious that we need to change our thinking. When we avoid the pain of seeing our incoherence we impede the process of feedback and correction. Pain causes us to pull our hand out of the fire. By being willing to experience our incoherence, we set in motion the natural intelligence that releases fixed holding patterns and sets the stage for coherent thinking.

Self-correction is a natural facet of intelligence. IF we are paying attention, the system attended to corrects, aligns, grows and develops. Watching our state of physical tension, it begins to regulate itself. Noticing our balance, it tends to improve. Watching our thinking highlights incoherence activating a natural

self-correcting process. A coherent state of being develops emergent thinking. From that state the whole relevates as an unfolding system. You don't do it; it does you.

Negotiating life can be like passing a piece of metal through steel wool, every rough snag, every fragment of personality, catches on the fibers of the wool. We may never polish our spirits to perfection, but we can smooth off a few of the rough edges for an easier passage through life.

When we willingly challenge the incongruities in our thinking, the process inevitably produces greater coherence. The process of reconciliation, central to Aikido, develops coherence, a unified field, in our perception, thinking, feeling and action. Attention to how our descriptions and somatic state participate in the unfolding of experience develops harmonious interaction with the force, the form and the spirit of creation.

**“Aikido’s spirit is that of loving attack and peaceful reconciliation.
Reconciliation means the completion of everyone’s bestowed mission.
Winning means winning over the discord in your own mind.”**

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

The Development of Attention

Using a skill develops it. The exercise of paying attention generates the power of attention. Attention gives us power to understand others and speak in a way that can be heard. The light of attention makes things visible that would have gone unnoticed a moment before. Attention enhances perception. By paying attention, we can alter what we perceive and the world we assemble out of that data.

If I am in a flow, breathing and feeling myself, I sense change. Feeling allows flow. When we feel, what we feel is flow, the process of change. If we pay attention, feeling changes. If we feel sad, feeling the sadness allows the sadness to complete itself, whereas resistance to feeling the sadness stops its movement and inhibits change. We stay stuck in the feelings we resist feeling.

In Aikido, if I am breathing and feeling myself and from that state of awareness include feeling my partner, there is a natural movement that unfolds out of the total system of me, my partner and the energy field that encompasses us. Connection to the universe expresses itself through my movement. In a flow state, the universal self explicates naturally through the personal self, creating a unified field of being. Someone unaware of the process would think the personal self just decided without noticing the universal movement at play.

The appearance of an enemy should be thought of as an opportunity to test the sincerity of one's mental and physical training to see if one is actually responding according to the Divine Will.

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

Maya Illusion & Dialogue

Quantum perception moves from the illusion of solid matter to operating in the domain where matter is energy. Energy appears as form and dissolves back into the force of creation. In quantum terminology, the potential, the wave function collapses and appears as a particle. All the forms that appear are apparitions of the essential energy. Energy and form unfold and enfold as part of a universal flow, the flow of change.

In our Aikido dojo (school) we emphasize opening the doorway to the formless by aligning with the flow of energy and letting the flow teach us forms. We practice tuning our awareness to the energy domain and allowing the energy flow to produce the forms. The ability to access the formless as a source of form, allows the power of infinitely creative design to emerge.

Forms appear out of the infinite void. It doesn't mean the void ceases to exist. Experiencing the void or energy dimension does not mean form ceases to exist. Without access to the void, the energy domain, people can only repeat forms they have learned. What we mean by Jiu Waza, is the ability to repeat known forms or create new techniques which ever would serve.

Beginners mind doesn't mean you have to not know what you know. It implies not being limited by it. Most of us are limited by our habits and known forms because we lack the freedom of energy to create, to generate spontaneously-- not just the form of our movement but the form of our thinking, the form of our intention and our spirit. My assumption is that it is not the most valuable attitude or mind state from which to function

Once we learn a form, we have an energy charge on it. That charge holds us to a given mind set. If we can ground the charge until it exists as potential energy infinite possibility appears. For a moment we have nothing, like putting down the quart to pick up the half gallon, Nothing is dying to the known. Nothing means presence, neither adding anything to nor taking anything away. If I am here, present with experience as it is, my energy does not go into worrying about where I'll be in a minute or where my partner is going to be in a minute

or anything else. I experience the universe as it is. The nothing of formlessness, connects with and experiences the divine creativity of energy, without mediating it.

The system of the polarities of two forces, positive and negative, form and flow, are contained within a larger domain we will call the field. The field of exchange between emptiness and form is one system of communication. The world of form and the formless realm are one system. We unfold and are enfolded within a unified field.

The word religion comes from a Greek root meaning to re-connect. The practices of religion developed to connect us to the origin of forms, to the source of creation, to the divine. The ability to create and use forms has value, and, equally valuable is the ability to let go of those forms, and reinvent experience. Every meditation should be a death to what we know, an empty, clear openness to direct experience.

Everybody wants to go to heaven; but nobody wants to die.

If I cannot access the formless it blocks my creativity. I lose my divinity, my ability to create. I'm limited by the known. In a martial situation, since I cannot be stronger than I am in any moment, I am stuck in my limitations. If I can let go of form and go to a formless state, the possibility exists of a different process showing up not based on speed and strength. Connection to the divine source, the source of form, is the purpose of religion, science and spiritual training.

Quantum physics is not real to the general experience of most people's lives. Most of us still live in a Newtonian perception of the world without seeing any value in the quantum paradigm. In a similar way, shifting from operating in the known, into the inquiry of Dialogue can take a while until inquiry's disturbance translates into power in forming more creative lives.

Awareness and Energy, the Unfolding Field

The mystery of the world and creation extends infinitely. Without an interest in inquiry and a tolerance for ambiguity we collapse infinite potential into a few simple, fundamentalist ideas. Without seeing the patterns and fragmentation of thought, we lock down our doorways and our beliefs and imprison our thinking. Instead of basing our lives on inquiring into possibilities, we limit our lives to one way of seeing, where words have fixed meanings. Dialogue opens a doorway to the formless. Moving from operating in a fixed system of thoughts, to seek creative and spontaneous thinking, allows form to relevelate, appear spontaneously. The meaning of words changes as we use them.

When we resist the mystery the magic dies. In *The Mists of Avalon*, Bradley describes the loss in human consciousness of the feminine domain of the mystery, to the dogmatic descriptions of the masculine realm. The fear of vastness restrains the exploration. Victims to fear, we hide out in what we know.

We resist letting go of who we are, what we know and how we see ourselves to the point that we have to have a trauma to evolve. As long as we hold on to form, we expend some portion of energy in resistance to change. It takes a “revolutionary war” to break the hold of the power structure or in this case the thought structure. When we are in an alignment, change could generate a kind of revolutionary wave function rather than having to have revolutionary war.

. . . (they) show a tendency to seek the formal and avoid the vital, even to substitute a form for vitality, because slavery to form is the last hope of the person alienated from vitality.

From *The Miracle of Dialogue* by Reuel L. Howe

A willingness to explore the mystery separates mastery from ordinary consciousness. We don't have to be at a level of awareness capable of sensing the whole in order to explore the mystery. In a simple willingness to consider dealing with realms of mystery and inquiry — a larger field of possibility unfolds, balancing the wonder with the terror and process with content.

Shared Meaning Creates Culture

The basis of thought is shared across a culture. We like to think our thoughts are original. In fact, they are the culmination of language, ideas and cultural concepts we have absorbed without being aware of it. The design of our culture informs our choices. As unspoken rules become a system of thought, they become invisible to members of the culture.

In Dialogue we intentionally create awareness of our process, so as to make the unspoken rules visible. By sharing ourselves and our thoughts and suspending our beliefs together we open a possibility to create a new flow of meaning new neural paths, new inter-connections. What we can imagine increases. What we can imagine affects what we explore and create. New meaning can be created out of the larger field, that we cannot create alone. Will new meaning be more empowering or fulfilling? It depends on what we set the experiment up to prove. Authenticity and spontaneity create a culture, as do their opposites.

Self-reflexivity - in a person, couple, group, business team, community, culture - creates coherence. Dialogue gives us an open forum to look at the fragmentation of thought and creates open space. An individual or a group develops skills for centering and self-reflexivity through attention. Through the power of attention, we free ourselves from default behavior, i.e. taking a path because we've always taken it.

Seeing ourselves, beyond our self-image or habituated personality, changes our vision. The gating factor is the degree of personal connectedness, openness, wonder and tolerance for ambiguity of each individual, at that time, in that dialogue. In a state of self-reflexive awareness we magnetize a field where people come into their essential self out of their natural attraction. Relevation happens.

The Unity of Diversity

All the different forms of matter are made up of molecules, atoms and sub-atomic particles, all of which are form out of energy. In Dialogue, there are countless approaches, all unified by an intention to transcend the limits of thought as a system both individual and collective. Diversity expresses quantum potential. Gender, race, religion, ideology, age, lifestyle, nationality, all potentially contribute to our understanding of the world we inhabit. When we come together in the spirit of learning, flexibility, i.e. willingness to change, and vulnerability, i.e. the willingness to be open to and intimate with another, new possibilities unfold. The Kanji or pictograph for 'Ai' harmony the first syllable in Aikido is a pictograph of two forces joining together in a new direction. In the practice of non-resistance to diversity reconciliation ensues. Diversity has the same origin as "divide." We have to have something to divide it. What are we dividing? We divide unity.

Aikido is not one force against another. In the universal domain, the whole of creation, the field, the energy and the diversified forms are all one system. In the Quantum Dialogue everything is connected to everything. Movement unfolds out of the unity. Spirit is a universal flow.

The spirit of Aiki-Dialogue means allowing the energy of the moment, to lead the dialogue. We intentionally create a mindset open to change, to allow new techniques, new thinking, entirely new arts and philosophies to be created. Relaxing leads to unifying the mind and body and allows one to blend with and lead, new ways of seeing. The light of attention dissolves thought's limitations, which are created by our blindness to how we create meaning.

Most of us think of ourselves as one unified person. Really we're made up of multiple identities. We are different with friends than we are with strangers, with our spouse than with our mother, with our kids than with our boss. On different days, different aspects show up. They exist in the same space, the same body.

Aiki-Dialogue allows a unified interpenetrating participation between all the domains. When the aspects unify, another level we could call field intelligence, surfaces. On the mat it shows up as an effortless power forming infinite techniques. In the circle when all the voices have been heard, the inquiry forms itself. It produces a breakthrough in thinking. Life doesn't stop with how I know myself. It includes who I am becoming. When we attend to consciousness without resistance, thought becomes a vehicle instead of a limit.

We sat once with the executive team of a large southern sportswear manufacturer that had been stuck on a topic without resolution for years. We taught a simple introduction to the principles of Dialogue. We then facilitated a relatively short Dialogue between the individuals. After a few rounds, what started out carefully became a simple honest sharing of each person's perception of the situation. When everyone's voice and everyone's passion had been heard, the solution emerged. What was stunning was how clear and obvious the answer was to everyone in the room. There was no argument, no power struggle, only resolution. The CEO remarked his surprise that this form of communication had solved so easily, what had been a highly contentious issue for such a very long time.

Power

People often have negative connotations about the word power, probably because we have seen power abused so often. Power is neutral. The root of the word implies ability. We could use power to negate someone else's opinion or to understand another person's view. That does not mean we have to either accept their view or feel negative about ours. It means we can exchange knowledge openly and increase our power, our ability to develop shared meaning, rather than avoiding or opposing information that disturbs our present order of meaning.

We each assemble meaning differently. If I study a certain style of Aikido or subscribe to a set of beliefs, religious or scientific, and believe it is the one and only right way, what would it take for me to be open to the possibility that the way I think may not be the only possible valid approach? In the spirit of

Dialogue, I would want to understand more about your beliefs. That requires accepting my style is just a style, my beliefs are just beliefs. That doesn't mean that I give up mine. I accept that you and I are different. I maintain my authenticity, and I honor both how I know myself and who I am becoming. Life is too short to waste our life force in opposition to life's diversity.

In a Dialogic approach I would inquire into understanding about how and why someone else feels the way they do or why they think one approach is better than another. Understanding more about your understanding changes the way I see the world through our interaction. Then our differences fuel learning.

Protecting and defending, operating out of fear, talking too much and listening poorly, we train to see these habits as red flags, signals to shift state, to let go, to die to the known. Whereas people commonly argue when they see the world differently, in Dialogue we can let go, explore the universe and learn together.

If I am secure enough in my relationship to the universe, I willingly intentionally challenge why I believe what I believe. If I have enough power, I am open to what other people believe and how they see things. Whether, why they believe their vision and how it works for them, works for me or not, I let all of that feed into the inquiry. We could share our ideas and develop spiritual wisdom, the way we frequently combine ideas from different cuisines.

There is an ancient yoga teaching about discernment told in the tale of the swan. It is said that if you pour a quart of cream and a quart of water into a bowl and present it to a swan, and when the swan's done drinking, there will be a quart of water left. The story implies a swan has the ability, the power, to take that rich in value and leave behind that which does not have value. (Forget any modern dietary implications that swans are going to get heart disease.) Why not take that rich in value and leave behind that which does not have value, with each other's views, and our own. That is power.

Diverse Resistance

In the world of duality, we live in the fight – flight continuum. In one case, somebody dominates, and in the other, someone gives up power or surrenders it in the struggle. Standing in our own power, means being willing and able to play. Standing in our power creates authenticity that creates a culture that helps bring others into their own power. If we have no power, someone else is responsible; that quickly becomes someone else is to blame. Blaming causes us to abdicate responsibility. There is no win there.

Our habits become fixed patterns. It took time to form them and it takes time to change them. With people who have little sense of their own power, or have lived in a dis-empowered state for ? years; we should not expect to sit down in a dialogue circle and expect we are going to solve the worlds problems in the next couple of hours, although anything can happen. What you can do is be responsible for how you show up, how you participate. Stand in your own power and share who you are. Adding that flavor generates a resonance that affects the field.

We look into the house through different windows — you see the couch, I see the piano. After having our unique experiences we can argue passionately about who's right, like two children playing war. Once we are willing to grow, through hearing each other or coming around and looking through each other's windows, we talk about what is possible in a new way. We could rest on the couch and we could play the piano.

We can fight with each other. History has established that. Or we can listen, allowing deeper meaning to grow through the power of diversity. Opening our lives to the diversity makes better use of our resources, instead of creating meaning that causes us to fight with each other about the fact that we see differently or argue about who is right. Opening to the diversity powers the inquiry that frees us from predetermined structures of thought.

Castaneda's Don Juan taught that one learns a warriors view not because it is more correct than that of an average person but because in having both one may 'be able to see reality through the crack between the two worlds'. Diversity offers us that power when we harmonize instead of resisting. The ability to allow each of us to stand in our own power, which is the universal power, allows us to dream and see new possible meaning through understanding each other's view.

Through the power of love we empower each other to be who we are. Love implies protecting each other's sovereignty. Love means protecting each other's revelation. It means the loving protection of each other's emergent spirits. If you love me, and I love you, I'm willing to be in a relationship with you. If you don't love me and I love you, I'm willing to be in a relationship that is different than I want. Love protects your freedom to find out who you are.

“The true spirit of a warrior is that of loving protection.”

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

IV.

**Recipes, Distinctions and Experiments
for Differentiating Attention**

GUIDELINES THAT MAY BE USEFUL

IN OPENING THE DOOR TO INQUIRY AND DISCOVERY
THROUGH THE ART OF AIKI-DIALOGUE

Breathing & Feeling

I.

Breathe normally. Pay attention to breathing. Start with the movement of the breath. Feel the experience more acutely. Notice if paying attention to breathing has any effect on your breathing, state of attention and your state of being. Does the rate or depth of your breath change? Do you feel differently, bigger smaller, more open, secure, relaxed? Is your muscle tone different? Do you feel any differently at all, simply from paying attention to breathing?

II.

I can decide to breathe deeper or shallower. I can also choose to let go and, allow the breathing to direct itself. I can decide to breathe faster or slower or simply listen to the breath and let the breath teach its own speed, depth and quality. Try both approaches. Then play with this experiment while you are in the process of Dialogue.

III.

Pay attention to the rate and depth of natural breathing that seems to happen without attention. Pay attention to the breath moving itself. Notice the impulse that activates the movement of the breath. Sense into or imagine the point of attention that decides when and how to breathe. Notice if you can the source of the muscular command to inhale and exhale. To find this impulse, hold the breath still until you feel the impulse to breathe take over from your intention.

Feel the natural power of the impulse. Listening to the impulse that guides the breath as if it were a whispering. Play with breathing through controlling the impulse that activates the movement of the breath and then abandoning control and letting it guide the breath. Focus your awareness between feeling, listening and sensing. Is there a message? Is there a distinction between the breaths natural

rhythm and when you decide to breathe in a different rhythm, or with any specific intention or attention? Tuning into the intelligence that controls the breath without attention directs attention to the connection between the personal aspect and the universal aspect of self.

Play with the experience whether or not you understand its implications right now. Soak in these ideas, breath easy and open your spirit. If opening your spirit seems too abstract a directive, simply breathe slowly, easily and deeply. Do five or ten slow deep breaths. Pay attention and see what happens to your state of being. See if and how that changes your outlook, your meaning, your thought and your actions.

Find a Point of Resistance in Your Body and Release It

When you feel pressure, especially when anyone starts to pressure you, differentiate where and how you experience it. Notice if you feel resistance. The easiest dimension to access shows up in the form of muscle tension. Be distinct about anything you feel in your bodily felt experience. Feel any resistance to the flow of Ki /energy. See if you sense any relationship between physical tension and any mental and emotional tension. Locate a point of tension in the physical sensory awareness of your body and release it. If relaxing is difficult or indistinct tighten the muscles in the area first and then releasing becomes easy and obvious. Use the breath, the focus of attention and imagination.

Find a Point of Resistance in Your Thinking and Release It

Relaxing the physical allows freedom of movement and relaxing the mind allows dreams, ideas and explorations. Think about a subject that causes a reaction in you and relax your mind through relaxing your body.

When we relax and pay attention to experience as it unfolds, we ‘sink open’. We reach deeper mind states that are open to new meaning. We become aware of our connectedness and naturally explore its implications. The power of wonder develops the ability to stay open to learning. In a spirit of exploration we appreciate the questions that come up. Open to the idea that ‘I am more than I think I am’ transmits to the people that I engage with that ‘you are more than you think you are’. We can go into that inquiry together.

Life’s pressure has similarities to a Chinese finger puzzle. The more we try and get out of where we are, the more stuck we get in it. When we’re able to enter into and engage in the spirit of inquiry with, a point of tension, the holding pattern starts to release.

If we hope to change someone else’s mindset we tense up. IF we are willing to change ours we release tension. We can choose to engage in inquiry rather than arguing. If we go into an inquiry of why we, or anyone thinks a certain way, we

can focus on a question that empowers change. The spirit of inquiry offers us a way to use our energy other than defending ourselves or attacking someone else. To the degree we engage in an inquiry, we touch into our own wonder. The spirit of wonder feels so different than thinking you know what should happen and how life should be. When you fill your life with wonder, life becomes wonderful.

Thinking as Distinct from Thoughts

Thinking develops thoughts. Thoughts are ideas, pictures and concepts formed from past thinking. When we operate out of thought we function out of past knowing. Dialogue catalyzes the movement from thought into thinking, movement from assuming we know to an exploration of the unknown, a shift from a state of knowing to a state of learning.

Dialogue illuminates the limitations of incoherent thought. Through seeing thought as a system we can look beyond it creating a more inclusive view. We can create meaning that is more empowering rather than default down deeply carved channels of thought. We can see as the whole or recognize the degree to which we are not.

Feelings as Distinct from Felts

Bohm coined the term 'felts' in the feeling realm as a corollary to 'thoughts' in the thinking realm. We habituate to feelings as we do to thought patterns. We can run down familiar halls of feeling, as addictive and limiting as our thought patterns. We habituate to acting out of familiar feelings even though they may be inappropriate.

If we watch we may begin to notice a familiarity of certain feelings we repeat over and over. Paying attention to this tendency allows us to think and feel in new ways. We empower the creation of our lives in ways that align with who we are becoming, instead of who we were. Releasing awareness from self-protective reservations and barriers frees energy for creation, creating freedom.

You can see aspects of thought as a system through oft repeated moods and attitudes. Awareness allows us to learn from the past rather than being condemned to repeat it. Seeing thought as a system awakens us to move into present thinking and feeling that is a spontaneous expression of the now. Thinking and feeling affect each other and the creation of our reality.

Facilitation of Self-reflexivity

We can support each other in achieving the suspension of assumptions. By sharing our diverse meaning, we facilitate each other's ability to see ourselves and our process. All of us hold a shared accountability to help each other move towards a clearer perception of the self. Self-reflexivity is the ability to see

ourselves in interaction with our environment and adjust our thoughts and actions to correspond with what is learned.

Our accountability to watch our state of being, our process and our inner dialogue, maintains the quality of self-reflective attention that is pre-requisite to and generates self-reflexivity. Dialogue is a going towards. It is an ongoing journey into the exploration of meaning. The group, functioning as a mirror, enhances everyone's self-reflexivity, everyone's ability to see beyond the limitations of individual awareness. Our collective intelligence responds with greater creative wisdom.

Collegiality

Superconductors cool the medium of transmission to allow greater flow of energy. Through the collegiality of the Dialogue process, we reduce friction to cool the temperature of the interaction between differing assumptions. When cooler heads prevail, it cools the resistance to the flow of meaning. In this spirit we gain a broader, more coherent view, rather than fighting over the differences. Inquiry deepens and meaning can be conducted more efficiently.

Collegiality creates a platform for the appearance of collective intelligence. The dynamic field of energy of a collection of harmonious human minds, thinking together and speaking together, transcends the sum of its parts. The quality of the relationship we create shapes the container of the Dialogue. Mood colored by history induces a quality of interaction. Collegiality, shaping the container differently, affects the flow of meaning in the Dialogue. By individually choosing collegiality, we affect the shape of the whole field.

We do not create a cooler container by diminishing our spirits or our passion. When the container is collegial, passion and intensity drive the inquiry enhancing each other's perception. When it is not, passion becomes about win-lose and right and wrong. Collegiality doesn't mean nice or polite. It is about a willingness to share honestly and listen openly to each other's views.

Conflict dissipates energy. When we come together for inquiry, learning occurs. When we come together to establish right and wrong, we concretize ourselves as fixed identities. The more collegial the atmosphere we create, the more we are able to relax the boundaries and share mind power. Differences become fuel instead of resistance. Energy, rather than being lost to friction, generates knowledge. Unified, the collective power of our intelligence, instead of creating friction, emotional heat, can be focused on creating meaning that supports experience, meaning that is non-fragmentary.

EX: With or without a dialogue group, visualize a person or situation. Notice what thinking opens or closes collegiality. As we choose to adopt a spirit of greater collegiality, energy flows into creativity rather than judgment. See what

that means for you at this moment in time. By simply thinking about collegiality you become more sensitive to distinctions. As your ability to make distinctions increases, your options open.

Inquire Together to Suspend Opinions and Assumptions

The suspension of assumptions doesn't mean to stop or inhibit. Suspend in this usage means to hang out, to look at and get some perspective on. By sharing what we see with each other, we take advantage of our differing perspectives.

When our thought is fragmented, aspects of communication get entwined in a way that obscures clarity. Fragmented, emotion and thought confuse rather than support each other.

Learning about and understanding the building blocks of our personalities dissolves the glue that locks them in place. Attention allows a more consciously created human experience.

An intense energy of listening to others and oneself speak what feels most essential and true at each moment creates meaning through disciplined attention. Attention to experience, feeling and thinking, suspending opinions and assumptions brings us into the present and allows creativity to flourish. Sensing into the release of physical tension opens the door to non-resistance in the intellectual, emotional and other forms of intelligence.

EX: Play with the idea of suspending assumptions. We opened one session with a fifteen minute exercise where each person began with the phrase, "It's my assumption that . . ." or, "It's my opinion that." After the shortest period of practice flare-ups of certainty and assumed assertions glared. After a moment of being suspended before the group, the assumptions seemed to flow into an inquiry.

Seeing Beyond Thought Patterns to Thinking in New Ways

Established ways of thinking become habitual through unconscious repetition. As humans we tend to repeat our stories to make them true, to validate our meaning and thereby ourselves. Develop attention to stories and thoughts, phrases and attitudes that are repeated as a dialogic experiment with awareness. As we chose to see habits and propensities, they come into the conscious realm. Once we recognize ourselves repeating a pattern a few times, we begin to notice if we use it intentionally or unconsciously. If we are aware of our behavior we can explore what triggers it. Then we can notice the constructs of thought through which we give it meaning.

As we make our thought patterns visible, we can assess whether those structures are coherent with our intention. If not, we can alter them or develop new

structures. If we are aware we can create rather than succumb by default to thought structures that are no longer current or effective.

Experiment with closing the doors to how you know yourself and see who shows up. Tune into the urge that insists that a description be repeated again. Behind the urge is a need, which if experienced real time can be addressed openly and effectively instead of indirectly. As we uncover the forces that drive our behavior, we make it possible to suspend our thinking in front of our eyes and consider if it is coherent with our intentions, with our values. We may consider whether our values are coherent with themselves.

Seek a state of mind open to new experiences and learning. In the discipline of Dialogue we seek to awaken, to expand beyond past descriptions and explore uncharted areas of thought and perception. Suspending our tendency to repeat what we know, hangs it out to look at. Deepening Dialogue repeats less what is known and directs exploration toward the leading edge of learning. Learning happens on the edge of the unknown

A Tolerance for Ambiguity Explores New Pathways

What we know seems simple and self-evident; what we don't know seems complex and obscure. When we explore new information it can seem incongruent with what we already know. The movement into the unknown can feel disturbing enough to be frustrating. After a time we may see connections and patterns that were invisible or unrecognizable at first. In a fixed state of mind we avoid the disturbances of new learning by subsuming, discrediting or ignoring information that conflicts with what we know. Developing patience and tolerance for ambiguity makes it possible to continue the learning process.

Turning up the light of attention on viewing thought as a system, incoherence in our thinking processes become visible. The ambiguity of not knowing is a necessary passage on the journey of learning that then must be entered into again and again to allow knowledge to take the next step.

Divergent

Diversity takes us to places we would not individually go and offers us views to expand our horizons. Depending on the attitude with which we encounter them, views that differ from our own are either opportunities for growth or threaten our system of thought. Rather than narrowing thought to minimize challenges to our beliefs, in Dialogue we seek a wider view of experience. Through the suspension of assumptions - taking a non-defensive look at what we and others assume - a diverse set of meanings appears. Diversity makes possible a view that is inclusive, holistic and akin to a 360-degree perception rather than confined to the normal bounds of linear thought.

When we find ourselves resistant to divergent views, at least we can notice our reactions. It is the awareness of our thought process that will free us from default slavery to our past ways of thinking.

It is nearly impossible to see our own thought process. This is why the group can be so valuable in Dialogue. They reflect what we see in different ways. Often the diversity of the group's meanings reflects enough light on our thinking to make it visible through its own shadows. The diversity adds meaning, accelerating our thinking and creating the momentum needed to allow us to escape the gravity of our system of thought behind the content of our thinking.

EX: Notice your reaction to feedback. Facilitation is feedback, given or received. We can value feedback and use it or not. But if we are afraid of it or resistant to it we should question what is going on and whether it is being given the proper valence. Looking makes the system of thought visible.

Full of Wonder

Wonder expresses and enriches itself through inquiry. When thought is pushed to its limits we reach the bounds of the known, the edge of the unknown. The willingness and ability to maintain attention at the edge of the unknown connects one with the experience of the mystery. When we open ourselves to it, everything contains mystery and with it the whisperings of its secrets. Wonder expresses an attitude of a human in contact with the divine. It is the doorway to the mystery.

Learning things about the world helps us operate in the world. We could be satisfied with what we know or we could continue to wonder about what we don't know. Using the spirit of attraction, where we have interest, where we find wonder to expand the inquiry, moves into open Dialogue. By sharing wonder we enhance our perception and deepen our understanding. We allow new meaning to emerge.

The enemy of truth isn't lies it's convictions. When you develop the strength of spirit to let go of defensive attitudes your spirit fills with the wonder of the mysteries. Seek the mystery, the (leading) edge of the unknown.

EX: Notice areas of discomfort in your thinking and seek to understand and include the dis-coherence. Visualize a state where the muscles relax to reflect opening to experience the mind's wonder. Imagine the culture super-consciousness would create. Write five descriptive sentences. See how your answers affect your state of inquiry.

Casteneda's Don Juan said, "the art of being human is to balance the wonder with the terror."

Equal Attention to Process and Content

There is what we are doing and there is how we are doing it. How we are interacting with and transforms who we are. Governing the process is attention, or lack thereof, to our state of being, our attitude of engagement, our spirit. We are so imbedded in our thought we fail to see it. Nor do we know how we came to the identifications and beliefs we have. Most of us do not calibrate whether we are in a more or less open mood today than we were yesterday. We are somewhat aware of the content of our thought but not its process. In this state the content represents itself as fact. We lock onto what we know and become fixed in our thinking. Wonder fades and dogma fills its place.

Dialogue is maintained by giving equal attention to process and content. Attention to process is developed by not giving value to one thing over another. Once the system of thought is included in the equation and allowed for, a greater balance emerges. When process and content are seen as a field transactionally creating each other, the fog begins to lift on the creation of meaning.

**We don't know who discovered water,
but we're pretty sure it wasn't a fish.**

Marshall McLuen

Two Way Conversation: Listening as You Speak

Dialogue explores 'two directional communication'. Listen as intently whether you are transmitting or receiving. Often we speak to someone 'out there'. Awareness of ourselves, interacting in a shared system of thought, is as important as what we are talking about in any specific moment of the ongoing dialogue.

Live into the inquiry as you listen to yourself speak. When we listen to thought as a process separate from content a new meaning appears as part of the process. Notice speaking as an authority. When we slip into teacher mode the role can be defined as someone who knows and that attitude can block exploration.

There can be value in teaching another person what we know but it should not be at the expense of our ability to learn. As an exercise in maintaining a relationship to the whole, explore speaking to everyone in the group including yourself, without making it out there or separating from the group.

Non-Resistant Exploration

To be calm and centered, in the face of someone who is not in a Dialogic mode and locked into defensive behaviors is a developed skill. One develops living from a centered state through practice. Practice means consciously paying

attention to your state of being and self-reflexively tuning it at each moment. If you are willing, you can center yourself consciously at each moment. If you pay attention to center, the skill of centering develops and becomes a way of functioning even with someone who is not. Maintain attention to center, ground and flow and return attention to that practice when you notice it has drifted. The practice, if continued, will develop your ability.

Imagine you have somebody engaging you in a way that doesn't feel like dialogue. They are into debate. Worse than that, they are into abuse. Sometimes ma-ai meaning harmonious space, which implies increasing the distance between you, including leaving the relationship, is the best solution. However, if it is appropriate, rather than breaking away or resisting, consider practicing presence, being there with them and yourself in the face of pressure. Almost any situation provides an opportunity to practice living in an open non-defensive state.

Psycho-cybernetics documented the power to develop ability through visualizing and practicing in your visualizations. If you can't improve the situation in the situation, practice off-line through visualization. Visualize yourself operating in high-pressure situations from a state of grounded presence. See what it produces in future encounters.

Inquiry moves us from argument and debate into dialogue. A relationship is an interactive field of energy. People respond to how they are treated. People change when they are treated differently. The tone of dialogue resonates throughout the field.

When you chose the tone of conversation a systemic process unfolds affecting every aspect of thought and action. The process evokes change at differing speeds in different people. When we are in re-action rather than response-able, tension escalates. The spirit of the moment changes as soon as we enter into an inquiry, when we truly want to know what is behind and beyond the patterns through which we see and think.

Consciously paying attention to state of being brings us in touch with the forces that drive our lives. In touch, we can answer questions regarding our goals that are critical in the development of strategy and ask questions that help our partners in communication clarify theirs.

- What is it you really want? What might we accomplish with this communication? Is there something that would help it unfold for you? Is there a more powerful tone of communication? Can we find a way to satisfy your needs and mine? Are you aware of the quality of energy you are putting out or how I am receiving it?" -

Your mission should you choose to accept it is: Practice engaging in Dialogue with others regardless of their attitude. Imagine how you might. Come up with

one question that causes them to think of creative possibilities instead of unloading negative energy in a way that escalates fragmentation.

Inquiry takes us from a limited mindset into a realm of infinite possibility. The process of non-resistance that unfolds through dynamic presence, takes us beyond the state of resistance into a state of fluidity, an experience of flow in the emotional, intellectual and physical realms. When all aspects interpenetrate, it creates a unified energy field, an energy of unlimited quantum potential. Inquiry unfolds naturally in an open mind. Our minds open to new possibilities, when our bodies open to sensory experience.

Indicators - Dialogue Red Flags

As the eye cannot see itself, thought is not aware of itself. So we look for signs, indicators that we have lost the flow of Dialogue. Indicators indicate unconscious habituated patterns - efforting, agreeing/disagreeing, defending, time conscious, communicating to someone out there - are examples of indicators. These flag communication habits that function in place of creative presence.

Through disciplined attention we begin to recognize personal indicators; stories we retell on autopilot, having a specific outcome in mind and losing the inquiry, a particularly strong feeling or emotion. Indicators used properly help us re-focus on the process of Dialogue much as the little bumps on the freeway help us notice we are drifting out of our lane and guide us back.

Indicators do not imply a right way of engaging in Dialogue. They say more about the quality of attention and listening we bring to the communication process. Indicators help us magnify attention on how we form meaning. They highlight awareness of our thought processes, of fragmented awareness as differentiated from awareness of the whole. They indicate a pre-set goal orientation instead of an opening to the unfolding.

Explore Dialogue as an Unfolding Process

Dialogue has ancient roots yet leads the cutting edge of communication technology. Being aware of the past without being limited by it is an act of intent. All learning should be the platform for the beginning of the next exploration.

Once we perceive the limitations of thought as a system we can challenge its boundaries. Once the spirit of imagination begins, exploration inevitably occurs. The spirit of attraction spontaneously propels our inquiry to explore beyond the known universe. True learning requires dissolving the conclusion we just arrived at. For thinking to be creative we must continue the exploration. We don't know what this is yet. But it is not defending what it was.

"The Purpose of today's training is to defeat yesterdays understanding."

Miyamoto Musashi- Japan's greatest swordsman

**“Today’s technique won’t be good enough today;
and today’s technique
won’t be good enough tomorrow.”**

**Morihei Ueshibe , O Sensei
Founder of Aikido**

Aiki-Dialogue In Three Easy Lessons In One Easy Page

I.

Induction

The focus of attention

Presence / Rhythm

Alignment

Feel where you are

II.

Inquiry

The recognition of attraction

Wonder / Harmony

Adaptability

Non-resistant relationship

III.

Relevation

Listen to the whisperings

Creativity / Melody

Unfolding Meaning

Share who you are

"All who are joined in a genuine dialogue need not actually speak; those who keep silent can on occasion be especially important. But each must be determined not to withdraw when the course of the conversation makes it proper for him to say what he has to say. No one, of course, can know in advance what he has to say; genuine dialogue cannot be arranged beforehand. It has indeed its basic order from the beginning, but nothing can be determined, the course is of the spirit, and some discover what they have to say only when they catch the call of the spirit."

Martin Buber

1965, *The Knowledge of Man*

New York Harper and Row

V.

**Echoes
of
Dialogue**

**SPRING RETREAT
DIALOGUE
APRIL 17, 1993**

The Enemy of Truth is not Lies. It's Convictions.

"The map is not the territory.

The map does not represent the whole territory.

The map points to the mapper and their interaction with the territory."

Korzybski

QUESTIONS AND INSIGHTS

The following condensed exchanges are from one of our semi-annual Aikido Retreats. The exchange of inquiry, thought and emotion show both the process of unfolding and the exploration of the content.

"SAY ONE WORD HEAR TEN WORDS."

STUDENT: I really liked the distinction between a win-lose or a win-win. Still when I read O Sensei's statement about the only true victory is victory over the self or victory over the mind of discord, I hear a win-lose in that. Isn't 'myself' or the 'mind of discord' a loser in that. I don't know how to sort that out. I'd like to translate that into win-win.

MOON: You have already taken a huge jump when you identified 'myself' as 'the mind of discord.' That assumption sets the tone of your exploration so let's start there by suspending that idea and see what opens as we explore.

I wonder what O Sensei said? Did he say victory of the self or did he say victory over the self? Was victory really the word he used? Let's have some fun with that.

The next thought that relevates for me about the 'mind of discord' is a story in which a monk asks a Zen teacher, "What happens in death?" And the teacher responds, "What happens to my fist when I open my hand?" Something in that rang for me when you said, "Does the mind of discord lose?"

Let me take this as an opportunity to share some ideas, maybe we could irreverently call them techniques, from the study of 'Dialogue'. Take a moment and let the meaning deepen. This is what Korzybski called the Semantic or Thalamic pause. (See *The Thalamic Discourses*, Zanshin Press) Rather than having a preset about what each word means, looking from the world of duality, of right or wrong, win-lose; can we relax our muscles, open our mindsets a little bit and *feel where we are*? Rather than answering the question, shutting it out or doing something with it, bring it into the light so it receives positive, conscious attention and so we can share the process together.

Don't give your question away,

Don't take someone's question on i.e. don't try to answer it

Let go of looking for an answer

Let the question unfold

First, allow the questions to stimulate movement in feeling. Appreciate the process a good question activates Instead of thinking "If we can answer the

question, that's a win, or if we can't answer it, that's a lose," which is clearly win lose thinking, let's create the possibility of *feeling where we are* and moving into a *harmonious relationship* with the question. If we enjoy the process and we can't find an answer to the question would you consider that a lose? Maybe learning represents a win. Maybe opening our minds is a victory without a loser. Inquiry represents a different spirit of play.

In paying attention to our thought process, notice how rigidly we hold the meaning of our words. What is winning? What is victory? What is self? What are we talking about? It helps if we soften our understanding of what words mean? The Japanese have a saying, "Say one word hear ten words". This quality of attention starts to open into a playfully interactive field. It might open up other ways of understanding. We can achieve an open spirit starting through the physical. Because mind and body are one system when the tension of the physical muscles release, the holding patterns of the mind softens. Space can be found for exploration.

What if discord is the degree to which 'ki' or universal energy is resisted. Maybe a win is dissolving the resistance and recognizing the harmony.

Back to the question about victory over the self, I saw something today in an Aikido book by O Sensei's son about, 'training to destroy the self'. I don't think he meant the same self O Sensei talks about when he said,

**" One who understands the secret of Aikido has the universe within
themselves and can say I am the universe."**

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

The words we choose to describe our experience affect the creation of the world we experience. The definitions we choose to describe our words affect the creation of our descriptions of experience. The whole process of meaning is in transaction.

DEEPENING MEANING

STUDENT: Could you change the word victory? It implies win-lose. How about if you use the word acceptance? It's a type of victory. Acceptance does not imply loss or gain. It means a stage where everything is agreeable.

MOON: Does victory imply win lose or is it the way we make meaning, our state of mind? When you are in Aiki-land or the Aiki state, does victory have a different meaning? In the Newtonian world words have fixed meanings. In the quantum world words are forms of potential meaning. If we play with different words let's see what opens up in our thinking.

Words come to mean different things as the language and the consciousness of humanity evolves. Here is an open doorway for us -- paying attention to the way we give meaning to words.

We slip into a place where we are certain about what things mean. Once the mental concrete sets, we try to make everything fit into our understanding. The less grounded we are the more we hold the meanings for words rigidly. From a centered grounded state of being we tend to be more fluid. I'm looking for ways to open doors to new worlds, new ways of thinking.

The way we describe our experience

affects the creation of the world.

Harmony with the Mystery

I don't know if we answered anything. But I am looking at a spirit of engagement, a state of being in harmony with the wonderings that show up, being in harmony with the mystery. We may never dissolve the mystery. But does the mystery mean something negative? Do we lose because there's a mystery? Or would we lose if there were no mystery?

Do you feel the spirit in these questions? Rather than pouring my attention into feeling 'sad', thinking that "I'm not enough" because I can't answer the question, I allow a new way of perceiving through, "simply being with the question," *feeling where I am*, noticing the flow of my own judgments. That is the practice I am in right now. Acceptance can be a doorway. Through acceptance, the power of what is occurring becomes available to divine intervention provided it is a doorway and not a sedative. Divinity appears as creativity.

Self-validation

Feelings of incompleteness and un-connectedness permeate the human condition. We resist these feelings and in compensation, look for some way to

establish ourselves. Isolation's need for self-validation is amplified by the fragmentation of thought.

If we harmonize with our need for self-validation, we can respond creatively seeking a more coherent thought structure, rather than unconsciously, seeking to prove we have value because our thoughts are right. Self-reflexive; we can see and adapt not just our actions, we can change the way we think. Self-reflexive inter-action express intelligence. Exercising awareness, focusing attention, develops a wisdom that guides life in a relationship to the whole.

The process of identification, how we identify who we are and who we are not, goes on as an interdependent part of the meaning we create. A need to claim a particular identity usually hints at a sense of disconnection. When the aspects of our being function as a unified field a holistic identity exists; there is no need to claim it. Aikido, as I use the term, connects us with the essence of being. The more attached we are to our identities, the less identified we are with the whole, the greater the tendency for compensatory behavior.

The need to claim identity can be transferred from personal identity to any desire for belonging. People join clubs or groups. We identify as Aikidoists or religious or as golfers. At a natural level the desire to belong benignly expresses our desire for connection.

When stifled, the need to identify turns neurotic. Fanaticism occurs. Then there is only one politically correct right meaning for words and only one right way to do techniques. We join the party. It's the new age nazis. A fragmented state based in fear lacks the power needed to adopt a non-resistant relationship.

As we *feel where we are* we generate power and diminish our fear. Power gives us the ability to relate rather than resist. Being present and non-resistant brings us into a state of participation. The practices enhance each other. Again and again they returns us to the truth of who we are. We have no need to validate is so.

Opening the Inquiry

I'm not sure we know how life should be done. I think we just know how we've learned to live. We might even have an idea of how life could evolve. This doesn't mean we have exhausted the limits of the possibilities.

Likewise we do not know finally what words mean. We only know how they have been used and that has changed over time. We don't know what power is contained within a sound. We don't know how words will come to be used one hundred or a thousand years in the future.

The possibility exists of exploring life in an open spirit or holding meaning in an open frame, of engaging in life in an inquiring mind. The quality of our attention is all we have to free thought and enliven thinking.

How does a limited intelligence perceive that which is beyond its perception? History, memory and thought contribute to perception. How do we transcend making meaning not limited to past meaning. To look in new ways, we need to change the state of mind, out of which we view the world. We can play with our meaning, with the evolution of our lives, in the same evolving spirit. Rather than thinking there is only one right way to live, or one right meaning for a word, we can allow ourselves more exploration.

There is great value in a knowledge of history. History is the story of the exploration and has much to teach. But history can limit our thinking to what was. Life forms out of an infinite field of possibility. Like sub-atomic particles, meaning is coming into form and disappearing. There are ideas that are no longer as appropriate as they once were. Many are different than they were generations or centuries ago. If we look, we can see this evolutionary process in our social forms, in our thought forms, in our language, in our forms of engagement and interaction. We forget that all our forms are changing. They will change again and again as new information and new technology alter the field, out of which the system of thought takes form.

Notice how quickly we jump in thought to a rigidly held position, then move forward as if it were true. Something else beyond what we know could happen, but it has a hard time happening if we hold to a modality of rigid understanding. If we resist change, we 'cut ki'. We break the connection with the flow of universal power rather receiving the guidance of the message.

“On the basis of a false notion, it is possible to build a towering doctrine.”

Gaston Bachelard Art of awareness p 331

Aikido provides an opportunity to learn. Sensing the universal flow and listening to the whisperings of the kami, life changes from a struggle to a dance of unfolding growth and development. Something beyond the known relevates, something surprisingly easier, less resistant, fluid, adaptable, creative, harmonious, rhythmic, flowing, fun, vital, inviting, all sound right. There is something going on here beyond the way we frame words and beyond the way we use techniques. We can reinforce each other in using technique to develop a spirit that explores this unfolding universe of possibilities. Embrace the opportunity to dance with the mystery.

The Value of Not Knowing

I'm looking at the ways we tend to engage. The ways we function in daily life show up in our techniques on the mat. You think you know how techniques should happen. You think you know what is supposed to happen in your life. But maybe you just think you know.

Maybe what you think should happen is just one of many things that could happen. It might be fine if any of a thousand other things happened and maybe 822 of those would be better, meaning you would enjoy them more or the people around you would enjoy them more or would become more of who they are through one of these other options.

On the mat we might find ourselves struggling with our partner. We force a technique we know, in order to get them to fall down the way we think they should. We pressure them to adhere to our fixed image rather than "allowing them the completion of their bestowed mission".

"Aikido is not for correcting others; it is for correcting the discord in your own mind."

Morihei Ueshiba, O Sensei

STUDENT: For instance, if you attempt to blend and allow somebody their mission and they're determined they want to fight -

MOON: That doesn't mean that you have to.

STUDENT: No, but there is a temptation to want to teach everybody how not to fight.

MOON: That is part of the system of thought, the tendency to want to make them be the way you think they should be. Those of you who teach have probably told your students to do something or not do something.

One of the teachers in New Zealand said, "I can't tell you how many times I have taught someone how a technique should be done and then found out later that it

wasn't necessarily right. Often it actually was an incorrect process, but I learned it a given way and I taught it that way, as the right way."

Easy to get locked into these places. Every now and then if we are lucky a student will say, "I'm not sure about that, Sensei." And if we stop and think about it, if we are willing to have all our answers questioned and our little 'flare-ups of certainty' challenged, if we can go beyond our self-protective reservations and barriers, a doorway to 'growth and development' opens.

That is why I prefer an informal approach in the dojo. To hold too rigidly to form impedes staying creative. I have no objection to forms. I respect the power they bring, but they need to be free to grow and develop as we find that our perception of the universe changes.

"An intense energy of listening and a freedom from self protective reservations and barriers"

STUDENT: I find it interesting that I've learned a lot about myself and then start trying to teach other people. It's hard enough to teach myself not to do anything, to listen, to just be there. So the art of spiritual teaching has to be trained first on yourself before you are able to go and pass it on.

MOON: The Aiki comedy act is two beginners telling each other how to do a technique. What you point to is the dichotomy. If everybody got these principles it would completely transform the harmony of the culture of the planet. But try and tell someone. They don't see the value in it so they don't even care. Now what?

Just do it. Be who you are. Don't tell them who they should be. Generate the quality of being and then perhaps they will resonate with it. *Feel where you are*. Don't tell them to feel where they are, at least without leading by doing it yourself. Gandhi said, "You must be he change you want to see in the world."

STUDENT: In this last training there was a sort of constant feeling that I wasn't doing Aikido. Something was wrong. Then I had this feeling that maybe I was doing Aikido and maybe I didn't know it.

MOON: 'I wasn't doing Aikido' meaning I wasn't doing what I thought Aikido was. Though we come here as students, notice how quickly we start acting like we know: Aikido is this, or Aikido is that. And usually we don't even see what we're doing.

If you were willing to say, "I don't know if this is Aikido or not, but let me play with it a little bit more. Let me open my mind. Let me open a possibility." You are taking a risk. Start with risking say, ten bucks worth of your assumptions. You do not have to risk everything you own. In this spirit, start to play with learning and understanding and allow that maybe Aikido is more than we think it is. Guess what, it is. Maybe life is more than we think it is. Maybe we're more than we think we are. Probably. The next level happens when we are in alignment. But it takes a willingness and persistence to risk going through the disturbance.

When we use words, we think that what we mean is what everyone else hears. But rarely is that true. The meaning of words is generated through experience, through culture. They mean different things to every one of us. If this is true in the material world, think about how nebulous communication becomes when we talk about thoughts or energy dimensions.

Keep your focus on that feeling of exploration and don't quit. Why inhibit your growth by saying, "Well, this isn't Aikido"? How do you know? Well, if you "just know," then we're done talking, and the Aikido, the inquiry and the learning stops right there in your sureness. Slow down. Study is learning, not knowing. Don't worry be happy.

STUDENT: I practiced one round this afternoon and it's something you said about no effort. We've been talking two days about non-resistance and about the struggle and practice, and then seemingly something happens and you understand something.

STUDENT: I felt the awareness of my own struggle through a 'pressure sensitivity beam' or something similar to that. As I was training I felt there was a little muscle tension or a little heat on the muscle and that I was trying to do something instead of blending. From when I started early Saturday to later today I felt that 'pressure sensitivity beam' get noticeably more sensitive.

STUDENT: I'm really glad to be reminded of the possibility of change. Recently I ran into people that I knew 20 years ago and I was amazed how little change has taken place. There seem to be certain things in the personality

that don't budge. I really appreciate this practice as a possibility for actually changing. And I appreciate how difficult it is, what a thing it is to change.

STUDENT: This last practice that we did this afternoon was really important for me because it took me quite a while to feel okay about upping the ante and feeling myself and feeling free, and just sensing myself and allowing myself to feel that when the pressure or the speed increased.

STUDENT: I was aware that I was paying attention to my unconfident self and how there is not usually reinforcement for staying there. I usually have a really strong desire to get out of feeling unconfident fast, but that was such a growth place that I could see into myself. I felt the confidence come from the collective of everybody willingly staying in the experience or feeling. That's something that unites us. I noticed that rather than feeling separate I felt really connected. And I don't think there are many places where I get this kind of experience. It un-programs another kind of learning that I went through, that most of us went through.

STUDENT: Stepping into this room is stepping into a force field and a zone that increases life's potential and I experience it way down deep. This community helped me through a real crisis time in my life and I still feel the energy from the contact. It's nice when there's change all around us out in the world to come back to a rooted place where some powerful energy continues. Of course, it has its changes and its shifts and its movement, but it's a powerful force that continues.

STUDENT: For a student to go to that place takes a lot of courage to dip down there. To dip into that part where there's really claustrophobia and stuff. There's something about that that touches me and there's something about me instigating that. There's something there.

MOON: Courage, the willingness to be authentic or enter the unknown, develops through intention and practice.

If you cultivate an experience of courage, if you continually go to the edge, not way over the edge, if you can practice going into the mystery, that's training. It's like developing a muscle. Courage grows. It doesn't take a lot of courage

The Aiki Dialogues

to come to an Aikido seminar or talk, but it takes a lot of courage to be present for what's going on for you in your life. And the more you do it, the better you'll get at it and the better you get at it the more vitality you get to explore with. This is Aikido.

STUDENT: I'm appreciative of all the disturbances that have been created in our ideas, in what I think Aikido is. I come away from here knowing a lot less than I did when I came.

**“What if we were as intense
about waging peace,
as we are when we wage war?”**

About Extraordinary Listening & The Quantum Edge

Extraordinary Listening & The Quantum Edge are dedicated to increase human wealth through extraordinary communication. Aikido of Marin is the dojo –the school where we practice

We are a network of consultants specializing in executive coaching, leadership and team development, mastery training and mediation. Our training and process work are drawn from and explore the disciplines of Aikido and Dialogue. Our coaching and training has been delivered primarily in high-change environments. We have worked with fast-paced start-ups within the telecommunications industry, large utility firms, the banking industry, and a number of high-tech corporations. We also contribute in the arena of international peace building, having worked with the Institute for Multi-track Diplomacy, Harvard Negotiation Project, Conflict Management Group and the Fulbright Commission.

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