

Power & Presence

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

Fall 2003

Beacon Street

I was walking down Beacon Street in Boston when a man approached and asked for directions to Quincy Market. It was the middle of the day and while no people were in the immediate vicinity, there were people around. Still I felt funny. I kept walking past the place where I imagined he wanted me to stop. Then I turned to face him and pointed with a large, expansive gesture in the direction of the market. My voice was loud, clear and steady as I told him he could probably walk there, but why didn't he go across the street to Starbucks, where they could give more detailed directions. The interchange lasted no more than ten seconds, but it was full of a subliminal awareness that I was on guard, my senses heightened, my physical self ready for...what?

Afterwards I remarked to myself how my body just kept moving, walking away from the corner with my back against the fence of the Public Garden, where the initial encounter took place. I was pleasantly surprised at how I (unconsciously?) created a safe distance between the man and me, giving me freedom to move in any direction. Once the moment was over I thought about how big my arm movements were as I pointed toward the direction of the Market. I felt expansive, bigger than my usual self – though not defensive. My energy was receptive, engaged, and it would keep me safe if necessary. It said: I'm assuming you have good intent but if you don't, I'm ready. It was strong and soft at the same time. I was fully present.

It all happened too quickly to make these instantaneous assessments consciously. I reacted. Only after I turned the corner and was walking down Charles Street did I begin to reflect on exactly how much happened in that brief encounter. I had no outwardly perceptible reason to think this man had any bad intentions. So why did my body do what it did? And so calmly?

Maybe it was seeing another man (his friend?) with his back to us near the rear of (their?) van parked behind him on the street. Or maybe it was the sound of his voice, the way he inclined his body toward me as he spoke, just a little too close for my comfort. It could have been the too many unfortunate stories I've heard and read about men, vans and trapped women and children. There's no way of knowing if his intentions were suspect. I only know I was able to give him the benefit of the doubt without compromising my self.

The power of connection and its ability to influence relationship is truly amazing. We need not fear our power. When used consciously, true power is engaged, aware, fluid, and assertive, without being judgmental or controlling.

Centered Response

We practice aikido with the hope that gradually over time we will build in this kind of internal barometer. It determines the extent of the pressure and activates the appropriate response mechanisms in physical danger. In tense situations I may not have time to think about what to do. I train so that body and mind respond automatically to the circumstances at hand.

As I thought about this physical encounter, I began to draw parallels. Many conflicts that are not physical in nature may nonetheless evoke a similar emotional state – the adrenaline pulses, our senses are more acute and we react emotionally. As in physical aikido, in non-physical conflict we can train our mind/body to be simultaneously receptive and assertive. We can allow our partner the benefit of the doubt while keeping ourselves safe. In physical or in verbal/emotional conflict, centering allows us to be in control and fully present. When we're centered, we make good decisions.

Ten Seconds

It's interesting how much can happen in ten seconds. The power of connection and its ability to influence relationship is truly amazing. We need not fear our power. When used consciously, true power is engaged, aware, fluid, and assertive, without being judgmental or controlling.

My lesson from Beacon Street is that acceptance and readiness go hand in hand. When I am ready for anything, I can accept my partner at face value. If he threatens, I am ready. And if he is just looking for information, I am ready for that as well. I am equally receptive and assertive – holding both in the power of centered presence. Compassion and assertion – each tempers and supports the other. We need to feel strong before we can accept, empathize, understand or appreciate. Likewise, as we learn to appreciate our own power and use it consciously, we deepen our capacity to understand and accommodate others.

Centering practice allows us to be safe and in control, strong and soft, ready and curious at the same time – to say no *and* yes.

inspiration

There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action. And because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique and if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is, nor how valuable, nor how it compares to other expressions. It is your business to keep the channel open. You do not even have to believe in yourself or your work. You have to keep open and aware directly to the urges that activate you. Keep the channel open.

– Martha Graham

**Conflict Management
Communication Skills
Training & Facilitation**





real life

Many thanks to all who sent stories about how you are utilizing Aiki principles in your life.

From Dree Sherry, speech therapist

After our special needs instructors' group took your course on conflict resolution, several of us used it very successfully at a parent meeting. Three or four of us were going into what we anticipated would be a very stressful staffing on one of our students. In preparation we gave each other the "secret sign" as we passed one another in the hall which was the "unbendable arm." We left little signs on each other's room doors with the reminder "Center" on it. By the time we got into the meeting, it went off without a hitch. The atmosphere was calm and one of cooperation, and we all left far more relieved than we thought possible.

I think changing the energy in the atmosphere around the situation did the trick before the meeting even started. Even the parents left in good shape! It is mentally embracing the idea that things can go well rather than draining one's energy anticipating how badly things could turn out that makes the difference.

From Sue Herrera, my aunt Mary's caregiver

Because you shared your "Birthday dinner date" with us about the "Lucky Baby Planet," today we remembered to laugh and enjoy the space that we share with people of all

ages. I've been blessed with making the best of The Lucky Senior Citizens Planet.... Hey, they keep me young!

From Steve, Musician and Research Coordinator, Anesthesiology Dept., Maine Medical Center

I've noticed in my music that the more I can relax and just center in the moment, the better the performances are. All the things I might be worrying about such as the audience or the booking agent or the club owner all become a lot easier and often just take care of themselves. I do a bit of improvising (scat) and my best performances are always when I can relax, stop thinking, and hear where the music wants to go.

From a friend

I did try to center when my "difficult person" came within my proximity, I felt relatively open and projecting energy — and this person didn't even address me! I thought that was good!

...the difference between great teams and mediocre teams lies in how they face conflict and deal with the defensiveness that invariably surrounds conflict.

—Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*



resources

Journey to Center

Give yourself a gift of learning and quiet reflection in the Colorado Rockies. Consider joining me in September at Tom Crum's Journey To Center — a program of centering training, conflict resolution, stress management, and rejuvenation. This year the program runs from Sept. 29 to October 3. For more information, email judyringer@rcn.com or visit www.AikiWorks.com.

Centering Practice - Meditation

You can create more power and presence in your life by developing daily activities in which to practice centering and mindfulness. One I have used for many years is meditation. There are many ways to meditate, including silent prayer, Transcendental and Zen Meditation, deep breathing, and toning/sounding exercises. You can meditate alone or in a group. Meditator and psychotherapist, Donna Melillo, leads a group that meets regularly in Durham every Tuesday morning from 8 to 8:30 a.m. Donna can be reached at 603-868-1241.

Portsmouth Aikido

Portsmouth Aikido is an ongoing martial arts school located at the Seacoast Family Y in Portsmouth. Many of the principles that are reflected in our workshops come from Aikido, the Japanese martial art that teaches self defense through redirection of energy. Classes are held on Tuesdays

and Thursdays at 7:45 p.m. and Sundays at 1:00 and 2:15 p.m. You may stop by anytime and watch a class, or visit our web site for more information.

The next **Aikido Beginner's Class** will start at the Seacoast Family Y on September 7. The six-week course will run through Oct. 12, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. each Sunday. The cost is \$50.00 per person for the course and anyone aged 12 and older is welcome. For information or to register, please visit www.PortsouthAikido.com.

Conflict Coaching

Private coaching sessions are available to build skills in conflict management or to facilitate conflicts between couples, co-workers, and management teams. Also available are sessions in public speaking, presentations and vocal power and presence. Please let us know how we can help.

Power & Presence Associates

Power & Presence is not just a newsletter — it's a company that provides unique training for specific needs. If your focus is on conflict, communication, or increasing power and presence under stress, we have associates with expertise in leadership development, strategic planning, customer service, powerful presentations and stress management. Please contact us to discuss your training needs.

There is
no true path
without center.
With center
the mind, body,
and spirit merge —
Passion and
commitment
unleash
a force
that cannot
be contained.

—Thomas Crum

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

Conflict in The Workplace

Most of us see conflict as negative, and this perception has a profound impact on how we manage it as individuals and organizations. The purpose of this one-day program is to provide perspective, tools, and training in self-management and conflict resolution in the workplace.

You will discover how to use daily challenges to move towards your vision. You'll experience conflict as a way to strengthen relationships at work and at home. You'll practice Aikido techniques to change resistance into flow, reaction into response. And you'll learn how to make life more effortless and powerful, and have fun doing it. At the end of this workshop, you will be able to—

- Re-pattern ineffective responses to conflict.
- Stay calm and increase options under stress.
- Communicate more effectively.
- Manage emotional energy constructively.
- Move from problem-focus to solution-focus in resolving conflict.

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 will team up once again 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

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

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.

Women's Self Defense – A One-Day Training in Physical Confidence

New!

Do you wonder what you would do in the event of a physical attack? If you would like to feel more confident physically, generate

calm under pressure, and practice verbal and physical skills to disarm a potential assailant, join Fiona Blyth and Judy Ringer in this one-day women's self-defense and assertiveness training. Fiona is a 3rd degree black belt in aikido, and teaches at New England Aikikai in Cambridge Massachusetts. Judy Ringer is a black belt in aikido and founder and chief instructor of Portsmouth Aikido, Portsmouth, NH. Participants will:

- Increase physical and emotional power
- Learn to turn a freeze response into an action response
- Practice effective self protection skills for common types of physical assault
- Begin to control fear and make wise choices in physically threatening situations

YOUR SPIRIT IS THE TRUE SHIELD.

— Morihei Ueshiba, Founder of Aikido

registration

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: _____

Please add me/my colleague to your mailing list:

*Full deposit refundable one week prior to workshop date.

Please tell me!

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

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

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

workshop calendar

September 10 • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE

Tuition: \$135.00 per person
(Lunch, Magic of Conflict text
and workbook included)

Location: Daniel Webster College
Pease Tradeport, Portsmouth

To register: Return form below, call, or email

October 29 • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
POWERFUL PRESENTATIONS

Tuition: \$135.00 per person
(Lunch and handouts provided)

Daniel Webster College
Pease Tradeport, Portsmouth

To register: Return form below, call, or email

November 8 • 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
WOMEN'S SELF DEFENSE

Tuition: \$125.00 per person
(Lunch included)

Portsmouth area location TBA

To register: Return form below, call, or email

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
- Creating a Positive Work Environment
 - Managerial Courage
- Team Building: Working Together Effectively
 - Assertive Communication
 - Powerful Presentations
- Difficult People: Tormentors or Teachers
 - Principled Negotiation
- Aikido and Conflict: Getting on the Mat

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




Judy Ringer

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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inside

- *Beacon Street*
- *Journey to Center*
- *Conflict in the Workplace*
- *Powerful Presentations*
- *Women's Self Defense*

 All things are ready if our minds be so. —William Shakespeare (Henry V)

quotables

- *Thank you for providing this valuable training to our leaders. Your work will no doubt have an impact on this organization.*
- *Applying Aikido principles to managing conflict added a unique dimension that was very instructive. I appreciated the notion of staying close to the conflict.*
- *Thank you so much for coming to our Young Women's Leadership meeting! I think the idea of embracing conflict was new to many of the girls and has given them a simple, effective way of managing their stressful lives.*

solutions

question

Next week I am speaking to a group who have chewed up and spit out other presenters. Reportedly they have an arrogance that no one is as smart, talented, competent as they. How do I frame this so that I will not be scared to death and immediately fulfill their expectations of incompetence.

answer

Utilize the energy of "expert" audiences by deferring to their knowledge whenever possible. Acknowledge their expertise without disclaiming or belittling yourself or your message.

Coming from center and your own power, invite their contributions. Arrogance comes naturally from a place of wanting to prove what they know, to "show off" a bit perhaps. So let them, wherever it seems appropriate.

Similarly, have confidence in your own knowledge and passion about your topic, knowing you are there for a good reason. Your perspective, idea, or niche is unique and they will be grateful to add it to their base. Make the audience your ally and the presentation an adventure in co-creation.



**Conflict Management
 Communication Skills
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Judy Ringer

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