

Judy Ringer

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inside

RELAX!
Real Life
Aikido
The Magic of Conflict
Resources

The environment is invented by our presence in it. We do not parachute into a sea of turbulence, to sink or swim. We and our environments become one system, each influencing the other, each co-determining the other.

- Margaret J. Wheatley, *A Simpler Way*

quotables

The Magic of Conflict

- *It was a great day. I am applying what I learned daily. As you said, it just needs practice. Thanks again for the enlightenment.*
- *I just want to thank you again for your incredible work! Many of us have used/practiced the skill of centering since you delivered your workshop. We all agree that it was invaluable!*
- *I believe that this, of all the things I have explored, is the key to more effective, responsive connections with patients, staff, doctors, and family.*
- *I feel more empowered to make changes in my life and feel it's up to me to make them*

The Magic of Conflict

The Magic of Conflict involves both body and mind in a journey of change, using simple and powerful kinesthetic exercises from the gentle martial art of Aikido ("The Way of Harmony"). Based on the book by Thomas Crum, *The Magic of Conflict* is a course in conflict, personal growth, and better relationships. We examine beliefs about conflict that hold us back, practice skills such as centering, listening, and managing emotions, and strengthen our commitment to make new choices. This workshop is about changing ourselves at a deep level and discovering how to live the life we want.

The Powerful Voice

Do you wish you had a more powerful speaking voice? Do you have skilled, capable employees whose confidence is hampered by a soft-spoken, harsh or shaky voice? How we use our voice is closely connected with who we are. The Powerful Voice workshops teach how to develop a stronger, more effortless voice, how to give clear, effective, and compelling presentations, and how to be more confident in front of an audience of one or one hundred.



Judy Ringer

Aikido Based Workshops
Conflict Resolution Training & Facilitation
Voice Work

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Power & Presence

Spring/Summer 2001

Ideas and inspiration on conflict, communication and creating the life you want

Relax!

Relax – a word that is regularly heard during aikido practice. “Relax!” says the teacher. “Relax!” I say to my partner. “Relax. Don’t be so stiff. Let go. You’re working too hard. You’re resisting. It’s much easier than that. Don’t struggle.” It’s all true. If only I could take my own advice.

I like to find similarities between my aikido practice and daily life. One that I’ve noticed relates to relaxation. I tend to give a lot of advice on the mat. I’m often the teacher and I’m supposed to, but I also do it when I’m practicing – when I’m just somebody’s partner. For example, I might suggest that my partner relax if I sense that he or she is stiff, resistant, or generally making the technique more difficult than it needs to be. I try to demonstrate where they are tense or struggling more than necessary. My intention is to support them, but maybe there’s a better way.

There’s no question that aikido is a martial art that takes a lifetime to master. Our initial reaction in the face of attack is to tighten up and resist the oncoming assault. One of the most important reasons to practice aikido is to learn to do otherwise. If a student can “relax” and not stiffen or freeze, he can move out of the way of the attack and join with its energy. This relaxed yet energized blending is the essence of power, why we practice aikido, and one of the most difficult tasks to master – on the mat or in life.

Well, so, here I am telling my “stiff” partner to relax and take it easy. But what about me? My arms are more relaxed than his perhaps, but I can still feel the tension. My breath is tight, and my center has moved up into my shoulders. I seem to have “caught” some tension from my partner. The more resistant he is, the stiffer I become, especially as I attempt to “correct” him. He’s not falling right! If he’d only loosen up a little he could feel what I want him to do! Oh, he’ll never get it, he’s just too tight.

A Change of Focus

Out of curiosity, I change the focus to my own body instead of my partner’s. If I get stiffer in response to my partner’s tension, then maybe it will work in reverse. If I relax maybe he will too. So I try it and it works. As I

become more relaxed, so does my partner. I relax and blend and suddenly I’m back in the driver’s seat – in control of myself and my opponent/partner. I begin to ask myself which one of us needed the admonition to relax. I realize the connectedness of everything and that it only takes one of us to make a change for the whole to change. I even wonder if my relaxation with this partner might have an effect on the whole dojo. It’s possible.



Off The Mat

If this “relaxation contagion” works on the mat, maybe it works off the mat too. You’re probably already thinking of the ways. Your life partner starts shouting at you or the kids, and instead of shouting back you relax and center. You notice that your boss is tense (again!) and

instead of resisting, you relax. Your co-worker is upset and ranting about something that happened at home. Instead of telling her to calm down, you calm down. You ask your 15-year old to stop putting it off and clean that room now! When she stiffens, instead of stiffening with her, you relax, center and figure out what you can both do to resolve this ongoing problem.

A Different Kind of Control

What we learn in aikido practice is relaxation in the face of attack, and how to replace one kind of control with another. We’re so used to controlling others with force. If I’m bigger and stronger I can control you. If I’m a parent or a boss I can (for a while anyway) tell you what to do and you have to obey. We use power to control. In aikido we relax, center and blend. I control myself so that I can control the attack and the attacker. By blending I can feel where the energy is coming from which also affects my choices in that moment. It’s a moment to moment unfolding, relaxing, centering, blending and redirecting – physically. In non-physical aikido, we do the same thing: relax, center, blend and redirect, from moment to moment, making choices that return us to our vision of who we are and where we are going. It’s not easy. Or rather, it takes practice. Just like aikido on the mat, off-the-mat aikido is powerful and fun if you learn the techniques.

When You’re Smiling

When you’re smiling,
when you’re smiling,
The whole world smiles with you.
When you’re laughing,
when you’re laughing,
The sun comes shining through.

But when you’re crying
you bring on the rain,
So stop your sighing,
be happy again.
Keep on smiling,
'cause when you’re smiling,
The whole world smiles with you.

— A song from from the 1920’s
composed by Mark Fisher,
Joe Goodwin and Larry Shay

Aikido Based Workshops

Conflict Resolution
Training & Facilitation

Voice Work



Call 603-431-8560 or e-mail judyringer@rcn.com or visit us online at www.JudyRinger.com





JudyRinger.com

If you enjoy surfing the web, you can now receive *Power & Presence* – and a lot more tips and information – at www.JudyRinger.com. Our new site offers support on conflict skills and communication training, conflict facilitation, private coaching and aikido. You'll also find in-service workshops and upcoming events. Please stop by!

Please tell me!

If you prefer to receive *Power & Presence* electronically, let me know:

- By phone 603-431-8560,
- By email judyringer@rcn.com, or
- Online at JudyRinger.com on the Contact page.



We are indeed energy beings as well as physical bodies.

The energy field around us changes as we change . . .

Our psycho-physiological states are affected by the energy field around us, and there appear to be no limits to our ability to change and affect this field.

— Thomas Crum



real life

Stopping to Center — From Christine

Christine was watching TV late at night when she heard the car horn honking outside her window. She knew who it was and her anger flared immediately. She got up, ran to the door and began to shout at the woman in the car to stop. The honking continued. Normally, Chris would have run out in her bathrobe and started to bang on the car window and yell. She has a hot temper and, according to her, an "attitude!" She would have told the woman off in no uncertain terms, and possibly done more than that. But she'd just learned about centering earlier that day and thought she'd try it out – "just to see." As she centered she began to wonder why the woman continued to honk the horn with such a regular rhythm and considered for the first time that something might be wrong. Chris did go out to the car, but she tapped on the window, which the driver rolled down. Chris could smell liquor, and the woman didn't look well.

Chris asked if she was okay, and the woman said no, she thought her pulse was fast and she didn't know where she was – could someone get help, which Chris promptly did. She felt good that she'd taken a moment to change her attitude.

A Refreshing Pause — From Greg Andruschkevich, National Education Association

Jean and I had a grand time at your workshop. We have a chime at home that reminds us of the centering bell ... Jean rang it three or four times on Sunday. That brought a pause to our busy activities. Thanks ...

Work in the invisible world
at least as hard
as you do in the visible.

—Rumi

resources

Whenever I think I should know everything there is to know about conflict management and therefore never have another conflict, I remember what a mentor told me early on: "It's a process." I recall that every conflict can be an opportunity to learn and to progress on my journey. And I've come to rely on certain supports to help me maintain forward progress. One is that I enjoy reading. Another is my ongoing Aikido practice. If you're looking for a good book, here are two suggestions.

Journey to Center

Tom Crum's second book, *Journey to Center*, is a collection of true stories relating some of his fascinating life experiences. The reader gets to follow Tom as he finds his way back to center in situations all over the world, and with all kinds of people. Each story embodies a lesson such as: "Learning to Let Go," "Turning Fear into Power," and "Creating Centered Relationships." The book is a breath of fresh air, a treat for the soul, and very centering reading. I have copies, or you can get them through your local bookstore.

The Art of Possibility

The Art of Possibility, Transforming Professional and Personal Life by Benjamin Zander and Rosamund Stone Zander is fun reading, filled with personal stories, examples, and practices on creating a life that is a journey of fascination, learning, and discovery. Benjamin Zander is a world-renowned speaker and the conductor of the Boston Philharmonic, and Rosamund Zander is a family therapist and consultant to groups and individuals on conflict and life issues. This book

deepened my thinking about how to be more fascinated and less serious in my own life and gave me lots of new ways to practice.

Aikido — The Way of Harmony

Many of the principles incorporated in *The Magic of Conflict* and *The Powerful Voice* come from aikido, the Japanese martial art which means "The Way of Harmony." In aikido, students learn to blend with an attack and redirect energy without harming the attacker. There are excellent schools in Portsmouth, Portland and Cambridge that are affiliated with the United States Aikido Federation and whose teachers are well-known throughout the U.S. and the world.

Portsmouth Aikido was founded in 1995 and meets three times a week at the Seacoast Family Y, 550 Peaverly Hill Road, Portsmouth. On Tuesdays and Thursdays practice runs from 7:45 - 9:00 p.m. and on Sundays from 2:15 to 3:30 p.m. Dues are \$40.00 per month, and there is a \$25.00 registration fee. You may come by at anytime and watch a class, which is the best way to see if this martial art is for you. Information on Portland and Cambridge is available there also.

Private Coaching Sessions

If you prefer working on your own to working in a group, or if you have employees who would benefit from personal coaching, private sessions are available to build skills in conflict management, presentations, and public speaking. Call Judy at 431-8560 or Email judyringer@rcn.com.

The words *Power* and *Presence* are used in numerous and sometimes contradictory ways. In *The Magic of Conflict* and *The Powerful Voice* workshops, *power* is defined as the life force that connects, engages and flows internally and from one person to another. *Presence* refers to a quality of being in the world and in the moment, a unity of mind, body and spirit that fosters connection with ourselves and our deepest values, a place of awareness and stillness that promotes appropriate action. *Power and Presence* is published three times per year to provide ideas, information, and inspiration on conflict, change, connection and power, and ways to make conscious choices about them.

workshops

(See calendar to the right for dates and times.)

Women's Power, Women's Voices

Our voices are intimately linked to our power. Learning how to use our voices can help us be more effective, articulate, and influential in the world. Engaging our inner voices can help us stay healthy in the midst of confusion, stress and emotional chaos. This program is an opportunity to get in touch with our inner and outer voices, find the power behind them and use them. Activities include:

- ✓ Kinesthetic and Breathing Exercises
- ✓ Making Simple Sounds Together
- ✓ Guided Visualization
- ✓ Group Discussion

Powerful Presentations

This empowering workshop combines training in good vocal technique with practice in giving clear, effective, and compelling presentations. Judy Ringer and Susan Losapio team up to help participants develop a more powerful voice, enhance confidence and presence, and connect with an audience. You'll learn simple kinesthetic exercises you can practice daily and use before, during, and after presentations. You will also be guided in the Four Defining Characteristics of a Powerful

Presentation and have the opportunity to deliver several one minute presentations on tape. You'll receive individual coaching to help fine tune your skills and have the video to review at home.

The Magic of Conflict

"Conflict isn't good or bad. It's what we do with it that makes the difference." — Tom Crum

Each time conflict shows up, we have the opportunity to respond with awareness and composure. Yet so often we fight or flee. We know what we want to do, but our bodies react before we can stop and think. **The Magic of Conflict**, using principles from the gentle martial art of Aikido, teaches how to avoid reaction, stay calm and focused, and utilize the energy in conflict. This workshop will explore new ways to transform difficult situations into opportunities for growth and change. Participants will:

- ✓ Build skills in conflict management
- ✓ Strengthen the ability to communicate with power
- ✓ Increase connection and improve relationships

registration

Yes, I want more information about:

The Magic of Conflict The Powerful Voice Other: _____

Please add me/my colleague to your mailing list:

Please call to discuss creating a program for my organization:

Please reserve space for me in your upcoming workshop:

Title of Workshop: _____

Total Cost: _____ Deposit enclosed: _____ (minimum \$50)*

Name: _____ Occupation: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (day): _____ (night): _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

* Discounts available for multiple participants from the same family or company as well as some partial scholarships.

Please take a minute to let me know if you'd like to continue receiving this newsletter. Please return this form, call, or e-mail indicating Yes or No. Thanks!

Yes, please keep me on. No, please take my name off the list.

MAIL TO: Judy Ringer • 76 Park Street • Portsmouth, NH • 03801-5031

workshop calendar

June 16 • 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

THE MAGIC OF CONFLICT

Tuition: \$125.00 per person

Portsmouth Location TBD

Call, email, or return Registration Form

July 7 • 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

WOMEN'S POWER, WOMEN'S VOICES

Tuition: \$65.00 per person

Location: New Hampshire Theatre Project,
Portsmouth, NH

Call, email, or return Registration Form

August 15 • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

POWERFUL PRESENTATIONS

Tuition: \$125.00 per person

Portsmouth Location TBD

Call, email, or return Registration Form

Please register early.

All workshops have minimum and maximum participant requirements.

CUSTOMIZED PROGRAMS

The following are examples of programs designed for organizations. All trainings are tailored to meet specific goals and objectives. Please call for additional information.

CORPORATE/BUSINESS SEMINARS

- Conflict in the Workplace
- Team Building: Working Together Effectively
- Assertive Communication
- Powerful Presentations
- Difficult People: Tormentors or Teachers
- Principled Negotiation

PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATORS

- The Magic of Conflict
- Violence: Dealing with Anger (for students)
- Helping Students Deal with Anger and Conflict (for teachers)
- Team Building: Working Together Effectively

