

## Marple Aikido Members

Looking ahead to some interesting Systema practice over months ahead.

For those of you who may be looking at supplementing your Aikido practice with some Systema I thought it may be useful to offer a bit of guidance to our Marple Aikido Members.

Aikido and Systema are uncannily similar in many ways. The basic principles of breathing, relaxation and movement apply equally to both arts. Both are non-competitive, effective martial arts and both rely strongly on your partner to help you develop and improve. They also both offer some real health benefits to life outside the dojo/training hall.

Given these similarities both Arts require a very different mental approach to training, especially during the early years.

Aikido is complex to learn and requires a strong commitment to study the form, to develop and establish skill and to become confident with both delivering and receiving techniques. Although it is natural to look outside your Aikido to compare with other styles and arts, it can significantly hinder your progress if you dabble and mix. Ideally you should select an Aikido style and teacher that suits you and follow that path

This is the clear view of both Christine & myself and it is also the view of Mimuro Sensei.

As your Aikido ability develops, your form will become embedded within your body's muscle memory. Only then should you strive for more freedom of movement and experimentation. You will progress from Kihon (Basic movement) to Awase (free flowing or blending movement) and eventually Ki No Nagare (advanced full practice). We are all striving for the ultimate Takamusu Aiki (i.e. No set technique, just action and response).

Systema, in contrast to Aikido, has no rigid form and really no specific technique. It works on the principle of free movement from the start of your training

Systema also has two parts i.e. Health and Combat. To study Systema you need to embrace both of these elements equally. However, the health and basic principles of Systema can be studied separately from the combat and can be taken out of the training hall and used to enhance your daily life and improve your Aikido.

For anyone studying Aikido as their main Martial Art and wishing to experience Systema to improve their Aikido I would offer the following suggestions and guidance:

- Many Aikido students have developed an interest in Systema and appreciate the benefits. However, we all have busy lives and it maybe you only have time to sample the Systema training occasionally.

If anyone (Aikido student or not) attends only an occasional session of Systema it will still be of great benefit.

You don't have to study Systema as a separate parallel art. The more you do, the more you will benefit. Just take away these benefits and implement them in your daily life, including your Aikido.

- Attend the Systema classes when you can and embrace fully the core principles of Breathing, Relaxation and Movement.

**During the early stages of your Aikido training you should leave the Systema combat and freedom of technique outside the Dojo and concentrate 100% on your Aikido, as taught by your instructor.** Of course there will be opportunities for experimentation within Aikido classes from time to time but please curb your enthusiasm until invited.

- As you move towards the high Kyu grades you will be introduced to multiple attack and freestyle work. At this point you will see opportunities where the Systema principles of free movement could prove to be very beneficial.  
All instructors will have their own view on the level at which free work should be introduced into your Aikido practice. You should follow the lead of your instructor.

Hopefully you will find the above of some help, please feel free to discuss at anytime

Breath, Relax and Move

*Chris Wallace 4<sup>th</sup> Dan – May 2015*

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