

## Gift of Katana: Acceptance

Last weekend we had an Aikido Seminar here at my school where my teacher came down from New York and did a seminar. Some of the black belts from the other schools in our association came to join us here. One came from Baton Rouge, Louisiana which is where I will be going on Thursday to do a seminar; another came from the Tampa, Florida area, and another from Atlanta, Georgia.

The one from Atlanta Georgia I have known for several years. Every time I would give a seminar at his teacher's school he would attend. So I've got pretty friendly with him.

After the class was finished he came over to me and said, "I have something for you." He went out to his car and came back with a long thin box. He opened the box and came out with this black bag with a long thin object in it and he handed it to me. I opened the bag and came out with a real live razor sharp Katana.

He said, "This is a gift for you for all of the years for all the years you have been teaching me and all the things you have been helping me with."

Comment: Wow Wow Wow!

Yeah it is. It is really really nice.

He said, "Well you gotta go out and try it out." Of course I didn't have anything to try it out on there except the heads of my students, and I don't want to hurt any of my students. So I haven't actually tried it out yet. I need to go get some bamboo or some melon and start slicing with it.

The reason why I am telling that story is because I have just finished doing a video, at least the first draft, on "The Laws of Manifestation" subject that I went through with you for the last two dharma talks .

This incident is a very pertinent demonstration of the validity of those principles. Because in that presentation, in that program, I talk about how the more you work at setting intentions, the less the universe responds to you. The universe responds to the least or the most subtle intentions and when you make those intentions without a lot of fanfare or a lot of emotional attachment to it... Like, you know, you make it but you

maintain your presence, you maintain your integrity; you don't feel like you're incomplete because you don't have it. You just throw it out there as a passing thought kinda saying "Yeah, it would be a nice thing to have." Then effortlessly put it out to the universe not really as a request and certainly not like begging the universe to give it to you. Just putting it out there, having the thought, and letting it go.

And sure enough this katana came my way, out of the blue so to speak, out of emptiness, out of a totally unexpected quarter. And that's usually the way the best things in life occur. They occur as a result of something you probably wouldn't even have noticed, except for the fact that down the road you look back and see how profound that seemingly insignificant incident had on your life.

I'm going to share more stories with you because they have happened all through my life and they are happening even now and with greater frequency.

q. Didn't you create the katana through the love you shared with your student?

Yes absolutely. I'm not trying to say it came out of nowhere, but it came from an unexpected source. And it came effortlessly. I didn't have to do anything in terms of work to have that katana drop into my lap. I didn't ask for it. Even though I did do "work" in the sense that I taught that students and all of the students up in that school in Atlanta, over the past nine years; you could call that "work" but to me teaching is not work. Teaching is joy, it's love, it's service. It's like coming here to this virtual space we share, here in Deer Park, to talk to all of you - this isn't work, this is fun! This is joy. This is enthusiasm. It's flowing with the universe.

It's joy for all of us. Sharing, giving. We're all in the same boat. We can say, "I don't care because the leak is on the other side of the boat," And none of us will get out of this alive. So we might as well get along with each other, help each other out and all be everything we can be.

Another manifestation story. For the last couple of months I have been working like a madman, and I use that term guardedly because it hasn't really been work, it's been a creative outburst. I have been revising my website <http://brightpathway.com>, and I have been producing videos. One is on meditation and enlightenment and the other is on the laws of manifestation. I've been working on putting these things together. So

I've been doing more work on the computer – work that requires a lot more of the computer's capabilities than my poor old dinosaur Mac can give. I'm almost at the end of the useful life of this thing.

So as I am putting these videos together and having a little bit of a problem I felt like “Gee, you know it would be nice – I'd like to get a new computer because it would make this whole process much easier; especially because I have plans now to produce more videos, similar videos and also finishing writing the book on Practical Spirituality and Integral Living that I have been taking notes for over the last ten or fifteen years. I have kind of galvanized myself into action now to get that done.

I had the thought as I am working – I thought, “Wow, it would be nice to be able to get a new computer that had some increased capabilities.” I had the thought and just dropped it. Didn't have any attachment to it. Just like “It would be nice.”

Well, yesterday I got a call from my business partner in [Natural Soap Formulas](#). Some of you are aware that one of the many things that I do is to manufacture a non-toxic soap and cleaner. My business partner called and said, “Happy Birthday. I want you to go on to Apple.com because you need to pick out a new computer that the business is going to be buying for you. You need a new computer.”

I hadn't spoken to her about needing a new computer. I was chugging along with the one I had. Sometime today or tomorrow I'm going to have a brand new Apple Mac Pro super duper bells and whistles computer.

So, where did that come from?

Again, my friend over here might say it came from all the love and the service, and that's absolutely true.

c. Congratulations!

Thanks. That's just another example of how when you put something out there, without that sense of longing, without that sense of separation and just live in your integrity, live in moment, in the presence, in the now, in the knowledge that we are connected with all that is. All of the material things that you need to continue to serve your highest good and purpose to continue you to expand in your consciousness, in

your love, in your growth will come to you. That it's just a given, you don't have to worry about anything.

That story is example number two.

Now I'm going to give you example number three. I'll read this because it is posted on my blog <http://blog.brightpathway.com>.

While we wait for that to come up I will tell you a little joke. You remember Rene Descartes the French philosopher who said, "I think, therefore I am." Well he was out at a bar having a drink one day. He was having a few beers and the bartender noticed that he had finished his beers so he goes over and he says, "Excuse me Monsieur Descartes, will you have another?" And Descartes looks up at him and says, "Ahh, I think not." And poof! He disappears.

Okay, I think I should get on to the story.

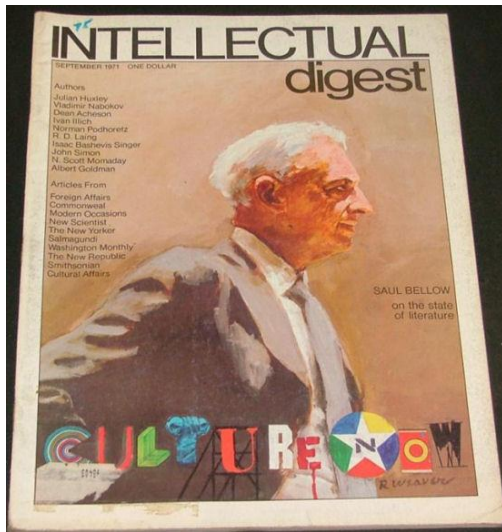
A series of co-incidences led me to revisit an article I read "by chance" 37 years ago – "Aikido and the Mind of the West" by George Leonard – and the powerful impact that article has had on my life. This is another story about the Power of Intention, and what Carl Jung termed "synchronicity."

You can read it here: "[Aikido and the Mind of the West](#)"

My friend of many years, Bob, wrote a book report on the book "The Power of a Positive NO" by William Ury, which he submitted yesterday for a graduate course he is taking in Negotiation Skills. He sent me a copy for my review and comments, and mentioned that some of the principles in the book are similar to principles I have discussed with him that are principles of aikido. Aikido teaches non-resistance and yielding to an attack and moving with the energy of an attacker and re-directing it so that you neutralize the attack.

As I mused on this, a train of thought began which culminated in my searching for and finding the article by George Leonard. This article is worth reading when you get a chance. You can find it here:

"Aikido and the Mind of the West" was included as a chapter in the book "[The Ultimate Athlete](#)" by [George Leonard](#) published in 1975. My friend Bob and I went to one of Leonard's workshops together in 1985 at Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, NY.



The series of co-incidences that would come to have such a profound effect on my life's direction begins with the first time I read this article in the June 1973 edition of a magazine presumptuously called "Intellectual Digest." This magazine was a short-lived publication, to which I happened to have a year's subscription, courtesy of a friend who was somehow getting cut-rate prices on magazine subscriptions in those days and asking all of his friends if we wanted to subscribe to some magazine or other via this "deal" he had. I originally didn't, but I suppose to humor him, I did eventually chose a subscription to "Intellectual Digest", which was the only magazine among those he was offering that held any interest for me. He told me that I didn't have to give him any money up front for it (I think it was about \$12 a year at the time), just to pay him after I started receiving the magazine in the mail.

As I recall, I never actually paid him the subscription fee, having forgotten to do so until he reminded me years later (at which time he of course didn't want the money anymore). When I look back and consider what the great worth of this one article has been for me... I still think of my friend to this day and how profoundly this seemingly insignificant event affected the course of my life. Regrettably, this friend passed away last December.

### *"Someday" is Today: From Inspiration to Realization*

When I read the article for the first time, back in those heady days of 1973, I was inspired. My friend Bob and I had just come off of one year of studying Tae Kwon Do with Mr. Yoo at NYU during 1972. Both of us had dropped out at the end of that academic year because of increasing academic demands on our time. We had not practiced any art for almost a year. Both of us, however, often said to ourselves (and

each other) that "some day" we would want to study the martial arts again, both figuring that it would be resuming the practice of tae kwon do. Bob eventually did return to the study of tae kwon do when he lived in Albany, NY, during the years from 1980 until 1986, and obtained his first degree black belt in that art in 1983 or 1984, as I recall.

### *"Aikido and the Mind of the West" My "aha" moment in 1973*

I read this article and everything changed. When I finished it, it was like one of those "inspirational" moments, when you see and know your path clear before you. I knew that, if I were ever to study a martial art again, THIS would be the art. This was, to me, the highest expression that a martial art could embody, one as close to a spiritual experience while still being a physical one, as could be possible. Remember, these were the days of Bruce Lee and also when "Kung Fu" was originally being televised, extolling the virtues of the "spiritual warrior". I kept this idea in the back of my mind from then on, even though I never had or took the opportunity to make it a reality



I moved to Orange County from NYC in 1979, beginning my first position as a school psychologist. During some of my rare sojourns through downtown Middletown in '80 to '83, I'd pass a storefront with the sign "Aikido School of Self-Defense", and was astounded to see that what I had taken for a very rare martial art, one for which schools would be available only in major global metropolitan centers, was available in, of all places, Middletown!!! Of course, I did not know at the time that it was Nihon Goshin Aikido Dojo, and not the style originated by Morihei Ueshiba which I had read about in George Leonard's article. But that still did not galvanize me into action.

### *Actualization: My Three Commitments*

It took my attendance in July of 1983 at the third in the series of "Actualizations" workshops I had been attending (this one was held over a week's time in Sonoma, California) to inspire me to make 3 commitments to myself that I would follow through with when I got home to New York , and which would lead me pragmatically on a

journey I had wanted to begin for many years– living a life where I would be the best “Jim Giorgi” that I could possibly be by practicing activities that united body, mind and spirit, and also releasing the emotional baggage and hangups that were still troubling me.

Those 3 commitments were, first, to read every book on the “recommended reading list” they had distributed at the workshop. This list of about 20 books included “A Course in Miracles”, which I had never heard of before, but dutifully obtained and then studied faithfully for the full year term of the course (I did this from late January 1984 to late January 1985...365 days without a miss). I also read all of the other books, too.

The second commitment was to begin again the serious and regular practice of meditation, which we both had started practicing together in 1971 when Bob and I went to a Transcendental Meditation workshop at Don Herbert’s (TV’s “Mr. Wizard”) house in Larchmont NY. Bob and I practiced TM for about a year and then both of us sort of let it fall by the wayside. Returning from California, I went to the first available meditation intensive workshop I could at the SYDA ashram in South Fallsburg in August of 1983, learned and started practicing Siddha meditation regularly. I eventually felt a calling to Zen, and followed that in 1985. The results of that journey are noted on my webpage for “Integral Zen”.

And finally, the third commitment was to begin studying a martial art again, and aikido if at all possible.

### *When the Student is Ready, The Master Appears*



To this end, I made an appointment in early November of 1983 to observe a class at the nearest aikido school I could find (it would have been a prohibitive commute to go down to NYC from Orange County for classes), met Sensei MacEwen, and signed up that night to begin classes the following week. I believe that the date of my first class was November 8, 1983. And the rest is history.

I have to say that I went through periods of "disappointment" for the first couple of years that

NGA was not the same style as that which I read about in Leonard's article, and thus somehow not as "spiritual". Sometimes I considered dropping out and finding a nearby "mainline aikido" dojo. But two factors prevented me from doing that.

First, I was committedly practicing meditation and studying spirituality on my own, and so did not require that kind of influence or instruction from aikido classes. I brought my own spirituality to my aikido practice instead of needing to obtain it there. Second, as I progressed through the ranks, and also occasionally attended workshops at other schools conducted by "mainline" aikido instructors, I was familiarized with the contrasts between it and NGA.

These differences caused me to realize more and more that what I was studying was more to my liking in every way, and I thank my "lucky stars" now that it was an NGA dojo that was "conveniently" located near where I lived. And now, almost 27 years later, I am the fifth highest ranking yudansha in the entire NGAA, and the principal author of the book that will be the definitive statement of NGA for generations to come, "**Nihon Goshin Aikido: The Art and Science of Self-Defense**" which I hope will be coming out this summer.

It's hard for me to believe sometimes that all of this that has come to pass. Not a bad outcome from just the simple and otherwise easily forgettable incident of reading an article in a magazine that I probably never would have picked up on the newsstand. This article is the "granddaddy" of all of it.

The universe is a strange, mysterious, fascinating and, for me, benevolent place. I have always followed the path of my highest good and that highest good is returned to me daily. Just like the little pebble thrown into the still, smooth pond.

So that's the story. And I can tell you other stories too of seemingly insignificant incidents that have occurred that have had profound effects. I think if you look into your own life, also, you will find that some of the best things that may have happened to you, and maybe some of the worst things also - but when I say the worst things I mean the things that you went through that taught you the most about letting go and the need to let go and to end suffering for yourself - in both cases the most beautiful and the most troubling things have come not from the planning and scheming, the rational, logical and analytical mind, but from seemingly chance and insignificant incident that just kind of marginally caught your attention but seemed to have more and more growing and profound effects as time went on.

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So that's why I think it so important for us to remain as present as we possibly can. Because if we're caught up in our regrets about the past and our worries and our schemes about the future, we miss the subtle signs that are right in front of us that would give us everything that we are looking for, and more.

Q: Why is manifestation so rare, or why does it appear so?

The reason is that people expend too much energy **thinking** about what they are manifesting rather than enjoying what is right there in front of them, what is manifesting in front of them in the present moment. Which, if they could just realize their intimate connection with, they would feel absolutely and totally whole, complete and fulfilled and whatever it is that they want to see manifested would just "drop out of the sky" so to speak. Although, it's not quite like that. My sword didn't drop out of the sky.

### *Acceptance, Forgiveness and the Art of Aikido*

Q: Is this not acceptance?

Yes, it absolutely is acceptance. At the last Zen retreat that I went to at our temple here in my interview with the Zen master, he said, "Zen is simply accepting this moment as it is. That's it. Being able to accept it. It doesn't mean you have to like it. It doesn't mean you want to try to change it, at least in that moment. You can do something to change it but you don't resist it. You don't inwardly put up barriers to it and say, "I don't like this," or, "I don't like that." It is essentially what Jesus said when he said, "Turn the other cheek."

Now if you see something that troubles you the law of karma demonstrates that the only reason you're seeing it is because you are holding on to that issue in your unconscious mind, in your Shadow. And you're projecting it. And you're blaming whatever is going on outside, for your feeling bad about it, when it's actually your own responsibility for creating it.

What acceptance does is to dissolve that issue within you so that you don't project it into your immediate experience anymore. And like I said, it doesn't mean you have to like it. You just have to acknowledge what it is and Let It Go. And Let It Go. Because the truth of the matter is there is nothing "out there" that can truly hurt you because you are perfect, whole and complete and one with all that is. The only thing that can hurt you, the only thing that can cause suffering are your thoughts of separation. And

then when you project those thoughts into your immediate experience of reality then it **seems** that it is coming to you from the outside. But that's the province of Shadow Work.

Whenever you see something on the outside that causes you distress, anybody with an ounce of enlightened consciousness needs to ask the question: "How am I creating this? What am I doing? What am I still holding on to that's creating this? How can I let it go so that I don't have to experience this anymore?"

And it is very much like the martial art of Aikido. Aikido is the art of non-resistance to attack. It's accepting this energy, even though it is seemingly hostile energy, it's accepting it. Accept the energy, but don't allow yourself to be impacted by it. Don't react or resist it. You move, harmonize with it, go to the center of that energy. And from that center you stop resisting, and you get into that center place, that still point that T.S. Eliot talks about:

"At the still point of the turning world" T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets

When you get to that still point in the center of that attack you can effortlessly re-direct it. So I like to describe Aikido as a kind of "instant Karma" because if somebody is angry with you and throws an attack at you, you simply get out of the way, re-direct it and they end up hitting the ground pretty hard. But you really haven't done very much, you haven't counter-attacked or anything - you are just taking them where they wanted to go, or at least where they wanted you to go. So it's a beautiful art and a beautiful analogy for how to use your mind on the physical plane.

So we also talk about using the principles of Aikido, non-resistance in emotional conflicts, personal conflicts, verbal conflicts. The key is acceptance. And acceptance is forgiveness.

Q: Is that manifestation?

I don't want to create a sense or concept of separation here. Acceptance is not necessarily manifestation but it is the key to effortless manifestation.

Q: What is forgiveness?

Forgiveness is acceptance and release of blame for past hurts. Acceptance you do in the present moment. You've got to accept whatever is happening right now.

Forgiveness is acceptance of the past. It's allowing whatever happened in the past to exist, without your needing to react to it or hold on to it, or try to change it in any way.

By releasing it you no longer need to change it because it no longer exists. It no longer can affect you any more.

That's why "A Course in Miracles" is such a beautiful and effective practice because the fundamental principle in the "Course in Miracles" is forgiveness.

C: Present only exists.

Right. Remember there is no past and the future. You can't prove that there ever was a past, or that there will be a future, because there's only now. We create the past and the future from the present moment. So whatever we are creating in this moment in our minds, in our heads, with our thoughts – that's what our past was. We can change our past simply by changing our thoughts or just stopping the focus on those thoughts.

C: The past is over the future is not here.

I wanted to start reading from the quotes on this book I am writing. Here is one:

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On Forgiveness.

"Refusal to forgive only confirms and re-enforces one's identity with victimhood, which then attracts more people and situations that victimize you. You become a magnet for victimizers. It is also a statement that you believe you are not whole, that you are harmed, that you were, and are still vulnerable. What you don't forgive continues to enslave you by identification with victimhood. As long as you continue to identify with victimhood you cannot realize and experience the Power of Your Divinity."

"Between Yesterday and Tomorrow" by Jim Giorgi

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Make sense? It will all be in the book. All of these dharma talks are recorded and they are available for you to listen to.

Next time, unless I come up with some more wonderful manifestation stories, that have been happening to me recently, I will quote more from the book and we can

discuss some of those quotes. There are passages from every subject – about the ego, about enlightenment, about relationships, about manifestation, and about the power of intention.

Thank you all for being here and I will see you next time.

Namaste

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