



**Northern Virginia Ki Aikido (NVKA) / Virginia Ki Society (VKS)**  
**Newsletter for May, 2021**  
[www.novakiaikido.org](http://www.novakiaikido.org)

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**This Week's Topics**

- I. Dojo calendar (incl. upcoming events)
  - II. Clarity: The value of our existence (short essay)
  - III. Upcoming events (details)
  - IV. Weekly Shokushu: The value of our existence
  - V. (New!) Book of the month
  - VI. (New!) Member feedback: Let us hear from you!!
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**Dojo Calendar**

**Current Classes (Adult)**

- Wednesday, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
- Saturday, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

*We hope to add a Monday night adult class if enough people return to the dojo for in-person practice. There are no children's classes at this time.*

**Upcoming Events**

- Spring Cleanup: Merrifield dojo, Date and time TBD
  - EKF Zoom Training: Saturday, May 15 (8:00 am - 9:00 am EST)
  - 2021 Miles Kessler Sensei USA Seminar at Aikido in Fredericksburg: Saturday, September 4 (9:00 am - 4:00 pm EST) and Sunday, September 5 (9:00 am - 1:00 pm EST)
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**Clarity**

***The Value of Our Existence***

Last month we clarified bodymind, or mind and body unification. We left off considering how the principle of "relax completely" relates to bodymind. This relationship is also central to this week's shokushu and the theme Matthew Attarian Sensei taught in the most recent EKF Zoom training.

"Relax completely" is the English translation of the Japanese sentence: *Zenshin no chikara o kanzen ni nuku*, which literally means "the power of your whole self -- pull it out" (like a letter from an envelope). The English translation covers over its deeper meaning. It is often presented (and misunderstood) to mean relax only in the physical sense, such as not tensing muscles.

But, to paraphrase David Shaner Sensei in his book *Living With the Wind at Your Back* (p166-168), relax completely really means to "relax" everything -- the body, thoughts/beliefs, emotions -- and lose attachment to one's sense of personal power or self. This refers to the ego. In other words, by casting off or letting go every way you think of yourself as a separate self, especially what you believe to be your strengths or power in this world, only then can you experience real freedom, connection with the Ki (life force) of the Universe, and the real power therein.

An example of this is seen sometimes in seminars. A dan rank will ably perform a technique that the instructor is teaching. The instructor says, "That was amazing. Didn't everyone think that she did that technique perfectly? Wow. You must really be proud of the way you did that so well." The dan rank laughs. The instructor laughs. In fact, everyone in the class breaks out in knowing laughter because they suspect what comes next. The instructor says, "Now, do it again. Remember how you did it so well the first time? Yeah, that was great. I bet you can do it even better..." Of course, the next time is usually not quite so stellar and many teaching points follow.

The subtler point here is it's not just because the dan rank may have been in her head with thoughts of glory and was not focusing attention on the technique or uke or on *nothing in particular*. It's not just that her sense of bodymind became fragmented. It's that she *identified* with those thoughts and the fragments. In those few moments, she shifted to think of herself only as those thoughts and fragments, believing they were the extent of her value and power. In other words, her ego became activated and rather than cast it off she remained attached to it.

That's how quickly and easily we can lose the four core principles, including relax completely. This *will* happen, perhaps a lot. Sometimes it happens subconsciously. It's a natural part of life and how we are wired. And, it's not easy to move our minds from an egoic sense of self when it gets activated or even become aware that it has. But, because this process is difficult and natural, we can both expect to lose connection with the Ki of the Universe and have compassion for ourselves when we do.

The good news is we can learn to quickly get it back. In fact, Ki Aikido trains us to recover the four principles with kindness and compassion and treat everyone, even and perhaps especially our attackers, with empathy from this place. For why else would they be attacking us if they had not lost this connection themselves?

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## 2021 Miles Kessler Sensei USA Seminar

<https://www.aikidoinfredericksburg.org/>

Join Aikido in Frederickburg for this exploration of "Stillness and Movement in Aikido" with Miles Kessler Sensei. The seminar will celebrate renewed connections post-covid and our shared Aikido and meditation legacies. Non-refundable discounted registration is available through August 7, 2021. \$159 thereafter (if space is still available).

TENTATIVE - if the event is cancelled due to covid-19 you will receive a full refund.

**Date:** September 4, 2021, Time: 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

**Date:** September 5, 2021, Time: 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

**Location:**

6155 Hickory Ridge Road

Spotsylvania, VA 22551

(540) 582-9600

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## Shokushu Reading

*Read the "Clarity" essay above for an exploration of this reading.*

### 2. THE VALUE OF OUR EXISTENCE

Our lives are born of the Ki of the Universe. Let us give thanks for being born not as plants and animals, but as human beings blessed with a Universal Mind.

Let us pledge to fulfill our missions by helping to guide the development and creation of the Universe.

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## Book of the Month

This is a space we will periodically use to highlight a favorite book that has helped deepen our understanding and practice of Ki Aikido. This month's book is *Mastery* by George Leonard. Check it out!

This relatively short book provides a powerful exploration of performance excellence and how we get there. It is particularly helpful to learning Ki Aikido because it explains how the inevitable plateaus are just part of the normal process of learning and mastering anything. He teaches us to "love the plateau," putting it in perspective.

(From the back cover) In *Mastery*, you'll discover:

- The five essential keys to mastery
  - Tools for mastery
  - Mastery and energy
  - How to master your athletic potential
  - The three personality types that are obstacles to mastery
  - How to avoid pitfalls along the path... and more
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## EKF Zoom Training

Email from Rich Fryling Sensei, Head Instructor, NYKA:

I'm happy to announce that we've scheduled our next online EKF Aikido class on **Saturday, May 15<sup>th</sup> @ 8:00am**. The class will be taught by EKF instructor **Matthew Attarian Sensei** who is currently studying in Tokyo, Japan.

Below is the Zoom link for the class.

This class continues with the training focus that Soshu, Koichi Tohei Sensei calls “**Ki no Shurenho**”. This means ways to practice, drill, repeat activities in order to make a habit of unifying mind and body in the dojo as well as ways to practice outside the dojo by repeating again and again unified movements in daily life. This class will also focus on applying the repeated *hitori waza* movements into the Aikido techniques, helping to further reinforce the basics.

Please feel free to share the below Zoom link with your EKF students. And similar to our previous online classes, we ask that you do not share the link information on social media. This is primarily for security reasons.

As we return to the dojo setting, we will conduct our classes in alignment with the Zoom classes offered in Japan. As a reminder for those planning to participate next Saturday, I've attached the **online training protocols**. Please take the time to review these as well as pass them on to your students.

Wishing you plus ki,

Rich

## Member Feedback

We would love to hear from you with any suggestions, concerns, questions, etc regarding anything dojo-related. Please don't be shy. Is there anything you're liking or not liking about the dojo or Ki Aikido? Is there anything you wish was different or don't want to change? Want to tell us what you love (or not) about the newsletter? Just want to chat? Please feel free to send us an email at [vkdojo@gmail.com](mailto:vkdojo@gmail.com) with anything on your mind. The door is always open!

THANK YOU! We hope to see you back on the mat soon.

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