

# Ki-Aikido

## A Model of My Aikido

This model reflects my life experience and martial experience; it also includes concepts from several martial arts and Aikido styles. As my life and influences have been different to yours, my world view will be different in both its emphasis and content. Your model will be different to mine, but perhaps this one can provide the basis of your model after modifying parts with your own ideas.

### Positive Mind

Maruyama Sensei:

I am mind itself.  
 If I hold positive thoughts in my mind, good things are likely to happen.  
 Holding negative thoughts in my mind works against my best interests.  
 Therefore, even if my body suffers physically, my mind remains optimistic.  
 Even if I encounter obstacles, my mind is never defeated.  
 Daily I fill my heart with thoughts of joy, gratitude and hope.  
 I face each new day with a bright and optimistic spirit,  
 which I express in word and deed.  
**I have faith in life, and life responds in kind."**

Tohei Sensei:

Always think with a positive mind  
 Always speak with a positive mind  
 Always act with a positive mind  
 Always treat others with a positive mind

The "I can/I can't + positive/negative images" ki tests show unambiguously that stating or seeing something positive or negative instantly changes your mind to that state. Therefore, since you can instantly change your mind there is no excuse to stay negative - simply say something positive or visualise something positive, then follow with putting your mind in the tanden/ extending ki 360'. If you are distressed it may take several iterations before you regain universal mind.  
 Positive thoughts have positive outcomes.  
 Negative thoughts have negative outcomes.

### Conflict

Tohei Sensei: Joy can't exist without sadness, beauty without ugliness, calm without disturbance, or harmony without conflict. There is no conflict in the absolute universe, but we live in the relative world.

Conflict exists in the real world and we must acknowledge and deal with it. Aikido exists to resolve conflict – physical, interpersonal, spiritual – with an attitude of positiveness and non-dissension.

Without this duopoly we would live in Pleasantville – no colour, no passion, no creativity, no fulfilment. Life would be passive and bland. But - this duopoly doesn't mean that harmony and conflict are 50:50. Our aim is to minimise conflict in the world.

We want inner peace, compassion and harmony, but to attain it and spread it we need quiet persistence, inner commitment, and the willingness to act assertively. Passivity encourages aggression in others, and therefore conflict grows.

Persistence in the spirit of "do good in secret", for our own satisfaction, without needing others' approval or recognition.

### Spiritual vs Martial Studies

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## Underlying Fundamentals

### Love and protect all creation

In Tohei Sensei's view it is our responsibility to love and protect all creation. This includes both our fellow man and fellow creatures, and also our environment. We are all, trees, dirt, camels, man, minerals, etc made from the products of star fusion. We are all related, all family.  
 "It is our duty to love and respect more than our own concerns and circle of family and friends."  
 Passive love isn't enough, true love also requires active love - protection, i.e. action when required.  
 Therefore we have to have the willingness and the technical capability to protect others, our values, and our environment.

### Happiness - Sogyal Rinpoche

- \* External factors have an effect, but ultimately happiness depends on the stance taken by your inner self. Your perception determines whether you are happy.
- \* Contentment is gratitude and satisfaction with what you have.
- \* Renunciation is the courage to have and the courage to let go without attachment.
- \* Wishing and Fear are both attachment and block happiness. Become Fear-less and Hope-less.
- \* Look for happiness within, not outside.
- \* We are what we think, so replace negative with positive.
- \* Too many people fill their time with distraction – doing, thinking, speaking – and are too busy to face their real selves.
- \* If you don't stir the water it will become clear. Allow the mind to settle into its true nature.

### Resolution

To resolve conflict means:

- \* Not avoiding dealing with it;
- \* Not submitting to or giving way to the will of others who intend to dominate or win (or throw) – this is false harmony that ends up hurting ourselves or others;
- \* Not ourselves dominating or acting aggressively;
- \* Acting positively and assertively to seek an outcome that:
  - is in our favour, but looks after the other parties, where they allow it
  - is in accordance with the universal principles.

False harmony is also contained in just going to the floor as uke. Taking ukemi has at least two main purposes, the obvious one being for uke to avoid injury, but the main reason is to do with flow and harmony.

Uke's job is to:

- provide ki, intention and a proper attack for nage to learn with; just going to the floor cheats both nage and uke of correct training;
- take ukemi in a safe place of uke's choosing, not nage's;
- more importantly, to look for and take advantage of any weaknesses in nage's ki or technique in order to reverse the technique or to escape. Naturally, this isn't done in practice on the mat unless with prior agreement, but every ukemi uke takes must be made with this mindset - without actually resisting, just flowing and observing mindfully where the opportunities are.

It is important to remember that in a real situation you don't know nage's intentions. On the mat you know that nage will do Irimi Nage as you expect it to be done, but in a real situation they may perform any technique and perform atemi in any of several places during it, and/or throw hard to injure you. You must be unified, mindfully aware and flowing strongly in order to perceive the threat and avoid or reverse it.

Our aim is always to look after ourselves first, then our opponent(s) – "love and protect all creation". However, their skill, aggression or intent may make it difficult to avoid the necessity to cause them injury. This is their choice, provided you have the right mindset. In a situation we must have decided to act (see Cut First with the Mind below), and then unattach from that decision. Our decision can then be that of the Death-Dealing Sword, where our mind is to decisively end the encounter (eg cut through them, or break their arm, or throw to injure), or that of the Life-Giving Sword (or Compassionate Sword) where we enter as if to do a decisive ending but, we alter it to, for example, a throw that allows ukemi, or pause with the sword edge on their wrist, i.e. we are now in a position to kill or injure, but leave the choice of a peaceful resolution vs. a violent one up to uke. If they come back after the throw, they have told us that we have to either injure them or exhaust them to resolve the situation; if they keep cutting or manoeuvring with our sword on their wrist they have chosen the Death-Dealing Sword as the means of resolution.

If you examine the positions we adopt after irimi, tenkan, or hantai tenkan, you will see that we are now in a position of increased safety but they have been placed at great risk from us, i.e. it is difficult for them to attack us, but easy for us to attack them. Given our great advantage our own safety is taken care of, and we are obliged to look after them. Unless they insist otherwise.

Of course, the greater our skill/ki advantage over them, the more likely it is that we will place them in such an untenable position that they will recognise the situation for what it is, recognise the peaceful option we are offering, and gratefully accept it. This is the best outcome, and why we owe it to our potential opponents to attain the best level of skill and ki that we are capable of – this is our gift to them, and a recognition of what we owe to the universe.

The implication of this is that mentally and physically, we must be ready for and able to deal with aggressive and deadly intent (in the boardroom or on the street) and resolve it with the appropriate means. This does not necessarily mean that we will injure others (see the discussion on the Compassionate Sword below), but we must be able to and ready to if required. Uke decides what we do to them, but in order to provide a compassionate response we must have the ki understanding and technical ability to do so. If we don't, we fail our responsibility to love and protect all creation and as a result others, and ourselves, may be hurt.

There is no list of the universal principles/values, and therefore no dogma or argument or other baggage about what they are. Tohei Sensei says that they are "the principles that everyone agrees on."  
 If you can remain unified mind and body with the universe whilst acting in accordance with your decision then it should be in accord with the universal principles.

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## Spiritual vs Martial Studies

You cannot attain the full potential of your martial ability without mastering the spiritual side of Aikido.  
You cannot attain the full potential of your spiritual growth without mastering the martial side of Aikido.

Tohei Sensei: "What good does it do if you can only coordinate mind and body in a quiet place?"

Tamura Sensei: "You cannot defend yourself. You must train so that the universe wants to defend you."

### Ki Studies offer:

- \* Self-knowledge
- \* Calmness and self-control
- \* Perception and awareness
- \* Connection to other parties and the environment
- \* Spiritual growth and awareness
- \* The ability to influence others positively
- \* Significant efficiency and energy saving in movement
- \* A significant martial performance edge

### Overemphasis on ki studies may lead to:

- \* A lack of technical ability to protect yourself and others
- \* A technical inability to offer your opponent a compassionate choice
- \* Subconscious lack of confidence
- \* Denial of the world as it is; living a false reality
- \* An inability to cope when your world is violated
- \* Difficulty in resolving issues other than by avoiding them or giving in
- \* Minus ki in your life.

### Martial Studies offer:

- \* The technical ability, allied with ki, to protect others and yourself
- \* Confidence
- \* Physical health, agility and flexibility
- \* Practice in learning the energy and movement of many different people
- \* Determination, perseverance, resilience and self-knowledge derived from physical effort
- \* The stress in which to master control of your universal mind

### Overemphasis on martial studies may lead to:

- \* A fighting mind. Even if you have superior technical ability this mind is easily defeated by Abiding Mind (see below). Fighting mind leads to attachment and focus that negate universal mind and create vulnerabilities in your defence. Fighting mind also attracts conflict into your life.
- \* Under-estimation of an opponent's abilities
- \* Lack of connection with and perception of your opponent
- \* Becoming stuck at a particular level of ability and understanding
- \* Frustration with your progress
- \* Minus ki in your life.

Tohei Sensei told me "each technique must work as if on a battlefield." By this I believe he meant:

- \* Unless the technique is as perfect as possible you are not getting the benefit of optimal ki flow;
- \* The technique must be perfect, as if performing kata, such that uke cannot escape from it or reverse it;
- \* Technical execution and ki flow must both be optimal;
- \* You must train to perform correct technique under great stress.

Which means that you must regularly practice in such an environment to exercise your universal mind and technique

Tamura Sensei & Kataoka Sense both told me that "for aikido to work as self-defence you must train very hard."

- \* Every day in some way
- \* Determinedly
- \* With Beginner's Mind

Tohei Sensei: "Never tire of training or repeating fundamentals."

Its easy to say "I've seen it a thousand times before" and close your mind. We must look to see something new each time and keep learning.

The penalties for closing your mind are severe - you don't see what has changed or is new, you don't have that flash of understanding where a new level of meaning is revealed, and, worst, you introduce your ego and self-importance and block your own growth. There are vivid lessons from our local history within Australia where some colleagues simply seem to stop growing, and others, desperate to grow, are blocked by their self-perception as "senior" and "skilled" or "superior".

Many of us have strong egos; we have to be eternally vigilant that we are not ourselves the major impediment to our growth.

Genuinely see yourself as a student.

Genuinely approach the same old technique with fresh eyes each time, looking for your mistakes, looking for a deeper understanding.

The oldest battlefield grappling and sword arts had a quite limited repertoire of techniques that they practiced endlessly until they were deeply understood. This was deliberate, as large numbers of techniques (a) dilute your ability to master them, and (b) confuse your response when in danger.

We need to approach things the same way - focus on, repeat, and master the fundamentals + use the other techniques to illuminate the fundamentals.

# Principles

## Posture

The precursor for Universal Mind is correct posture. It isn't mandatory, but it makes a huge difference. Learn the correct posture and weight distribution for sitting, standing, walking and lying down. In all of these the relationship and alignment of "centre pole", ribs, hips, knees and feet play a vital part.

## Universal Mind

We learn unification of mind and body with the universe (universal mind), and regain universal mind once lost, through:

### The Tanden Ball exercise:

Maruyama Sensei's exercise of moving the tanden ball horizontally, laterally, diagonally and in left and right circles at the tanden chakra, then the solar plexus chakra, then the breastbone chakra, then letting the ball drop through the chakras and settle 1/2 1/2 in the tanden. This is a brilliant exercise for learning the feeling of No Mind/ You are Here, Now.

### Lamp:

Imagine you are a lamp; brighten the whole room/space around you. This leads to 360' ki extension to, through and past everyone/everything in your environment. When facing an opponent be careful to remain a lamp, not a torch with a narrow illumination.

### The Floating Feeling:

Tohei Sensei described correct posture as both floating and centred. It contains centredness, non-attachment, and omni-directional ki extension in the same way as the tanden ball exercise. The image that works for me is to imagine myself floating at the very centre of the universe, perfectly supported from all directions. You just "are", without any particular thoughts, or any need to attach, or requirement to "see". You then need to move retaining this feeling.

### The Flowing Drills:

(explained in the manual)

Very useful exercises that lead to the same direction-less universal mind/No Mind extension:

- \* The straw in the mouth exercise (explained in the manual) - this one allows an unconscious awareness and connection with your opponent;
- \* The "drug agency reaction time exercise" (explained in the manual), which works the same way as awareness training - part of your mind is on your movement and part on your opponent's actions; as a result you focus on neither and just connect and move without thinking.

### Characteristics of Universal Mind (these are all explained elsewhere in this document)

- > You are "here", "now", fully in the moment
- > 360' ki extension
- > No Mind
- > No Attachment
- > Immovable Mind
- > Abiding Mind

Checking that you have universal mind must become a *permanently running background routine*. Constantly check - "am I sitting unified? Did I pick the coffee cup up unified? Am I standing at these lights with correct posture and unification? Where is the tension in my body right now?" Noticing you have lost universal mind becomes immediate, and you can therefore regain it quickly.

## 4 (5) Principles of Ki in Daily Life (Modified)

Also useful are the 4 Principles of Ki in Daily Life; however, I believe that the Universal Mind exercises described above are considerably more effective in attaining universal Mind. These are four different ways of attaining mind and body unification with the universe. They have exactly the same result as each other, but by different routes. At least one of them will work; which, depends on the conditions of your mind and your body at the time.

### Keep One Point/Tanden:

modified so that rather than dropping our mind to our One Point (1P), instead we drop a ball through the tanden in the breastbone, the tanden in the solar plexus, into the tanden in the pelvic area. Additionally, the tanden isn't infinitely small; instead see it as the size of a marble.

### Relax Completely:

when we relax truly completely we just "are", and we are "here, now". Constantly check your body for tension, then release it using one of the exercises, e.g. shoulders up and down in a series of shrugs (without rounding the shoulders). The tension we carry impedes the flow of ki; men in particular carry a lot of tension in the forearm muscles; if this is shaken out regularly techniques become effortless.

### Weight is Underside:

allow the weight in your body and limbs to fall naturally to the lowest point.

### Extend Ki:

modified to reinforce the point that ki extension is not directional, but omni-directional. Ki is not extended forward, but in all directions; this automatically harmonises you with whatever direction uke's ki is moving. The problem with thinking ki in any direction is that you forget to unify the rest of your body; this is easily seen in ki testing where your unbendable arm might pass, but any other test would result in failure due to your focus on your arm and exclusion of the rest of your body. In this model you send ki in all directions like a light bulb, then you can perform any kind of ki test within that sphere of ki and pass, or receive any kind of attack from any direction.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Principle = Turn on the Feeling:

Once you can confidently gain universal mind, train yourself to remember what it feels like to be unified. Then, just check whether you have that feeling, and if not, turn it back on.

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### 5 Principles of Ki in Aikido

Ki is Extending:

Never slack your ki. It is too late to extend Ki after something happens. Regularly check that your ki is extending in all directions. This will actually help deter trouble.

Understand Your Partner's Mind:

What is the attack? E.g. is it a grab for your hand? Is it a verbal attack designed to make you feel guilty?

Respect Your Partner's Ki:

Don't fight the attack or confrontation. Identify where their ki is flowing to and decide to flow with it and to move around it without disturbing your partner.

Put Yourself in Your Partner's Place:

In a physical attack this means to enter irimi or tenkan early in the technique such that you and your partner harmonise in the same direction before you lead them into the middle stage of your technique. In an argument, this means to understand where your partner is coming from. What caused this? What do they want out of it? Identify with your partner.

Lead With Confidence:

Once you understand their point of view and intentions you then lead them confidently into the resolution you have chosen. It is your resolution, although your partner's attitude and intentions can constrain your range of responses.

These 5 principles in sequence are the tool that applies your unification to the real world.

Because the ki is the same whether an incident is physical or interpersonal, the same sequence applies to all interpersonal transactions, whether relationships, physical attack or business.

## Kotai, Juntai, Ryotai

### Ryotai

In contrast to Kotai and Juntai, in Ryotai uke provides the majority of the energy in the transaction. Maruyama Sensei prefers that, like the old sword styles, uke and nage start about 10m away, so neither are affected by the other's ki at this point. Nage remains still whilst uke attacks vigorously. This is a very overt demonstration of abiding mind, although nage can equally easily use abiding mind while moving. Ryotai provides training in applying precision and rhythm with correct timing and distance.

Some points for consideration:

- Westerners do not use this model in any form of fighting and will expect to come in from 1-2m out of reach;
- the sword styles actually varied in their strategies for moving in; like our kumitachi sometimes both would move in simultaneously and the attack would develop over the last couple of metres; another model was like our partner practice, where shidachi waits while uchidachi attacks; a third model was that both would enter, pause and centre at ma-ai, then immediately enter vigorously;
- the 10m distance provides good training in remaining composed and centred whilst receiving a great deal of dynamic movement and ki. You should also practice receiving this amount of energy from the distance Westerners use, because that is our reality;
- if you are fingertip to fingertip then you must move as their ki moves (in, outward, back, or past them in sudori);
- if uke is further away, your ki connection shows you what they intend and you can choose to delay your physical movement until they are just inside ma-ai (in effect, until they believe they have got you – this is a favourite of mine);
- otherwise, the earliest you should move is as they break ma-ai, but never before, as they will follow your move. Very connected ukes can also follow to some extent if you move when they breach ma-ai, which is why delaying a fraction is so effective;
- you can also cut/lead their ki at ma-ai and immediately enter straight in; #1 and #2 of the Sword of Nine Ways is exactly that, and this approach is also used in the "no-touch" arts;
- if you remain still you will receive their ki and attack, and probably also be quickly forced into a wrestling match.

No amount of flowing, however, can make up for the blockages you cause by incorrect timing, placement and technique.

There are several correct ways of doing a technique; one of these is the version required in gradings.

My definition of correct is that the technique observes the ki principles + it works on everyone, regardless of height, weight and variations in natural body rhythm.

There is no syllabus in Yuishinkai except the grading syllabus. Maruyama Sensei has made it very clear that any ki-based technique from any Aikido source is valid and can be taught and practiced, as we practice "aikido without boundaries." Ki Society has a defined dogma and syllabus, Yuishinkai does not, except for specifying the version required in gradings and principles such as "tanden", "centrepole", "moon shadow", "lizard legs," etc.

### Kotai

In kotai both parties start from static if uke is using a grasping attack, at the point where uke has just stepped forward and grasped. Kotai for strikes starts from a ma-ai of fingertips touching when both are in hanmi. In Kotai nage walks through the technique.

Kotai teaches:

- \* the elements of technique and ki flow;
- \* precision and placement;

It is the basis of the later stages. Don't be in a hurry to move on from Kotai. It should be revisited regularly by students at all levels. Unless Kotai for a technique is well-practiced all that will happen in later, more fluid, stages is that you will learn to move fluidly to the wrong place and then perform incorrectly. The ki flow will stop because you will then try to force the technique. Resist the temptation to spend all your time in the more exciting juntai and ryotai – get kotai right.

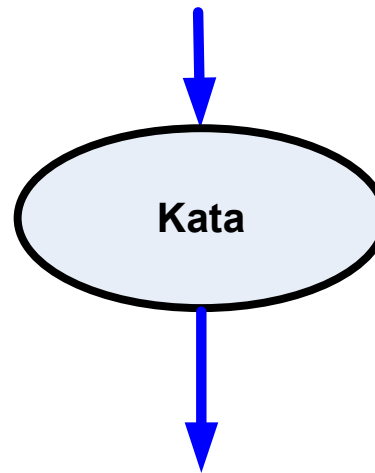
### Juntai

In Juntai the starting position is the same as kotai. The difference is that nage generates the entry, rhythm and energy for the technique and realistic movement.

Juntai teaches rhythm and basic timing. It requires the precision from kotai.

If ryotai starts to fail then immediately revert to juntai. Juntai is the basic "working" version.

Rhythm is not usually a linear 1-2-3 count with even time intervals. It can be done that way if you slow down to the Oneness Rhythm pace, but even that is pulsed, not linear. For martial purposes you usually have to be a bit quicker than the Oneness Rhythm, although you should never try to speed uke up or move faster than uke. In fact, it is far better to slow uke down, and thereby capture them within the wave of your rhythm. Techniques all pulse to their own rhythm. You enter softly, like an unseen breeze suddenly touching their cheek, slow down to harmonise with them and almost pause, then move into the next parts of the technique as a series of pulses (there may only be one).



The modern student usually associates kata with solo practice of a form, for example, Sword of the Dream, Sword of Nine Ways, etc. However, the old styles, which expected their arts to be used in daily life, largely concentrated on paired kata, as this was what would happen in real life. Solo forms teach movement and form, but struggle to prepare practitioners for the unpredictability, aggression and energy of actual combat. Paired forms teach connection, timing, rhythm, placement, movement, control, and form, plus the self-control, awareness, experience, composure and courage that comes from exposure to real attacks. Because kata are a controlled environment, paired kata also de-sensitise shidachi to confrontation, and also ease the response to uchidachi's unpredictability through the automatic use of appropriate components of well-practiced kata.

Aikido is kata for two or more people. If you practice a technique repeatedly against a virtual partner then your:

- \* adjustment would be precise
- \* movement would be precise
- \* arm movements would be precise
- \* etc.

In other words, a technique actually has a perfect form. When practicing with a partner or dealing with an opponent (there is no difference), you:

- \* adjust to the flow of ki
- \* adjust to their intent
- \* adjust to their movement
- \* adjust the pace of the technique to the dynamics of their body shape
- \* then perform the form of the perfect technique.

That is, after adjusting to the unique circumstances of this transaction, do the technique as a kata. This is kata and technique exactly as performed in the old arts. All aikido should be done like this.

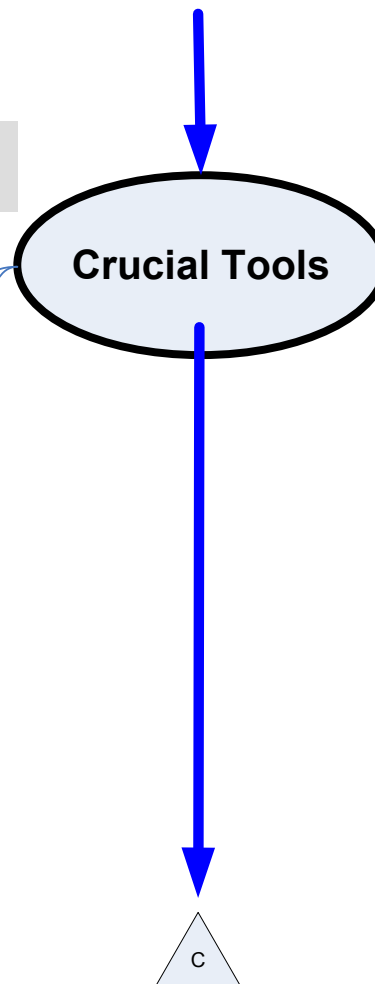
If uke resists nage's technique several unpleasant things happen:

- \* uke learns to fight, not flow = Fighting Mind
- \* uke prevents nage from learning the perfect form
- \* uke will have a lot of difficulty dealing with an unexpected response from nage [uke's mind is attached to resisting, and doesn't perceive nage's ki]

Tohei Sensei: "Begin with form then transcend it."

Master the correct form, then allow creativity in.

*These concepts have had a huge impact on my aikido. Most need the feeling of them to be demonstrated by an instructor who can do them.*



**"Down", not "Up"**

When raising your arms or sword before a throw or cut, don't think "up", it ruins your rhythm and ki flow. Also it is too slow as you stop at the top then start again for the down. Just think "down", knowing your arms will rise naturally and quickly as the ki charges back for the "up". Techniques become a rhythm of "downs", with the "ups" resulting from the "downs". Techniques become very relaxed and very powerful. However, you must know that you are sending very strong ki through your fingertips, so that, for example, when you point your fingers at uke's face at the end of irimi nage the direction of their movement is powerfully changed.

**The Information Connection**

Keeping universal mind establishes a real connection with your ukes. You should hide your own ki, but act like a radio receiver for ukes' ki. Starting out in aikido this connection usually tells you that "something" just happened (when uke makes a decision ki is transmitted). As your sensitivity and experience increase the "something" becomes more explicit. Don't connect forward; connect by expanding your ki in a sphere like a light bulb illuminating a room.

**Cut First with the Mind**

This applies to everything, not just sword. If you actually think "cut" before cutting you will be too slow, and it is the wrong meaning. Tohei Sensei says to place a very fine line down uke; Maruyama Sensei says to have the cut waiting just below the blade. The meaning is to place your ki in/on your opponent, like the feeling of aiming a rifle at a target. This commits you to act. Note that you have simply decided that you will act, you haven't decided what you will do. Uke will show you what technique to do and when to do it via the Information Connection. This includes your options regarding whether they will allow you to be compassionate or not. You wait with Abiding Mind, then uke initiates your cut/act when their ki moves. When your act is triggered the cut waiting below the blade is triggered and cuts uke's unification before the blade or throw.

**Receiving Ki Transparently**

When ki comes acknowledge it, then tell yourself to let it pass through you without affecting you. Don't ignore or deny the ki or you will receive it and be disturbed.

**No Enemy**

Tamura Sensei's advice was to enter and take your opponent with the feeling as if you were hugging a friend. This makes a huge difference. It calms you, calms your opponent, removes all feelings of conflict, removes the need to throw, and creates a swift, deep, relaxed entry. The throw or cut is very powerful because you are so relaxed. Calming your opponent, and also slowing them, allows the technique to flow as uke loses the will to fight or resist. Regardless of your opponent's mind, see no enemy, just a manifestation of the universe that will do "something", requiring you to do "something".



## Mushin - No Mind

You have an empty mind  
No thought  
No judgment  
No intention  
No expectation  
You have awareness and consciousness, but no "thinking"  
Processing of information is done in the Void, a mind empty of judgment and thought

An excellent way to practice this which also solves one of the "reality" problems with dojo training is: when doing paired training nage and uke almost always know what attack will be done and which response will be done. This means nage is never surprised; obviously this is the exact opposite of what happens in the real world. Instead, both uke and nage should face each other with no intention and no expectation - neither should "know" who is uke/nage, or what techniques are coming (although they do of course). Both are then training correctly in No Mind, and the attack and response are both realistic and convincing.

## Awareness - Zanshin

Awareness combines three elements, each with their own components:

1. Perception of the environment -

*Seeing Without Looking* - Don't look "at" things, don't let your awareness linger on anything or focus on anything, as that is attachment. If you focus on anything then you will miss threats or events in other sectors; if you are engaged in an incident and you focus, an aware opponent will attack from elsewhere - e.g. look at the hands and they may kick, run your eyes over them in a rhythm and they will strike once your eyes have moved on, etc.

Of course, you have to notice everything, so you tell your unconscious to notice everything without focusing or attaching to what you perceive (see Non-Attachment). If you pause to examine something, you do it without losing awareness of everything else and without focusing. Don't stare, absorb. Concentration means including a task within your awareness, and committing fully to that task, but not losing your awareness of everything else and connection to everything else.

Based on your situation you will have a running general checklist of things to watch for (posture, grip, intention, behaviour, "anything unusual", etc), but you set the checklist running and then unattach from it. The checklist changes to a more specific checklist(s) as events develop.

*Awareness of your feet* - You must be aware of your feet at all times. This method comes from Noh Theatre.

Basic: Move your left foot forward, notice it has moved, then say "move";  
Touch your left foot to the ground heel first, notice that, and say "touch";  
Raise your foot, heel still touching, notice it has raised and say "up";  
Press the foot to the ground, notice it has touched and say "press";  
Notice that your whole left foot has changed position completely and say "left".  
Repeat for each step.

Next: Just say "left" and "right" after the respective foot has completed its move.

Next: Just say "touch" after each foot has completed its move.

2. Not being disturbed by stimuli - use the same method as Fudoshin below -

When you see something that startles you or takes your attention, say "sight".

When you hear a sound that startles you or takes your attention, say "sound".

3. Making your sense of self identify with your awareness, and removing it from identifying with your ego and with your thinking mind. You still think of course, but now it happens in the Void (see Non-Mind), moved aside from the forefront of your mind. This makes it feel like it is happening in a void or vacuum. You = Awareness, not = Thinking, not = ego or "I". Your awareness is centre stage and is the real you, whilst you process and think in another partition, or in the fabric of the universe.

The process as a whole seems to work by splitting your attention with several parallel tasks, not letting thinking or "I" intrude, and therefore letting the environment speak directly to your unconscious without filters in the way.

## Immovable Mind - Fudoshin

Immovable Mind is a mind that is not disturbed. It is not a mind that doesn't move or is rigid. Immovable Mind sees and hears, but treats all stimuli the same, with the same importance, no matter how loud, bright, or sudden the stimulus is.

When you see something that startles you or takes your attention, say "sight".

When you hear a sound that startles you or takes your attention, say "sound".

Doing this immediately reduces the importance of the stimulus and trains you to treat everything the same.

When ki comes, you don't ignore it. You acknowledge it, then let it pass through you without affecting you. For example, when someone punches to your face, you acknowledge that fact ("sight"), but are not disturbed by it, and therefore respond calmly.

Don't label things, eg "car, punch, explosion," just use "sight" and "sound".

## The Bridge Between Life & Death

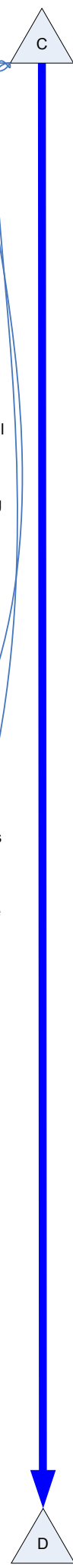
Suppose you start walking across a very narrow plank/log bridge over a stream. Part way over, a samurai also starts over the bridge from the other side, shows no sign of giving way, and draws his sword to force you off. You have 3 options:

- move backwards to your side of the creek; this means part of you will be focused on your footing, and part on your opponent; it will be difficult not to slack your ki or be distracted, and easy for your opponent to attack and overwhelm you; your willingness to give way is irrelevant to the other person;
- stay put; you will become attached to the defensive and again have difficulty with balance and footing; nor does this solve the issue;
- unify mind and body, forget life and death, leave matters completely up to the universe and move forward with no hesitation or reservation. This is the only real way of achieving a positive outcome.

Tamura Sensei said to see life as a sheet of paper. On one side is written "Life", and on the other, "Death". You are always walking along the edge of that sheet.

The implication of the BBL&D is that when faced with a challenge you must forget the possible consequences to yourself and move forward positively. This solution is the one most likely to result in a positive outcome.

In Abiding Mind there is a mention of deciding to act, without deciding what action it will be. How you do this action is in the manner of The Bridge Between Life and Death.



## Fighting Mind & Abiding Mind

\* Fighting Mind is wanting to win, wanting to attack, wanting to throw. It means you will probably "break" first and attack; also, the desire to throw or do a technique means that you are already predisposed to try and force the throw/strike to work, thereby blocking the technique from working.

\* Fighting Mind is an attachment to a thought/decision/mindset. Old sword styles saw this as "sickness".

\* Fighting Mind blocks your perception, restricts your connection with your opponent, blocks personal growth, and both attracts and causes conflict. It also leads directly to defeat.

\* Abiding Mind is calm, unified, observant, and completely non-attached to any thought, decision or mindset. It is the decision to wait for uke's ki to move, and to act without hesitation once your opponent's ki moves. To execute your action you use the mindset of The Bridge Between Life and Death.

\* Abiding Mind connects to the opponent and waits for their ki to move. You make no decision as to technique; you decide that you will act, in some way; however, uke shows you what to do; uke triggers your action with the movement of their ki. Tamura Sensei - "When facing an opponent unify, don't want to fight, don't be afraid, don't want to throw, don't care, don't be first, dance with the universe." = Abiding Mind = Non-Attachment = No Mind = No Enemy = Immovable Mind = All aikido is like this.

→ "Dance" = blend lightly and harmoniously, not "seeing" each entity as an opponent. It does not mean frivolously, or "empty".

Tamura Sensei - "When opponents come I don't see them, I see a manifestation of the universe and dance with that. I don't choose to throw; when they come I just do "something".

This approach de-personalises the situation, removing the fear and conflict, removing the desire to fight, and allows harmony with the energy and intentions of the people/manifestations involved. It results in Non-Attachment and No Mind.

Fighting Body, Abiding Mind - this is a deception to entice your opponent. An example is Hasso, where your shoulder and leg are forward but your sword is raised beside your ear on the back-foot side. It looks like you are exposed, but actually you are waiting to pounce when they take advantage of your supposed weakness. The simplest example is that we extend our hand out or shoulder forward for them to grab, then move as they attack.

A more complex example shows two stages of Fighting Body/Abiding Mind. We wait, they attack with a punch. We put our hand out; they have to change their attack and grab it, and we then do a technique. If they don't, we convert the outthrust hand into an atemi or grab of our own. They have to honour the threat or receive the consequences.

Unlike many other arts, ki-aikido makes little use of blocking, although deflecting or palming aside is sometimes seen during entry. This model comes from the Japanese approach to sword, where the intention was not to spar with an opponent (although feints and deflections were common and blocks were done *in extremis*), but to win with one cut made with 100% commitment. Any subsequent strokes or parries are simply the result of each party adjusting to the other's cut, each made with 100% commitment.

We wait until our opponent commits, then act ourselves. Rather than sparring or moving first, as is common in Western and other Eastern models, we take the first committed move by uke. This committed move often arises because we offer an opportunity, or just wait calmly. As the grab, kick, punch emerges we lead that and throw. We don't wait for their attack to develop into the full technique or combination of blows etc that they intend, we take it at the beginning. If we wait then we receive their ki, the full force of their first move, and the kick or punch or throw that follows next.

Therefore we train to move automatically when their ki moves or we are touched, but we are always conscious that we can delay, based on the ma-ai considerations discussed earlier.

## Non-Attachment

Attachment is focus on, or lingering on a thought or intention, or focus on a part of their body; for example an intention to attack or to defend, watching their hands, thinking about remaining centred, etc. Ki follows the mind's attachment and an opening is therefore created for a perceptive opponent. For example, if your focus is on attacking they may perceive that they can attack themselves, and your attachment to attacking will mean that you see it late; similarly, if you are focused on their hands, you will be surprised when their body may move instead, or they may kick, etc. Attachment was described as a "sickness" by the old styles.

## Non-Attachment

Decide to do/think/see something, then immediately unattach from that decision and action. Let it run in the background and feed you information without you looking for it.

Seeing Without Looking - this is observation without attachment.

of course you have to look, and to decide, but you can't linger or focus with your mind or your eyes. You must attach to decide to cut, look, abide, etc, but then immediately unattach from that thought or action, leaving it running without thinking about it. A concrete example: Tohei Sensei said to look at your opponent in the general area around the nose, and not to focus anywhere - this shows you their mind and intention. But you must also be aware of their posture, the position of their hands and feet, weight distribution, etc. So, look generally near the nose, but decide to notice everything, as well as letting the ki connection carry information, then immediately don't think anymore about observing. This is "don't see, don't look". Old sword styles said to look at everything, but not in a sequence or pattern (this is attachment, and also creates a pattern that can be exploited) and not to attach to looking.

"A calm centre will show or reflect your opponent's mind and movement, but also look at the specifics in a non-attached way."

When engaged - having cut/thrown/parried/struck etc you cannot think about having done so - your ki becomes attached and you become vulnerable. Instead you retain Universal Mind and non-attachment in the same way as we do yonningake - we throw, but don't care about it, and keep moving lightly as we unconsciously select and take the next opponent (Dancing with the Universe). When weapons are involved or your life is threatened then you will deliver multiple techniques so rapidly in sequence that your opponent cannot respond or regain their own Universal Mind - but you do this exactly as above, unattached to doing it, with Universal Mind.

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### Mai-ai

Ma-ai has been discussed earlier. The information connection also discussed earlier has a vital effect on ma-ai and timing as it directly connects you to uke's timing and intentions.

If fingertip to fingertip, or swordtip to swordtip, you must move immediately their ki moves; either in (to take or pass through) or back (to defend or take) or outwards (to defend or take).

If closer, and they commit, you may need to do atemi to disturb or disable uke, then either take them or re-establish ma-ai; i.e. as a general rule if you find yourself closer than ma-ai you should either immediately re-establish correct distance to avoid this situation, or enter vigorously, without waiting for a move from uke.

If you are outside ma-ai, the information connection shows you what is happening, and, calm and confident, you can choose to delay your irimi/tenkan/hantai/cut until they are sure they have you, then you move physically. If you move sooner, at ma-ai or earlier, you will draw them around with you (especially if your own ki extension is strong).

Don't think about moving, just move. You need to "disappear" from in front of them. But, don't think "explode/fast", instead you are like a breeze in a field that is gently moving the grass, then all of a sudden that breeze gently brushes uke's cheek. The breeze's movement was unseen, soft and gentle.

### Beginner's Mind

Ego is the most dangerous enemy to personal growth. Competing with yourself, competing with others, being goal-oriented, are all attachment, and all result in less of you being available for awareness and growth. The harder you train towards a goal the less open and aware you are.

Seeing yourself as an instructor or a senior is just as dangerous. You start to say "I know that" and don't pay attention and lose the critical changes being shown, or "I'm better than he/she is" and lose the lesson they are offering.

Understanding is progressive, you peel another layer of the onion at intervals during your career - but you have to be listening first.

Instructor's Mind is a closed mind, and your growth stops.

You are always a student.

You are always open-minded.

### Cutting Ki

Don't depend on cutting ki to affect an opponent too much. You need strong ki to have a measurable effect; it is better to lead their ki. However, as Tamura Sensei said, when ukes move in through your ki extension their ki is cut. This gives you an advantage, and the ability to lead them. Don't expect more than that; an angry person is affected by your ki, but not for long and not as obviously as a centered opponent.

### Multiple opponents

Always assume there is more than one opponent. Extend ki in all directions from the tanden, not forward. One way to learn to connect with the whole environment, if you are a visual person, is to visualise your ki illuminating the surroundings like a bright lamp. Another is regular practice of Maruyama Sensei's seiza exercise where the tanden ball is moved in various directions. This connection is cut if you are not in the moment, or are thinking too hard or daydreaming. Have the connection run in the background, and just check regularly that it is still there.

### Universal Principles

There is no list of the universal principles. Therefore our human instinct to add disputation, dogma, doctrine and interpretation is cleverly avoided. Tohei Sensei said that a universal principle is one that everyone can agree on. Another meaning is that the Universe agrees with the principle. Perhaps, if you can pass a ki test whilst in that mode/mindset or action, you are acting in accord with the universe.

### Repression

Tohei Sensei - Don't endure or suppress something. Look at the issue, get one point (Maruyama Sensei - Universal Mind), then let the problem/feeling dissolve back to the universe.

### Mental Resilience

Tohei Sensei - "If its hot, its hot. Just don't be bothered by it."

NZ Army - "You don't have to like it, you just have to do it."

Life doesn't always allow easy choices with a guarantee of a positive outcome. We have to face problems and act, regardless of discomfort or personal consequences. We have to treat any unpleasantness the same way as we interact with ki - acknowledge it and let it pass through us without affecting us. Focusing on discomfort or danger is attachment and also generates negative ki, leading to defeat.

### Never Slack your Ki

- Your opponent will follow it in

- If you have slackened your ki you cannot connect with your environment; you will therefore be surprised and be reacting to events - possibly too late to recover; therefore you must be ready at all times;

- Fear and dislike of conflict make your ki negative. Let the hostility and anger pass through you without affecting you.

### Relax Completely

This principle is where real power in technique comes from, due to the flow of ki it enables. We are told all the time to relax completely, and we do. The problem is that what Maruyama Sensei, Tohei Sensei and Tamura Sensei mean by this is orders of magnitude outside our experience. Our relaxation therefore stops well short of what we can achieve at whatever level we are at because our expectations of ourselves are wrong. It is vital to experience complete relaxation from someone who can really do it, otherwise you cannot give yourself a target body-memory of what to aim for. I first felt this in Tamura Sensei's dojo and was astonished at what was really meant by relax completely. What was a common achievement there is almost unknown here due to lack of exposure to the standard required - it is readily achievable once the target has been experienced.

Tamura Sensei taught the feeling with a series of three exercises:

1. Uke stands in shizentai, nage kneels beside them (not seiza); nage strokes ki down uke's arm with both hands as softly as caressing a baby's cheek. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> or later stroke just gently melt your hands into their arm "at some point" (there is no conscious decision, and no grip) and continue the stroke to the floor (especially with your mind). There can't be any hold, and it must be very, very soft.
2. Uke attacks ryukatatori, nage steps back with the front foot and places their now back-foot hand on uke's furthest wrist and "downs" vertically very softly and positively to the ground (the ki must reach the ground). This is an unrealistic throw for most people until their "down" becomes softly and unconsciously powerful, so uke must agree to take ukemi. Nage therefore learns subconsciously to be very soft and not force uke, and learns the feeling of how soft they must and can be.
3. Same as 2 above, but now nage's hand is palm down just below their elbow (as you step back you slip in between their outstretched arms), and nage does "down" very softly but positively to the ground (the arm drops fully and the ki reaches the ground). There is no push at all, its as if their arm is not there and your arm is just dropping naturally through the air.

This same feeling should then be put into **all** your movements; it is the very basis of advanced technique.

It is also how the sword cuts. The sword drops entirely by itself; you are attached to it but play no part in the drop (except to shape it) - this is "using the weight of the sword". Only once you can cut as fast holding onto the sword as it can drop by itself can you then add anything to the cut - and then it is by getting behind the drop and "pushing", not by pulling the cut down. Any muscle in the cut actually slows it down through muscle tension compared to what it could do, no matter how convinced you are that you are making it faster. Muscle makes it a hit with a sharp hammer, not a cut.

## Other Gifts from my Teachers

### Hold the whole body first with your mind

Before you move to hold your opponent hold their whole body with your mind. Unless they let your ki pass through them, this will cut their ki. Hold in your mind, move in and take, and you will find they fail a ki test. Similarly, if striking, strike their skeleton with your mind first - "know" you are striking the skeleton. This is similar to "cut first with the mind."

### Take your universal mind outside the dojo

- Check your UM regularly - "is my posture correct? Could I pass a ki test?"
- Do this sitting at your desk, standing at the lights, walking, everything.
- Constant practice puts a background routine in your mind that alerts you to when you have lost it.

### Tuning Fork

One way to visualise unification is to imagine ki resonating like a tuning fork. The vibration just grows quieter but never stops, and it can be made larger at will. This way your UM never stops.

Maintain a spirit of unshakeable composure.

Be large-hearted and forgiving.

Keep universal mind then leave things entirely up to the universe, including life and death.

Individuality should not equal self-importance.

Persist all your life.

Quiet determination

Do good in secret without expecting reward.

Have soft eyes and a gentle, composed manner.

- Agression and tension cut your own ki
- Minimises the likelihood that others will cause you trouble
- Reflects zanshin and universal mind

Take care of the little things and the big things become possible.

# An End-to-End Transaction Model

## Pre-Event Foundation

### [1] Universal Mind

- > Posture
- > Floating Feeling
- > Relax completely - remove the tension from your body  
remove the tension from your mind
- > You are just here, now
- > Ki is Extending - like a light illuminating a room.
- > Beginner's Mind

### [2] You are Mind Itself

### [3] Immovable Mind

### [4] No Mind

### [5] Have "The Bridge Between Life & Death" ready

### [6] Add Zanshin/Awareness

- > See without looking
- > Apply the following subliminal general checklists to Seeing Without Looking:
  - Environment
  - Unusual behaviour
  - Movement
  - Posture
  - Intentions
- > Make sure that the processing of the checklists is without thought in an empty mind (Void) so that your observation is without pattern or attachment.
- > Awareness of precisely what your feet are doing
- > Use "sight" and "noise" to maintain equanimity
- > Make sure that your Awareness is what your Self identifies with, not Thinking or Ego

## Event Starts

### [1] to [5]

### [6] Zanshin/Awareness - Modified

Add to the general checklists with specific ones:

- Observe: Posture/stance/weight distribution
- Mind
  - Intention
  - Whole body
  - Feet
  - Hands
  - Grip
  - Weapons
  - Accomplices
  - Bystanders
  - Ground, obstacles, furniture
  - Light

> Use the subliminal processing of the data coming over the Information Connection to tell you what/when, and to inform your creative self, allowing proactive awareness. BUT don't "think" and don't get attached to a concept of what is coming (use No Mind + Non-attachment)

### [7] Establish ma-ai

### [8] Establish the Information Connection + hide your own ki

### [9] No Enemy

### [10] Abiding Mind

### [11] Don't care. Don't be afraid. Don't want to throw. Don't be first

### [12] Cut first with the mind

- > Place your ki on/in your opponent
- > Use TBBL&D
- > You have decided to act instantly when their ki moves, without processing.
- > Your action will emerge creatively from the situation, your training, and the information received by your unconscious

### [13] Receive your opponent's ki transparently

- > Don't slack your ki
- > Don't receive their ki, let it pass through you without affecting you
- > Automatically compensate for their manipulation/use of ki by increasing the brightness of your 360° ki extension

### [14] Non-attachment

### [15] Thinking

> Think if you have to, but retain observer status and awareness. Retain the knowledge that the real you is your awareness. When you are finished revert to processing in silent emptiness and bring your awareness to the front.

## During the Event

### [1] to [15]

### [16] 5 Principles of Ki in Aikido

### [17] Do as Kata

### [18] Master form then transcend it

- > Dance with the Universe
- > Just do "something"
- > Since you are here, now, you can move freely without thinking or being confused by time-based thoughts

### [19] Postive Mind

- > Don't slack your ki
- > Compensate with 360° extension
- > "Hug" your opponent (see no enemy)

### [20] Harmonise with what is/reality with a calm, silent, empty mind (no mind)

### [21] Harmonise with your partner to outflow them

- > Stay engaged unless absolutely necessary

### [22] Apply the Compassionate Sword if possible, the Death-dealing Sword if uke so chooses

All of these are subsumed by Universal Mind; however, it is important that each component is also fully polished and mindfully present as an individual facet of the whole diamond.

With practice you can start these in the combination required at that moment, by being unified mind & body with the universe and "knowing" to do them as appropriate.

