

Power & Presence

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

Fall 2004

Many Lessons...

There's a saying in aikido, "There are many lessons on the mat." It means that when we're practicing aikido we're not just learning aikido, we're also learning about life. For example, when someone grabs my wrist too hard and I get angry but don't say anything, I eventually learn that it would be more useful to ask him not to grab so hard. I may also notice that it's difficult for me to ask for what I want in other places in my life, that I suffer needlessly because of it, and that I blame others and justify my blaming instead of taking action. Many lessons...

I swim daily and notice that I have a new saying, similar to the aikido one, that goes "There are many lessons in the pool." Every day I seem to have another internal learning adventure.

An example of this is the lane partner dilemma. Some swimmers are easy and quiet as they cut through the water; others splash. Some swim straight and stay in their own part of the lane, leaving plenty of room. Others flail and lunge, seemingly unaware that there is anyone else around. Just like in aikido, with some partners cooperation is easy. As if we were dancing, we know the timing and the moves and we flow easily with one another. With others it's messy, and we're stepping on each other's toes all the time. Ever feel this way? At the pool, as in aikido, I find I can make the situation messier or easier depending on my attitude and actions.

Lesson #1: I am given many dance partners in life. Whether the dance is easy or difficult is influenced at least in part by me.

Please Pick Another Lane

Which brings me to Lesson #2. One of the "difficult partners" seems to like to swim with me. I can't figure it out. Even when there's an empty lane, he gets in mine. He swims more slowly than I do, so I have to wait for him or double back so as not to "pass" him, which we're not allowed to do at our pool. He splashes and his swimming is erratic, his arms swinging way out to the side and occasionally accidentally hitting me. When I see him coming I think, *Oh no, please pick another lane.* But he doesn't.

One morning I came to the pool late and this gentleman was already swimming. There was an open lane next to his, and I sat on the edge and was doing my warm-ups when he came up for air. He looked over and motioned to me that he was getting out and I could have his lane. I thanked him but stayed where I was. I had a lane. He

explained that he really liked his lane because there were no jets gushing water into the pool. The jets are very strong and bother him. The lane he was in – the lane I usually swim in – doesn't have them. *Aha!* I say to myself. *He doesn't get into my lane just to annoy me. He dislikes the other lanes. And now he's trying to give me the "good" lane. What a nice person!*

Lesson #2: It's not always about me.

The Benefit of the Doubt

A third lesson from the pool is that people surprise me if I let them. Recently I got into the hot tub ("many lessons in the hot tub") to relax after my swim. There was a man in there swishing his legs back and forth really hard, churning the water into waves. I closed my eyes and leaned against the edge of the tub and tried to mellow out. Impossible. I opened my eyes and looked at him, hoping he would see that he was disturbing me. Oblivious. I closed my eyes again. Getting worse. I was practically drowning in the churning hot water. I opened my eyes and looked again. Oblivious. I sighed out loud. Nope.

Okay, time to either get out of the tub or say something. I remembered that curiosity usually works better than accusation, and I asked, "Is that an exercise you're doing?" He noticed me and smiled – a really nice smile – and said that yes, it was an exercise recommended by his doctor. He used to jog, loved jogging, but his knees could no longer support that activity. In fact, his knees could barely support walking, and swimming was one of the few things that helped; the swooshing motion strengthened the ligaments. He went on to talk about jogging, swimming, disappointment and his efforts to reinvigorate his knees and stay in shape. *What a nice man,* I thought.

Lesson #3: People usually have a positive intention. Give them the benefit of the doubt.

The *benefit of the doubt*: what does it mean? What doubt? Well, as I swim *up and back and up and back* I think it must mean giving other people the benefit that derives from doubting my preconceived notions about their motives. *Is he really getting in my lane just to annoy me?* Probably not. *Is he churning up the water to keep others out?* I think I'll doubt that assumption and see what happens.

Usually what happens is that I discover a genuinely nice person behind the fog of my assumptions and have a really fun swim.

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

inspiration

Down To You

Everything comes and goes,
Pleasure moves on too early and
Trouble leaves too slow.

Just when you're thinkin'
You've finally got it made,
Bad news comes knockin'
At your garden gate.

Knockin' for you--
constant stranger--
You're a brute,
you're an angel,
You can crawl,
you can fly, too.

It's down to you,
It all comes down to you.

--Joni Mitchell

Conflict Management
Communication Skills
Training & Facilitation



Judy Ringer

real life

From Judy Ford, Keene State College —

Peggie and I have been using the Centering technique for a few weeks now and it works quite well. Whenever we find ourselves becoming agitated one of us, usually Peggie, says, "Stop now and breathe!" And we take a great long breath, sometimes two or three. We have even invited visitors to our office to join in with us.

I had a philosophy tutor once who recommended any time you change a task during the day to sit quietly for 30 seconds or so to center and clear yourself for the next task.

We are both trying to continue working with the principles we learned at your workshop.

**Water is everywhere
around you, but you see
only the barriers that keep
you from water.**

— The Basket of Bread,
Jalal Al-Din Rumi, 13th B.C.E

resources

Portsmouth Aikido

Portsmouth Aikido is an ongoing martial arts school located at the Seacoast Family Y in Portsmouth. Many of the principles reflected in *Power & Presence* 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 26. The six-week course will run through October 31, 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.PortsmouthAikido.com.

Difficult Conversations

Judy recently attended a course based on the book *Difficult Conversations*, by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton and Sheila Heen, colleagues at the Harvard Negotiation Project. This book offers excellent advice on how to use language more constructively to resolve conflict, build trust and improve relationships. Skills include balancing advocacy with inquiry, changing our perspective from blame to contribution, and separating impact from intent. Please see **Workshops** for a public course offering on "Managing Difficult Conversations."

From Ann Driscoll, Ed.D., Ann Driscoll Training and Development —

We had the blast of blasts on vacation – and did I ever get a great opportunity to practice centering!!! We went to Key West expressly to take a 4-day intensive course to earn our open water SCUBA certification. On my second dive 8 miles out to sea on a coral reef I turned around under water and discovered I was face to face with a barracuda!!!! I just about swallowed half the ocean I was so stunned. I blew it on this dive. I had to rush to the surface to keep myself from drowning while I was clearing the water out of my lungs and waves were crashing over my head, as I tried to regain my composure.

But I reminded myself about centering (I really did!!) and succeeded several times over the next couple of days when we were 25 feet down and I did dumb things like inadvertently sucking in water instead of air and/or filling my mask with water. All of these were very real occasions to practice centering because the panic of not being able to breathe or see happens in an instant. So, here's a roundabout way of saying thanks – for teaching me a skill that definitely helped me pass the course and get my SCUBA certification!!!! I can't wait for my next dive.

Conflict Coaching

Individual 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 and presentations. 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. Any of the workshops in this newsletter can be tailored to your goals, and you will find additional programs at www.JudyRinger.com.

At Power & Presence Training, we have associates with expertise in conflict and stress management, leadership development, strategic planning, customer service, and powerful presentations. Please contact us to discuss your training needs.



THERE IS A BASKET OF FRESH BREAD
ON YOUR HEAD, AND YET YOU GO
DOOR TO DOOR ASKING FOR CRUSTS.
KNOCK ON YOUR INNER DOOR.
NO OTHER.

— The Basket of Bread, Jalal Al-Din Rumi, 13th B.C.E



Journey to Center

Give yourself a gift of learning and quiet reflection in the Colorado Rockies this fall. Consider joining me in October at Tom Crum's Journey To Center – a program of centering training, conflict resolution, stress management, and rejuvenation. This year the program runs from October 4 - 8. For more information, email judy@judyringer.com or visit www.AkiWorks.com.



Aikido Today

"Beacon Street," one of my stories from a past newsletter appears in the May/June issue of *Aikido Today*, a leading journal of the Aikido world. It's the fourth time ATM has published one of my stories, and I thought you'd like to know.

workshops

Using Emotional Intelligence

"We are being judged by a new yardstick: not just how smart we are, or by our training and expertise, but also by how well we handle ourselves and each other."

- Daniel Goleman, Working with Emotional Intelligence

Would you like to be more effective in your personal or professional life? Do you find yourself provoked or flustered easily? The ability to utilize Emotional Intelligence is critical to interpersonal effectiveness and is a distinguishing quality of leadership. Complementary to IQ or cognitive capacity, Emotional Intelligence is the ability to communicate understanding and appreciation, manage and motivate others, and respond confidently under pressure. In this new offering from Power & Presence Associates, you'll learn and practice skills that will help you succeed in all aspects of life. Co-trainers: Judy Ringer and Ann Driscoll, Ed.D

Managing Difficult Conversations

What makes difficult conversations so hard? Based on the text *Difficult Conversations*, by Stone, Patton and Heen of the Harvard Negotiation Project, this program introduces new strategies for dealing with tough topics, sharing difficult information, and managing interpersonal conflict through inquiry, advocacy and acknowledgment.

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

You'll practice mental, behavioral and verbal skills that will help you to feel more confident expressing yourself, understanding others, and transforming difficult conversations into learning conversations.

Conflict in the Workplace

This interactive workshop provides perspective, tools, and training in self-management and conflict resolution in the workplace. You will learn to change the dynamics of your workplace relationships with non-verbal skills like centering and empathy, and then use these to stay in control of yourself and engage others in problem-solving strategies. Objectives:

- Define and understand conflict and your typical reactions to it.
- Choose to remain calm and increase your options in difficult situations.
- Appreciate the value of listening and curiosity in conflict.
- Acknowledge emotional energy and direct it in positive ways.
- Utilize conflict resolution strategies to communicate more effectively at work, in meetings and difficult conversations.

OFFERING e news!

Many of our subscribers are saying they prefer receiving *Power & Presence* by email. It's easier and faster, and saves paper, ink and trees.

In the future I'll be offering *Power & Presence* in a special email format. You'll be able to read it on your computer desktop or print it out completely formatted (8 1/2 x 11) and read it on your real desktop.

Either way, it will continue to have stories, ideas, tips and inspirational quotations on conflict, communication and creating the life you want.

Please email judy@judyringer.com if you want the new e-version of *Power & Presence*. (I will never give your address to any one else.) Thank you!

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: _____

*Full deposit refundable one week prior to workshop date.

Are you interested in a program for your organization or work group?

Put *Power & Presence* to work for you:

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

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

workshop calendar

September 27 • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
USING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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

New Hampshire Community Technical College
To register: Return form below, call, or email

November 17 • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE

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

Portsmouth area location TBA
To register: Return form below, call, or email

December 6 • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
MANAGING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

(Based on the text by Stone, Patton and Heen)

Tuition: \$135.00 per person
(Lunch, handouts, and

Difficult Conversations text included)
New Hampshire Community Technical College
To register: Return form below, call, or email

**Register for two or more workshops
and receive a 10% discount.**

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
- The Difficult Business Conversation
- Managerial Courage: Addressing Disrespectful Behavior
- Creating a Positive Work Environment
- Team Building: Working Together Effectively
 - 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



Judy Ringer

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inside

- *Many Lessons...*
- *Using Emotional Intelligence*
- *Managing Difficult Conversations*
- *Conflict in the Workplace*
- *E-News!*



People, in general, would rather die than forgive. It's that hard. If God said in plain language, "I'm giving you a choice, forgive or die," a lot of people would go ahead and order their coffin."

— Sue Monk Kidd, *The Secret Life of Bees*

quotables

- *Extraordinary...I didn't expect a 3 day class to have the potential to change my personal life as it is beginning to. Perhaps I was at a tipping point, and your input made sense on a deep level. Thank you.*
- *Thank you for your conflict resolution training. You provided a space for one of the best instances of teamwork my team has seen yet.*
- *Thank you for sharing your wealth of knowledge. I took away many new strategies for how to work better with each of my teammates.*
- *Great job! You create an atmosphere conducive to sharing and learning. Thanks.*
- *I have been wasting a lot of energy being resistant!*

solutions

question

I'm compelled to ask how one establishes a center. I don't have one picture or version of "center". Is it just a matter of bringing yourself fully into the moment where you are here and now? And if the latter is true, how do you do that in an environment that is not calm?

answer

First, center is different for each of us. For me it is (as you say) "bringing yourself fully into the moment." Especially if the environment is not calm, it's really great to be able to find that quiet stillness at your core.

Center is also a feeling of stability, physically first (for me), then emotionally. It's a feeling that says, "I'm ready. I can handle this." It's also a question I ask myself: "Where's the gift here? Or "Where's the Learning?"

I know I'm centered by an "in-the-body" feeling I recognize, and by the awareness that I am in control of myself and have options. The best way to find your center is to keep practicing. Eventually you'll find your own answers to this great question!



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 Communication Skills
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