

Featured Dojo-cho, January 2002



Richard Moon

Aikido of Marin, Fairfax, California
Division 3

Richard Moon began his career in martial arts in 1969 by studying Shotokan karate, Kenpo and Kung Fu under various teachers. In 1971 he began his study of Aikido under Sensei Robert Nadeau, who holds the rank of Aikido 7th Dan (Seventh Degree Black Belt). Nadeau Sensei was himself a personal student of the founder of Aikido, Master Morihei Ueshiba O Sensei. Richard has studied as a personal student of Mastre Accordion, Bira Almedia, a renowned Capoeira master and three-time world heavy-weight champion of the Brazilian art of Capoeira. Richard has also studied Cheng Hsin with world champion Peter Ralston, and chi gung with B. K. Frantzis.

Richard holds the rank of 5th Dan in Aikido since 1997. He is the founder and chief instructor at Aikido of Marin, a martial arts school. He is co-founder and a senior instructor at City Aikido, San Francisco, with Robert Nadeau. He has taught throughout the U.S.A. and has visited New Zealand and Europe as a guest instructor. He is also the creator of '[Aikido in Three Easy Lessons](#)'. (Copyright © Aikido of Marin 2000 Used by permission.)

I began the study 30 years ago with Bob Nadeau. I have always felt lucky to have found him and am grateful to him for his approach to the art.

For me, Aikido has always been a doorway to the unknown,

a path to perceiving the finer vibrations of universal energy that make up the manifest world. The ongoing challenge is to choose harmony with the universe rather than operating within a win/lose modality.

In our dojo, we do a lot of jiu-waza (free form movement). Our focus is to understand and practice O Sensei's spirit of exploration, whereas some dojos might focus more on preserving the form that arose out of that exploration. I am touched by O Sensei's admonition to create a beautiful world, and our inquiry delves into how we can do this in every moment of our lives, each in our unique way.

My most Memorable Aikido Experience

In the summer of 1999, I had an experience that changed the direction of my life. I led peace building and leadership work with a group of thirty-five young people from the various factions in Bosnia. We went to a remote island on Lake of the Woods in Northern Minnesota for several weeks. In addition to the class sessions, we divided into groups and went out on a five-day portage trip.

If you have traveled internationally, you know that communication often happens without words per se. Communication occurs in connection. For all of us involved, it was one of the strongest connections we had ever made. I had a group of eight young men and women on the portage trip plus several guides. Though I do not speak their language, I found myself laughing with them at jokes I did not understand. When we returned my associates described a similar experience. Communication takes place on many levels.

After watching these young people, whose relatives had on each other wreaked unimaginable horrors, playing and laughing together, my heart was somehow different. I watched them speak and listen to each other in ways I could never have imagined. What I saw and felt was beyond the power of words. It was a feeling, an experience of love I had never had before.

At the closing ceremony in Washington D.C., I was asked to encapsulate what we learned. I was honored, yet overwhelmed with the task of describing in two minutes one of the most powerful experiences of my life. Years of

meditation could not have produced the emptiness of mind I experienced. The inner silence was deafening. My whole life seemed to have been leading up to this extraordinary experience. Finally, suddenly, out of the emptiness, it came in a few simple words:

"The action that creates peace is listening."

After this experience I founded The Listening Institute, dedicated to increasing human wealth through the power of harmony, and making O Sensei's teachings accessible to those who will never take a martial arts class.

(excerpted from my book ['The Power of Extraordinary Listening'](#))