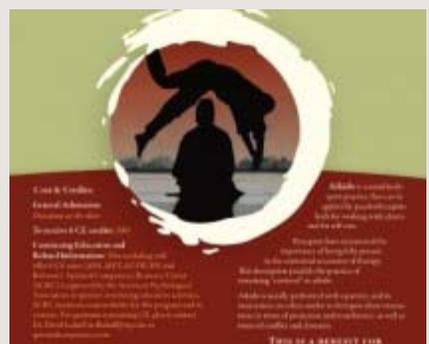




Paul Rest

Aikido & Psychotherapy - Martial Artists Making a Difference

October 14th, 2010 1:42 pm PT



Workshop on November 7th, 2010
Photo: David Lukoff

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On November 7th a group of Greater Bay Area Aikidoists will present a workshop where the intersection of Aikido and Psychotherapy will be explored. This workshop is a benefit for [Aiki Extensions](#) (I group I have written about in numerous features, including last month's Peace Week Initiative). It will be held in the dojo of the [Institute of Transpersonal Psychology](#) located in Palo Alto.*

The first workshop, which was held last March at Kala Feder's dojo ([Aikido of Berkeley](#)), brought together those interested in this groundbreaking work. In discussions, group movements, presentations and Low Impact Aikido practices, the dynamic of how each discipline can inform the other moved from words into action during the course of the day.

The same group of instructors will again present at the November 7th workshop. [David Lukoff, Ph.D.](#) and [Brandon WilliamsCraig, Ph.D.](#) have both been featured in past articles and should be familiar names. Patrick Fagginell, Ph.D., Jama Grancik, MFT, and Beth Tabakin, Ph.D. will also present (as will this writer). And as a special treat, [Robert Frager, Ph.D.](#) will join the instructors for this workshop. In addition, CE (Continued Education) credits will be available.

As the instructors discussed ideas during the conference calls before that first workshop last year, what emerged was interesting and enlightening. It was clear that this meeting of these two disciplines will provide practices and insights that can be used with clients by those in the helping professions. And it was equally clear that there was learning available for therapists and psychologists themselves to help re-balance and find center(s) when needed.

During that initial workshop itself, I think all the participants (including myself as both an instructor and participant) had many of those, "Ah ha!" moments. During one group process, we looked straight ahead as the instructor had us all "kiaï" together using our voice and whole body (hands moving down from above). Except, we couldn't look at him. The first attempt was ragged. He moved and we all followed in haphazard fashion. As this segment of the workshop continued, we discussed as a group how mind-body-spirit could emerge. Two more "Kiai's" followed. By the time we did the last one, once again without looking at the instructor, we were one. Even though there were those present that had done this or similar exercises in the past, we all laughed and congratulated ourselves on achieving this unity of action, a fun (and informative) blend of mind-body-spirit.

The workshop is predicated on the belief that Aikido can enrich the psychotherapeutic experience for both practitioner and patient. And it is the purpose of this workshop and the ones that will no doubt follow to continue this most fascinating journey, one that is now being supported by research and