



December 1, 2009

Dear fellow Aiki Enthusiast,



I take over the helm at Aiki Extensions with a three-fold hope: 1) that we can gain insight and practical wisdom from each other - thereby boosting our own aiki-inspired impact on friends, clients, and countrymen; 2) that we can in our dojos share the inspiration and encourage our peers to embrace whatever aikido and related arts may offer to enhance their lives and careers off the mat; and 3) that we can collectively magnify and extend O'Sensei's legacy into a world so clearly in need of more harmony and compassion.

I want to thank Bill Leicht and AE's Board of Directors for everything they have accomplished this year. I also want to thank AE Founder Don Levine for his unending dedication to the simple but worthy proposition that "Aiki" actually is what O'Sensei claimed it was - a way to reconcile the world and make all of humankind one family.

Since its founding 11 years ago, Aiki Extensions has become more than just the power of Don Levine's vision - it is the sum total of all of our efforts and all of the programs and all the potential we can muster. Even in this economy, AE Programs such as Peace Dojos International, Aikido in the Schools, and outreach projects in the Bronx, San Francisco, Brazil, Ethiopia, the Middle East, and the Philippines are making a real difference in the US and around the world.

While donations and a critical mass of dues-paying members is important, an equally critical contribution you can make to Aiki Extensions is your time, your energy, and your wisdom. In particular, I seek your support for three primary efforts for this winter and spring:

#### Initiative 1 - Growing Mindshare

We need to reach out to the world aikido community to gather details about their AE-like successes (stories of members doing aiki-principle work outside the dojo), and to survey what they are doing well and where they'd need support (researching where we can be most useful, determining where our value-add might actually be, and starting to bring all such efforts (even if they're not currently AE-sponsored) under the AE umbrella. We need to let people know they can become "affiliate programs" entitled to use our nonprofit status, access our network, and be profiled on the website and in quarterly newsletters. Our members need to engage online: to become a fan of our [Facebook page](#) and, if you've got something to say, post regularly, mentioning AE, on the Facebook [aikido group](#) - 18,000 people paying attention are a very valuable resource, and AE members should take a few moments every week to demonstrate the value they bring.

## Initiative 2 - Growing Membership

Brandon WilliamsCraig had the brilliant idea of supplementing the normal membership drive experience (standing up at seminars, extolling Aiki Extension's many virtues, and asking people to join by writing a check) by offering automatic AE memberships for the regular price of participating in an Aikido seminar or AE-led symposium people will be attending anyway. What this requires, of course, is a number of reasonably prominent sensei to forego some (but not all) of what they could have collected for one seminar. Our experience has been that convincing sensei of the value of AE's existence is usually fairly straightforward, as they really appreciate the opportunity to contribute to expanding Aikido's influence both on and off the mat. While details still have to be worked out, the idea includes the provision that AE membership will allow people to attend other AE-linked seminars at a substantial discount..

## Initiative 3 - "TAB-10" : Training Across Borders Seminar next year in the Middle East.


Aikido practice has proven its ability to foster communication between groups otherwise beset by chronic tensions. Aiki-Extensions sponsored an historic training opportunity for Arabs and Jews / Israelis and Palestinians, Sunni and Shia Iraqis, Greeks and Turks, and Bosnians and Serbs at our first-ever Training Across Borders (TAB) 2005 Cyprus seminar. We envision a "TAB-10" anniversary seminar to be held on common ground in the Middle East (perhaps in Jordan) which will be a dramatic opportunity for Aikido to really "walk its talk" and demonstrate our dedication to practicing the "the art of peace." Please consider sharing your ideas, connections, organizing talents, and targeted donations. Send inquiries or suggestions to [TAB@aiki-extensions.org](mailto:TAB@aiki-extensions.org), and visit [www.aikidomideastpeace.info](http://www.aikidomideastpeace.info) for more about our MidEast Aikido Peace Project (MAP).

The grand vision for AE is for it to become the catalyst, guide, and support for the aiki-activity outreach efforts of every student, every dojo, and every aikido association in the world. Getting there will take time, will take effort, and will take extraordinary perseverance. Imagine the impact, however, of having every Aikido practitioner automatically equipped to make as much of a difference as possible - and all that time and effort will seem very well spent indeed.

Here are four things you can do today:

- 1) [Join or renew](#) - our expenses are few, but they do exist, and membership dues are what keep the lights on
- 2) Contact the address on our [projects page](#) for any topic areas of interest, let them know you want to be involved
- 3) Stay engaged online ([Facebook](#), [AE Wiki](#), [YouTube](#), & [Google Group](#)) and in person
- 4) If you have any good ideas, share them with [me](#)

Yours in aiki,



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