

Power & Presence

Winter 2003

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

Becoming Each Other

During an aikido class in May I sustained a serious soft tissue injury to my ribs. I stayed off the mat for about three weeks, hoping to give the ribs time to heal. It wasn't long enough, however, and when I got back on the mat, though I tried to be careful, I could tell I was straining. At the end of July the doctor told me if I really wanted to heal completely I had to stop practicing aikido for three months. This was another blow – three months! When you're used to practicing five days a week, three months seems like a long time. I grudgingly folded my hakama and sat on the sidelines, jealously watching my comrades having fun throwing and being thrown.

I love aikido. It's not just something I do, it's become a part of me. I love the energy exchange, the touch, the physical workout, the sweating, and the sense of being energized and exhausted at the same time. I love bowing and saying "thank you very much," and I love the sense of quiet and peace as we all sit on the mat waiting for the teacher to begin the ritual that opens the class. I love the people that practice aikido, and I love myself when I'm practicing. It is a gift in my life. I wake up mornings thinking how lucky I am to have found it.

Sidelined

Landing on the injured list happened at a time in my aikido practice that seemed particularly unfair. Having just tested successfully for my black belt, I was in the best physical condition of my life. I was finally feeling my power and using it. It felt great. Then – boom – that's it. Sidelined! I was not pleased. But what was I to do? I decided to listen to the doctor and be good. I didn't want to jeopardize my practice, and so I took the long view. Three months isn't forever, I told myself, and I will get well and practice again.

I'm the chief instructor at my dojo and, though we have other more experienced and gifted teachers, I knew it would not be good for me to be absent for three months. I decided to go to class and watch. So I sat on the sidelines, missing the energy and the interaction, missing being part of it all. Most of all I missed playing. I also felt like a wimp. Others practice with injuries, why can't I? They'll all think I can't take it – just a girl after all. She hasn't got what it takes. The internal muggers were bad. But I stuck it out.

View From The Bench

After several nights of sitting on the bench, something changed. I started looking forward to going to class. It surprised me at first. I noticed myself smiling as I watched the other students throw each other, having fun. Those who practice aikido know what lovely people aikidoists are. Plus, I know these people. They are all my students and partners on the mat. Most are younger than I. Many are also new to aikido, and they all seem to love it. The longer I watched, the more joy I derived from the experience. I would see little things – a kind gesture extended from one partner to another, a smile, or laughter at a

Energy Exchange

New students enter this arena, this community of energy. They come with their own attitudes and beliefs, their physical and non-physical power. Attitudes of fear or cockiness gradually join in, blend and are changed by the exchange of energy that takes place every time we meet. They become more like us, and we like them. We blend and unite. As I watched the image that came to mind was "We are becoming each other."

Is it so different off the mat? In life – when we shake hands, embrace, speak to one another, when we touch our partners with our bodies or our words – are we not in some unacknowledged way

Life threw me into a fall that I was not prepared for, and I gradually found my center and rolled out of it. The view from the bench was unexpected and fascinating....

technique gone awry. A senior student gently showing a new person by the movement of his body how the technique might be done more smoothly. A young boy doing one forward roll after another to try and figure out why he keeps crunching his shoulder on one side but not the other. Another senior student trying to help him figure it out. Changing partners and doing it all over again.

The more classes I watched the more I began to see things I never would have seen while practicing or teaching. The exchange of energy that I missed so much I began to see live and in the flesh. Putting power into a partner who is capable of receiving it is an awesome feeling. Receiving another's energy is equally incredible and unique. "Here is power, here is some of me, take it," and "Give me your power, give me all you've got, I can take it," over and over again, a hundred times in the course of an hour's practice. But it seemed to go beyond the physical attack, connection, and redirection. As they gave their energy, they were giving themselves – their essence – nothing less. What are we *but* energy? You take a little bit of me, and I receive something of you.

exchanging a piece of our selves? Knowing this, will I make different choices?

They say in aikido that receiving the black belt is the mark of a true beginner. I would not have chosen to be sidelined for such a long time and indeed railed against it often. But I also see that I was permitted a new level of practice. Life threw me into a fall that I was not prepared for, and I gradually found my center and rolled out of it. The view from the bench was unexpected and fascinating. I may sit there again just because. As I silently witness the gentle, kind, playful and powerful souls in front of me, I experience hope. It isn't that hard to imagine that soon we will all understand – we are not separate. We are connected by invisible strands of energy, and we are becoming more aware of it everyday. It is a beautiful view and a surprise package I had not expected. Thank you very much.

**Conflict Management
Communication Skills
Training & Facilitation**





real life

How can I practice centering? Let me count the ways . . .

From a student at Daniel Webster College

I found the process of centering quite helpful recently. On Friday I had to attend a strategy meeting which included the department head. I was nervous and was one of the first people to get to the room. While waiting for the others I quietly breathed and practiced centering. I found I was able to calm my nerves and feel more focused during the meeting. As the meeting progressed I perceived, by the tone of their comments and body language, that certain managers were at odds with the department head. This was confirmed to me later by my manager, but I found it interesting that I had picked up on it myself.

From M.P., Kittery Point, ME

Although I've taught for many years I've never thought of centering before I started – seems like such a small thing, but it's actually transforming, and I enjoyed the benefit of it (as I'm sure my students did) when I taught classes last night!

From John Baker, Fortune 500 Insurance Co.

Two new stickers on my phone: "BREATHE & CENTER."

From Shawn Carey, SNHU Leadership student

Given the nature of the program I'm currently in at school I face a lot of pressure and stress. A lot is expected of us, and all outcomes have to be excellent. Since high school I have been very anxious about life in general. The important lesson I learned from your workshop is that we all hold the intrinsic power to discover from within that which makes us calm, focused, and "centered." Thank you.

From Betsy Tabor, mother, homemaker

I do wonder if becoming less critical of others and of self is a growing up thing. I'm consumed of late with thoughts like "There are no bad people, we're all just doing the best we can." Usually when we act "badly," it has to do with some pain along the way. Which can make the enduring of that behavior (on the part of others or in ourselves) interesting, something to contemplate, rather than misery.

The place to improve the world is first in one's own heart and head and hands, and then work outward from there.

—Robert M. Pirsig

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

— Robert Frost

resources

www.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!

www.PortsmouthAikido.com

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 and in *Power & Presence* come from Aikido, the Japanese martial art devoted to turning resistance into energy. Regular mixed level classes are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:45 to 9:00 p.m. and on Sundays from 2:15 to 3:30 p.m. Monthly dues are \$40.00 per person and there are discounts for family memberships. Beginners (aged 12 and up) through advanced are welcome. You may stop by anytime and watch a class, or jump in and practice once at no charge. Visit our new web site for more information.

Beginner's Class – Jan. 26 – March 2

A beginner's course in Aikido will start at the Seacoast Family Y in Portsmouth on Jan. 26. The six-week course will run through March 2, 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 to attend. For information or to register, please call Judy at 431-8560 or visit our website at www.PortsmouthAikido.com. There will be a live aikido demonstration and initial "try-it-out" class offered at the Seacoast Family Y on Sunday, January 19 from 2:15 to 3:30 p.m. There is no charge for the January 19 class or demonstration.

Conflict Coaching

If you prefer working on your own to working in a group, or if you have employees who would benefit from private coaching, sessions are available to build skills in conflict management or to facilitate difficult conflicts between couples, co-workers, and management teams. Individual coaching in public speaking, presentations and vocal power and presence can also be scheduled by phone (603-431-8560) or email (judyringer@rcn.com).

**Warm Wishes for
Connection and
Peace in the
New Year.**



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

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.)

Inner Resilience: 3 Simple Ways to Navigate Life With More Power & Grace

When meeting the stresses and challenges of life today, do you wish you had ways to be more resilient and more effective? Would you like to have confidence that you have what you need to face whatever comes your way? This interactive workshop will provide you with a model for how to develop your own inner resilience by taking on some simple and readily-accessible daily practices. You will take home a new practice or two, and some tools to support you in increasing your ability to face small and large challenges with both power and grace. Co-facilitators Judy Ringer and Sandy Davis, professional coach. Enrollment limited to 12 participants.

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 Weekend

It's what we can't see, what isn't said, that often decides the outcome of events. This two-day weekend training is meant to give all of us plenty of time to practice awareness, perspective, and skills in conflict management, communication and living a more powerful and effortless life. It is an opportunity to become aware of the physical, mental and emotional choices that we make and choose the ones that foster positive outcomes. You'll learn about the principles of the Japanese art of aikido and practice mind/body skills like centering, empathy, and redirection of energy. You'll use this new awareness to initiate verbal interactions that engage others in problem-solving strategies. Objectives:

- Understand why we can't change others, only ourselves
- Enhance relationships by being a better listener and communicator
- Acknowledge emotional energy and use it consciously
- Use words with awareness and intention
- Perform more effectively at work, in meetings and in all of life's difficult moments

The tree the tempest with a crash of wood
Throws down across our path is not to bar
Our passage to our journey's end for good,
But just to ask us who we think we are
-- Robert Frost

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:

Please call to discuss creating a program for my organization:

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.

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

workshop calendar

January 25 • 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

INNER RESILIENCE

Tuition: \$45.00 per person
(bring bag lunch)

Location: Kittery Recreation Dept.
To register, call Kittery Rec. Dept.,
207-439-3800

February 11 • 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

March 8-9 • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

MAGIC OF CONFLICT WEEKEND

Tuition: \$245.00 per person
(Lunches, Magic of Conflict
text and workbook 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
- 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

76 Park Street • Portsmouth, NH 03801-5031

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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inside

- **Becoming Each Other**
 - **Beginning Aikido**
 - **Conflict Coaching**
 - **Inner Resilience**
- **Powerful Presentations**
- **Magic of Conflict Weekend**



*Life throws things at us that we cannot predict and cannot control.
 What we can control is who we are along the way. —Learning to Fall, Philip Simmons*

quotables

- *Thank you for a very successful staff development session with our personnel last week. Many people, including me, have used these strategies already.*
- *Thank you, Judy, for presenting concepts that were, as you promised, practical, interactive, and fun.*
- *Very useful. I learned to be more open and relaxed in making presentations, and how to better deal with anxiety.*

solutions

question

What if you are the only one interested in resolving the conflict?

answer

It only takes one person to begin the resolution of a conflict. The belief that all people involved have to agree to resolve the conflict often stops anyone from beginning the process. Perhaps you think you're the only one interested because you have a specific outcome in mind. You may need to give up your view of what "should" be and focus on what is. When you begin to look at the situation from a more discovering place, you will become curious about your partner's needs, hopes, and frustrations. You will be more flexible and less judgmental. And you will move from feeling like a victim to being proactive in searching for solutions that work for all parties. Stop trying to change them, and change yourself instead. Can you do this? It takes true power and a strong center. But you will find that when you change, everything changes.



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 Communication Skills
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