



**Northern Virginia Ki Aikido (NVKA) / Virginia Ki Society (VKS)
Newsletter for November, 2021**

www.novakiaikido.org

This Week's Topics

- I. Dojo calendar (incl. upcoming events and a **new announcement**)
- II. Clarity: Breathing, One Point, and Time (short essay)
- III. Upcoming events
- IV. Weekly Shokushu: Ki Breathing
- V. Book of the month
- VI. Connection (click link to answer): [Knock, knock.](#)

---> No responses to report from last month's question.

Dojo Calendar

Current Classes (Adults)

- Monday, 7:15 pm - 9:00 pm
- Wednesday, 7:15 pm - 9:00 pm
- Thursday, November 4 and November 11, 7:15 - 9:00 pm (***Intermediate/Advanced: for 4th kyu and above and only fully vaccinated***)
- Saturday, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Current Classes (Children)

- Saturday, 10:00 am - 11:00 am

***Note:** *All adult classes are now contact classes, including ki testing and techniques. The children's class will be no contact for the time being.*

Message from Children's class teacher, Marion Sensei:

We restarted our children's program the first Saturday in June. We have class from 10:00 - 11:00 am every Saturday morning. With all our students under 12 years old, and therefore unable to be vaccinated yet, we use masks, have no contact, and keep a 3 foot distance. Although we still can't do many things (no throws, ki tests,

and some of our favorite games), we are still having fun and enjoying being on the mat together. We do stretches, hitori waza, ukemi, jo, bokken, games, and shadow box techniques. We had some returning students (one who turned 13 in July and has moved on to the adult classes), and we have several new students, who have been learning to roll, knee walk, and use weapons. We are very pleased that the children's class is back.

Upcoming Events

- EKF Zoom Training: Saturday, November 13 (8:00 am - 9:00 am EST) and Thursday, November 18 (6:30 pm - 7:30 pm EST)
- **There will be no January EKF seminar at the dojo this year.**

Clarity

Breathing, One Point, and Time

Last month, we explored the concept of entropy and how our ability to allow and even welcome painful experiences (as opposed to suffering) may be the way of *life* in the Universe. This month, we will connect to the breath, one point, and time.

First, let's examine the breath from a purely mechanical perspective. When we inhale, air comes through the nose or mouth, down through the trachea and into the bronchial tubes at the base of the trachea. The tree-like bronchi branches off into hundreds of pathways in each lung, at the end of which are tiny sacs called alveoli that are connected to thousands of tiny passageways called capillaries. These transport red blood cells that contain the protein hemoglobin.

So, let's stop right there and look at the process called gas exchange that occurs in the alveoli. We have breathed in air and that air is sitting in the alveoli sacs. There is higher concentration of oxygen (O₂) in the air in the alveoli than in the capillaries that contain CO₂ returned from the cells in our body. The same is true of CO₂ in the capillaries vis a vis the alveoli. Because of this differential, a process of diffusion occurs where the O₂ moves across the permeable alveoli and capillary walls into the capillaries and the CO₂ moves into the alveoli sacs to be exhaled. The hemoglobin in the red blood cells then carry the O₂ to the heart which pumps it to all the cells in the body where a similar gas exchange occurs to feed the cells O₂ and bring CO₂ back to the lungs and the process starts all over again.

This pretty much all happens, miraculously, within the span of a breath. But, what does this have to do with one point, or time for that matter? In his recent EKF Zoom class, Shinichi Tohei Sensei spoke of keeping one point. "People often try to keep one point intentionally all the time," he said, "but this is wrong." Instead, he said, "check one point once before you take an action and then do something."

In order to breathe, our bodies relax the thoracic muscles and contract the diaphragm to create space for the lungs to expand. This simultaneous expansion and contraction represents an equilibrium state in motion. In fact, the entire diffusion process is an equilibrium state in motion. And, isn't that action with one point? Perhaps successful Ki Aikido is simply a steady-state performance, like the visual of constantly level arms and shoulders and height throughout the Udefuri Choyaku waza?

So, how about time? For this we return to entropy which, in addition to measuring the disorder or chaos in a system, is the reason time runs in one direction, according to physicist Brian Cox. But, time *is* space, so we can also say entropy explains the direction of movement. For example, diffusion of O₂ and CO₂ happens because those objects move from a place of high concentration to low concentration. The same principle (in

terms of pressure) applies to the mostly CO2 "air" in our lungs that *must* be exhaled -- just hold your breath for five seconds and feel that pressure release when you exhale. Air pressure depends on the *density* of air molecules in a given space.

But these molecules more fundamentally move in one direction (high to low) because of entropy, and entropy depends on the existence of friction and heat. According to physicist Carlo Rovelli, without friction there is no heat, and without heat there is no entropy and thus no time as *we know it*. His current scientific work jibes with the writings of Zen Master Dogan Kaigen almost 900 years ago in that they both say time works differently in the larger Universe than it does for us. Perhaps in rare moments we are able to pierce that veil separating our linear time from nonlinear Universal time because, after all, don't we also exist in Universal time?

So, that brings us back to Ki Aikido. How do we connect all of these dots? The bridge may be bodymind awareness: Perhaps it is a function of one's internal state of entropy? Perhaps time is relative...to consciousness? In Shaner Sensei's simple diagram he has presented, the three levels of bodymind awareness are characterized first and foremost by the *density* of objects of attention (i.e., thoughts or "thetic positings") in the space of the bodymind, with many objects in third order, only one object in second order, and nothing in first order. An experience of hypofrontality (i.e., time slowing) occurs as we move from third to second order until we experience "no time" -- simultaneous past, present, and future -- in first order. Furthermore, this occurs as the density of objects of attention goes to zero, which means less and less internal friction and therefore less and less heat in the mind aspects and body aspects of our experience. Ki Aikido is a practice of bodymind awareness.

Could this explain the often (and always surprisingly) cool touch of an instructor's skin even after performing techniques or even taigis, while lesser trained students may often be warm to the touch? Could this explain Koichi Tohei Sensei's ability to lower his pulse at will or calmly submerge his body in below-freezing river water, as he describes in his book *Ki in Daily Life*?

What do *you* think?

Upcoming Events

EKF Zoom Training

Per the following email from Rich Fryling Sensei, Head Instructor NYKA:

Hello All,

It is my pleasure to announce the following additional online EKF training classes as we finish up our Autumn Schedule.

- Saturday, November 13th @ 8:00am et
- Thursday, November 18th @ 6:30pm et

As dojos return to live training and we approach the holidays, we will continue to assess the EKF online class schedule. In the coming week, we are going to issue a "participant survey" so we can gain insight into how we can potentially improve these online classes and maximize their value in our collective growth and development.

Note that the Thursday classes are live moderated recordings (with live Q&A) of the previous Saturday class.

All of this training is to further reinforce the overall theme that we've been developing around "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.

Attarian Sensei will lead all classes.

Please feel free to share the below Zoom links 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.

For those planning to participate in these classes, 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

EKF Saturday Class (November 13th, 8:00am EST)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84020146524?pwd=NWpwdE8rNi9wZEJUanlzQXhvZVdDUT09>

Meeting ID: 840 2014 6524

Passcode: November13

EKF Recording Class (November 18th, 6:30pm EST)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82766625003?pwd=dS9jb3A1MWxpTjZFQmxCVXBGamxrZz09>

Meeting ID: 827 6662 5003

Passcode: November18

Shokushu Reading

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

15. KI BREATHING

Breathe out so that your breath travels infinitely to the ends of the Universe; breathe in so that your breath reaches your one point and continues infinitely there.

Ki breathing is an important way of unifying mind and body.

At night, when all is quiet and calm, do this alone, and you will feel that you are the Universe and the Universe is you. It will lead you to the supreme ecstasy of being one with the Universe. At this moment the life power that is rightfully yours is fully activated.

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 *The Seven Arts of Change: Leading Business Transformation That Lasts* by David Shaner Sensei.

This book is the companion to his memoir and self-help book *Walking With the Wind at Your Back*. And, while *The Seven Arts of Change* is written for a business audience, it is applicable to any group of people, including families or small groups. It ultimately speaks to the individual because that is where larger and lasting change begins: the individual spirit. As such, this is another guide to applying the practice and lessons of Ki Aikido to daily life off the mat. In other words, it could benefit you personally. And, who knows -- maybe it could even help our dojo?

Here's an excerpt that encapsulates the wisdom therein (p12):

"Nearly every study of organizational change over the past two decades indicates that companies fail to make the change they intend approximately 70 percent of the time. And so the question forever being raised is: Why do change initiatives flop far more than they fly?...

Change efforts fail when the spirit of the company remains the same.

A leader might be right about everything -- the need to change, the reasons for change, and the timing of change. He might be extremely convincing in his pep talk. But if the leader doesn't understand where change begins, change won't happen, no matter how urgent it is.

Before organizational change can succeed, it must first occur at the subtle spiritual level in the individuals of the organization. That's because the spirit is the foundational source of energy that runs through our bodies and gives our lives meaning. Your spirit is the sum of your beliefs, your convictions, your moral codes and standards. All lasting transformation must begin there because, ultimately, your spirit and mine are the primary drivers of all our behavior.

Without grounding at the spiritual level, the change process becomes a cooked-up breadbasket of external tactics that never take hold. Employees might do as they're told for a time, but they will eventually default to the behaviors driven by their spirits. In short, without tapping into the defaults of organizational behavior, people's behavior remains the same. It always has and always will."

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? Is there anything you wish was different or don't want to change? Want to tell us what you LOVE about the newsletter (or would like to change)? Just want to chat? Please feel free to send us an email at 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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