

**PROCESS WORK & AIKIDO:
A COMPARISON OF PRINCIPLES AND METHODS**

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May, 1997**

In the cold Northern Wastes
There is a mountain
A thousand miles long
A thousand miles high

Once each thousand years
A small Bird
Flies North
A small bird Flies North
To sharpen his beak
on the cold hard stone

When the mountain
is thusly worn down
one second of eternity
shall have passed.

Tibetan poem

INTRODUCTION

How I became interested in Aikido and Process Work

I was born in Athens, Greece, in an industrial area filled with smoke and noise. I was a weak child with lots of health problems. Looking back, I believe that my health problems were not only due to my personal physiology and predisposition, but also to my physical, cultural and human environment.

One of my first memories is from when I was 2 or 3 years old. I was sick and a nurse came to my house to give me a shot. I felt strong and great and didn't want the nurse to touch me. I remember saying no and holding my body away from her. When she didn't listen to me and kept coming toward me with her syringe, I ran all over the room to escape her. In the end I had no place left to go and hid under a table where the adults caught me. This was a very disappointing moment, and I think it was the first time in my life that I became hopeless.

Later in my life, I encountered similar incidents in my family school and community. People tried to help me not by communicating with me and empowering me, but by defeating me, putting me down, beating me, insulting me, and trying to make me fit their rules, roles, and ways of understanding the world. Over time I became depressed and very frustrated with life. I wish that the people in my life, rather than trying to defeat me and teach me the \geq correct \leq way to be, had stood by me and helped me. I wish that people had loved me for who I was: that they encouraged me to find my own way, taught me how to stand and fight for myself, and allowed me to fall down.

In the culture I grew up in, we were trained to forget ourselves and our bodies. Cultural norms shape our perception of our bodies, making them into scary, shameful things that we should avoid instead of the wise allies that I believe we should contact and learn from. Nevertheless, our bodies insist on keeping records of our history, expressing our dreams and hopes, as well as our pains fears anger and resistances. Our life records are written in the bodies and if we pay attention we can unlock their secrets and come to terms with who we are.

In 1990 I moved from Greece to Portland to study Process Work and shortly thereafter I started practicing Aikido. Both practices became very important parts of my life. They helped me feel and understand myself, by connecting my dreams and body experiences, and broadened my understanding of people, relationships, and the world.

My first impression of Process Work was that it fostered the magic in life. I enjoyed Process Work's focus on individual experience, and the depth that this can bring. Process Work's deep democratic attitude towards oneself and the group life offered me a perspective which allowed me to see the plurality and diversity of life.

The first time I stepped into a Dojo (a practice room for Martial Arts) I was impressed with the integrity and self determination in the atmosphere. I liked the friendliness as well as the Aikido principles of love, compassion, openness towards others, and the giving of oneself to others. Another thing that excited me was the physical intimacy between people. Both Process Work and Aikido touched something very familiar and also forgotten in me.

Living in Greece's traditional and patriarchal culture led me to disavow and suppress many of my experiences and feelings. Within a country that has witnessed numerous wars and dictatorships we can easily spend our lives silently as patient martyrs : needs are forbidden and feelings are disguised and not communicated. To speak out when people are abusive and oppressive is considered wrong and useless. This repression naturally leads to revolution. Therefore it is not surprising that in Greece we often have massive riots with deaths and vandalism. I did not escape my culture or my time. I lived following the stream, shaped by cultural judgments and prejudices and with inhibitions strong enough to stop my inner impulses, intuitions, feelings, and potential.

Social beliefs become part of ourselves, since external conditions and inner experiences are connected. I became the many critics and dictators who disregard and disrespect the bodies, feelings, thoughts, dreams, and ways of living of others and myself. Disavowed experiences revolt and appear in mysterious ways, creating symptoms, relationship problems and even world phenomena. They try to catch our attention and communicate their messages.

I believe that working on ourselves and paying attention to our inner lives as they manifests in our bodies and dreams can help us deal with the inner oppression that we develop as we try to adapt to the existing cultural laws. Also through studying ourselves, we develop new awareness that enables us to deal in better ways with external oppressors.

Process work and Aikido both gave me ways to grow and learn, not by accumulating intellectual information but through experience. Using Process Work, I learned to connect dreams with body experiences, and also connect my individual experiences with relationships and the world. Process Work also examines how social issues such as sexism, racism, and homophobia, political, economical, cultural and religious differences are present in all levels of our life. Social beliefs with the inhibition and the constellation of rank and power, between what is higher and lower, what is good or bad, what is desirable and what we should avoid, influence our bodies and our relationships, creating inner and outer conflicts. Aikido helped me relate to myself and life in a disciplined yet loving way. It increased my body awareness and gave me a channel through which to work physically with my body and feelings of hurt violence and aggression. Aikido also offers a philosophical approach in its view of relationship and world issues and the creation of community. This approach includes an emphasis on knowing one's self and approaching relationship and world situation in a more open way.

At first it might seem strange to try to compare two so different fields, Martial Arts and Psychotherapy. One works mainly with the body and teaches one to defend oneself physically and the other works with the psychological components of the individual experience. One comes from the arts of war and the other is rooted in philosophy and the healing arts.

The popular idea that people have is one where the martial artist is presented like a tough fighting person. One may wonder even farther how that can be connected with psychological awareness. This view of the Martial Artist is only partly true. There is also another aspect in the Martial Arts concerned with the spiritual and psychological growth of the individual. Aikido, especially, is one of the Martial Arts that pays primary attention to the spiritual development of its practitioners. Physical and technical development of martial skills is supported by a philosophical approach to life. For the Aikido practitioner, the technical development

and spiritual development are tied together and are inseparable.

In recent years, psychological approaches have adapted Eastern Meditation methods and the Martial Arts practices. Some psychology borrows principles from the Martial Arts and Eastern Meditation practices, and Martial Arts teaches ways of spiritual and psychological growth and expands in the field of conflict resolution.

I am doing this research in an attempt to connect my learning from both fields. The main reason I decided to study Aikido and Process Work is because they come together through my personal experience. Being a student of both I became very fascinated by the fact that I was working on the same things in my Aikido practice as in my Process Work studies. The issues coming up in my personal therapy sessions were related to the difficulties that I was confronting in my training. In order to progress in my Aikido training, I had to confront my psychological pitfalls. In turn, progress in my Aikido training brought changes that were helpful to my life as a whole.

Aikido and Process Work are both based on the ancient Chinese philosophy of Taoism, which studies movement and change in nature. Process Work and Aikido share a belief that we should follow nature rather than ignore or repress it. Process Work believes that within the disturbance we can find the solution to the problem. Similarly, Aikido believes that instead of ignoring or fighting disturbances, we should stay open to the attacker and use the attacker's energy in order to neutralize the attack. Based on this basic principle, Aikido and Process Work develop ways to work with conflicts internally as well as relationship conflicts and group conflicts.

I choose to study the areas of Inner Work and also Relationship and Community, because they are three major components of human life that process work and aikido are occupied with. They are also occupied with the feelings of fear, anger, hurt and frustration that are present in ourselves and in our communities. These are innate qualities of the human race but they are also the result of having to live in an oppressive and frequently abusive environment. Most of us suffer minor or major abuse while we were growing up and certainly we are all oppressed by strict cultural values and the inflexibility of cultural roles. Conflict, abuse and

oppression manifest in the ways we deal with ourselves and others and also influence the ways we form our communities. Our society is still based on power and victimization. The polarities of victim and perpetrator, and the cycle of hurt and revenge they create, appear on all levels of our inner and outer life and are major forces in the creation of our history. Aikido and Process Work both offer new ways of looking at and working with these polarities and thus are useful approaches for our inner lives, our relationships and communities.

Organization of the paper

In exploring Process Work and Aikido, I will compare their philosophical roots, basic theories, and belief systems. I will try to find their similarities as well as their differences. I will examine their methods for addressing inner work, relationship conflicts, and the creation of community.

This work will be organized into four major sections:

- 1) The first part will be a brief mention of the history of the Martial Arts and the different theories about how the Martial Arts originated. I will also introduce the history, basic beliefs and methods of Aikido
- 2) I will examine how the body is viewed in the Eastern meditation practices as well as in Western psychology. I will also introduce the basic theory of process work.
- 3) In this section I will compare how Process Work and Aikido approach inner work and how they work with relationships and groups. I will give examples and discuss their differences and similarities
- 4) In this last section I will analyze my findings and discuss the relationship between the field and the individual using tools provided by Process Work and Aikido.

This study is a work in progress, since I have limited experience in both fields. As I study, my experience and understanding deepens and changes.

1. AN OVERVIEW OF Martial Arts'S HISTORY

The Asian Martial Arts developed in India and China and from there they traveled to Korea and Japan, where they developed into their more modern forms. Although there are many records about the beginning of Martial Arts, these sources draw primarily on legends and myths.

One theory traces the development of Martial Arts to the military in China and India where peasants lacked sophisticated weapons and therefore had to rely on their bodies. Another possible way that the Martial Arts developed is through the difficulties that travelers between India and China underwent. On their travels people had to endure the hardships of a long journey and to confront bandits and outlaws that lived in the mountains. Merchants hired Bodyguards to protect them and help them during their travels. The Bodyguards were exposed to man-to-man fight, the kind of fighting upon which the Martial Arts are based. In their encounters they were exposed to different fighting styles which they then incorporated into their existing techniques. Monks also traveled in these areas visiting the places where Buddha lived and looking for the sutras. They had to confront the same difficulties. Stories tell of Monks who were captured and the ways they escaped. From these experiences the Monks became aware of the necessity to learn the Martial Skills in order to be able to defend themselves.

One legend locates the beginning of the Martial Arts in the 6th century in China. A monk called Bodhidharma (or Tamo) came from India to China to teach Buddhism. The emperor didn't like his teachings and he sent him to a monastery. Bodhidharma withdrew in the monastery where he spent years meditating. While in the monastery, he instructed other monks. In order to help them to withstand the long hours of meditation, he taught them breathing technique and exercises to develop both their strength and their ability to defend themselves. From his teachings a school evolved named Ch'an in Chinese and Zen in Japanese. Another fighting form, Shaolin boxing, developed from the practice of his exercises. Many Chinese and Japanese fighting arts have evolved from Shaolin Boxing.

This story is in the realm of myth-without-written record, because

Bodhidharma believed that the only important thing is to look into our essences. Accordingly, all writings are useless things, and even the Buddha is not of big importance. Long after his death, Monks who followed his traditions published two books, one about his beliefs and philosophies and the other about his exercises. However, the reliability of these sources is questionable because information which came down through oral tradition may distort, mix, and change on the way. Bodhidharma is still considered the patriarch of many of the Japanese Martial Arts, with his appearance, the Martial Arts began their first steps in their development not only as a fighting technique for war, but also as a way to spiritual development.

In the next chapter, I will introduce the history and basic principles of Aikido

Aikido

Aikido is one of the modern Japanese Martial Arts. Although Aikido developed in recent years, a brief look into its background will provide a more complete understanding of the art.

Japan's martial traditions were influenced by the culture of Bushido, which means, "the way of the warrior." Budo was created by Samurai warriors. For a long period of time Japan was plagued by domestic wars. During the Edo period (1603 - 1868) the wars stopped. At this time, Japan was ruled by a military government, a government supported by noble successors from different families, and was in fact a dictatorship with an aristocratic nature. At this point society was very strictly structured. The classes were clearly divided, each with its own rights, obligations, and cultural expressions. The highest class was the aristocracy, then the warrior class, the commoners were a lower class, and an even lower class called "hinin"-meaning non-human-included people who served as jailers, executioners, torturers and corpse handlers, Some of the hinin were espionage agents (ninja). The government controlled every level of society and opposed any challenges to their right to rule.

Budo developed within this rigidly stratified society and opposed the system of strict class division, the hereditary privilege, and the oppressive mentality. Some warriors of this era committed themselves to following a path of spiritual development, through systematic physical effort and martial training. They aimed toward spiritual freedom for the individual, self-development and the development of intuition and moral sense.

Budo means the way of war, but the Japanese character bu also means to stop the struggle, and sheath the sword. This is a goal for the modern martial artist as well, in his effort to learn how to withstand emotions and how to work with feelings of fear, anger and hurt. So the emphasis in budo is not on war (bu) but on the way (do). Budo is concerned not only with fighting but also with the mental attitude of the warrior and includes not only the Martial Arts, but also medicine, the letters and the fine arts, and most recently with psychology. The character "do" comes from the Chinese Tao, in Japan "do" was mixed with Shinto, a form of animism in which all nature is filled with spirit, and

with social and political standards. It was also influenced by Buddhist self-cultivation methods, mainly those of esoteric and Zen Buddhism. Budo combines Buddhism's meditational discipline, particularly moving-meditation, with Taoism's philosophy and Crazy Wisdom. It was understood as a path to follow in life and its code promotes a sense of justice, courage, morality, and benevolence.

Aikido is founded by Morihei Ueshiba. At a very young age, Ueshiba developed an interest in spiritual life and studied the Chinese classics and texts of esoteric Buddhism. He also began practising the Martial Arts very early in life.

There is a very well known story that talks about an experience Ueshiba had: while he was still in his youth he saw thugs employed by the village landlord beat his father, who had progressive social ideas. He watched his father and felt helpless, not knowing what to do. This was an important incident in his life and some believe that this was the incident that lead him to develop Aikido. At this time Ueshiba understood the reality of physical power and the need for social justice. His love for the Martial Arts, his interest in spirituality and his interest in social affairs followed him throughout his life. These interests remain influential in the development of Aikido even in our days.

Throughout his life, Ueshiba spent much time in intense meditation, at times disappearing for days into the mountains when he trained and meditated. He studied various forms of Japanese Martial Arts and swordsmanship. The most important form he studied was the sword style (Yagyu Ryu) which was strongly influenced by Zen, although he never formally study Zen. He also studied Daito Ryu Aiki Jutsu until he mastered it and obtained a licence to teach.

The way the Martial Arts were practiced at the time didn't satisfy Ueshiba's vision of physical and spiritual unity. He organized his own system which he called Aikido. An art based on the principle of non-resistance, it is often described as a non-violent means of self-defense. Aikido is made from the three words "Ai" which means love, "ki" spirit or energy, and "do" which means "Tao" "the way" , and is very often referred as "the way to harmony."

Aikido does not aim at competing with and beating an opponent

in match. The term Aiki designates making one's ki agree with that of an opponent, that is bringing about agreement of the opponent's body mind movement with one's own. To put it more generally the goal of Aikido is to reach a state in which oneself and the other are one through harmonizing and accommodating each other. The Martial Arts with their initial purpose of opposing and conquering others underwent a change, to the technique of conquering oneself, and farther to the technique of harmonizing with others so as to become one with them.¹

I believe the following story about Ueshiba, which almost every book on Aikido relates, contains the essence of the Aikido philosophy. Once a swordsman visited Ueshiba in his dojo and challenged him to test his abilities. Ueshiba easily avoided his attacks, sensing the direction of the attack and moving out of the way. When the challenger left, Ueshiba went in his garden to rest and had what we will call a spiritual experience which he describes as follows:

I felt that the universe suddenly quaked, and that a golden spirit sprang up from the ground, veiled my body, and changed my body into one of gold. At the same time my mind and body became light. I was able to understand the whispering of the birds, and was clearly aware of the mind of God. At the moment I was enlightened: the source of budo is God's love. the spirit of loving protection for all beings. Tears of joy steamed down my cheeks. Since that time I have grown to feel that the whole earth is my house and the sun, the moon and the stars are all my own things. I had become free from all desire, not only for position, fame and property, but also to be strong. I understood: Budo is not feeling the opponent by our force, nor is it a tool to lead the world into destruction with arms. True budo is to accept the spirit of the universe, keep the peace of the world, correctly produce, protect and cultivate all beings in nature. I understood: The training in budo is to take God's love, which correctly produces, protects, and cultivate all things in nature, and assimilate and utilize it in our own mind

¹ yasuo, the body self cultivation and ki energy : 34

and body²

Ueshiba sees the critical struggle, not as the physical battle, but as our internal confrontation with the forces that lead us out of balance. Throughout his life he sought to unite his spiritual beliefs and his technical skill.

Aikido is a martial art in which technical skill and philosophy can not be divided. This system enables practitioners to practice with full body contact while at the same time to minimize the possibility of injury and competition. One of the most important principles in Aikido is that all living beings need love protection and nourishment in order to grow and develop. People and nature are seen as one. This philosophy contrasts with the socially manufactured division into good and evil, a division that makes us to forget who we are, and turns us away from our own essence and nature. To loose contact with our selves and to forget our natures, which includes both good and evil, contributes to the development of pain and distraction.

Aikido studies human life in an intuitive way. Its goal is self realization and individual freedom. It aims to transform aggression into presence, to use difficulties as a vehicle for self improvement and to minimize the separation between self and other.

Aikido's technical approach to self-defense utilizes the empty hand techniques, training with the jo (5ft wooden stick), and boken (wooden sword). The Aikidoist practices in a dojo (training hall) under the instruction of a teacher. The teacher demonstrates a technique and then students practice it in pairs or confront attacks by two or more people. In the dojo one is encouraged to practice sincerely and treat every moment like a matter of life and death; one is encouraged to attack strongly while at the same time keep in mind that we are there to train and grow and not to kill each other. This is one of the reasons an aikidoist bows before an attack, bowing gives you a minute of quietness inside yourself and also reminds and express thankfulness to the other for offering her body for the sake of practice and growth. This is an attitude that the aikidoist tries to develop and have in mind have when is in the midst of attack and distraction.

² K. Ueshiba, aikido :5

To remain open present, and centered while attacked is one of the goals of practicing. There is the belief that an attack will stop if the receiving side is open to it. This is true for people who maintain some relationship and receive signals from outside. An Aikidoist who remains open and receptive to signals will be able to stop an attack. This receptiveness to signals is an essential element of Aikido.

In meeting an attack, Aikido uses three basic principles: getting out of the line of attack, blending, and leading. An attacker will direct the attack straight toward our bodies. If we are at the receiving end of the attack, we get out of the line of attack by moving to the side or turning to face the same direction as the attacker. Timing is crucial: we should move when the opponent is committed to the attack. If we move too soon, the attacker can track movement and follow us, but if we move too late, we won't have time to avoid the attack and will probably be hurt. Staying open and present is very important in order to track subtle movements.

Most of us naturally react to an attack by pulling when pulled and pushing when pushed. We meet attacks with counterattacks, engaging in endless fights and struggles. Aikido tries to reverse this normal tendency and teaches how to follow one's movement instead of resisting it. We learn how to be pliable, through the principles: if pushed, turn; if pulled, enter. We do not oppose an attack, but blend with it in the direction it is already going, trying to harmonize with the energy and the direction of the attack, to see things from the attacker's point of view.

The final method is to lead the attack. We can gain control of an attacker by using the attacker's power. Here, we lead the movement and reinforce it in the direction that is already going. If the attacker's energy goes forward we, after turning and blending with that movement, slide and throw the attacker forward. If she changes direction and goes back and pulls us, we follow this new change and throw her backward.

Aikido is a path of non-resistance which is not only physical but mental and spiritual. It encourages discipline and a nonviolent attitude. It increases strength and suppleness in the joints and the limbs, increases awareness of posture, body alignment, and movement awareness, improves reactions, perception, and coordination. In the beginning levels the emphasis is on fundamental technique and learning how to fall. Exercises

improve flexibility, breathing, and increase stamina. At more advanced levels, one has mastered the movements and can pay greater attention to introspection and self-study. Aikido is a growing process, where our abilities and our understanding change. In this process we study the human body as a physical, psychological and spiritual being, and it's relationship to the environment. The practice of Aikido aims to bring to the surface our innate nature. Training establishes intimacy with oneself, develops intuition, and teaches us how to direct basic instincts of anger and fear, as well as excitement.

"Aikido's roots are deep in traditions of Japanese Martial Arts and the Japanese view of nature. Water flows and takes any shape, yet it is always consistent with its own nature. The Aikidoist admires this quality of living. In training the Aikidoist becomes sensitive to the flow and movement of his own mind and body and achieves insight into his own fundamental nature." ³

Knowledge of the Asian Martial Arts in the West hardly existed before the 20th century. The Martial Arts spread to the west mainly from Japan when Europeans and Americans started to study Judo and other forms. Through this century, an increasing number of people in the West are studying the Martial Arts. More recently, teachers from different systems are mixing concepts and techniques from the Martial Arts with western psychological approaches, thus using Martial Arts as a tool for personal development. Some Aikido instructors like Richard Strozzi Heckler, Wendy Palmer, Thomas Crum , and Terry Dobson took Aikido outside of the dojo and mixed it with different forms of body work, psychological concepts and ideas for conflict resolution. They created methods for inner-work, as well as methods in working with conflicts in groups and relationships.

³ Corcocan & Farkas, *Martial Arts tradition, history, people* : 6

2. THE BODY IN THE MARTIAL ARTS AND PSYCHOLOGY

Chi and the body

Despite differences in their religious and philosophical approaches and in their techniques, all Martial Arts have a common denominator in that they study and develop chi (ki) energy. There is no exact definition of chi. It has been defined as magnetic energy, electric energy, heat, and vital energy. In China and Japan today, chi is the subject of much research.

The Chinese have been studying chi energy for thousands of years. According to Dr. Yang Jwing Ming, in *The Roots of Chinese Chikung*, chi is a natural force that fills the universe. " chi can be defined as any type of energy that is able to demonstrate power and strength. This energy can be electricity, magnetism, heat or light.. chi is also commonly used to express the energy state of something, especially living things"⁴ There is heaven chi, earth chi, and the chi of each person, animal, and plant. Every field tries to maintain its balance of chi. If it loses balance, it will produce changes in order to reach a new balance. For example, if the heaven chi loses its balance, it will produce wind and rain. Chi energy within the human body has been studied extensively in Chinese medicine and religion. As scholars explore and understand chi and its connections with nature, they start to believe that chi provides the solution to sickness and death and that it can also increase people's happiness and well-being. In accordance with the introspective influence of Indian Buddhism, Chinese culture tended to focus internally on methods of self-exploration and self-cultivation.

Chinese doctors believed that meditation was important to achieve a calm and peaceful mind, and that a calm and peaceful mind was important for health. They also believed that people needed to move in order to increase the circulation of chi in the body. Chinese Taoists had a saying: "the rest in rest is not the real rest, there can be rest even in movement." Chinese doctors learned that people who exercised regularly get sick less often and their bodies degenerated less quickly. They also realized that specific body movements could increase the chi circulation in specific organs. They used these exercises to treat specific illnesses and to restore the normal functioning of the organs. They developed a set of

⁴ Dr Yang Jwing- ming, *the roots of Chinese chi kung* : 7

exercises, called chi kung, that were practiced by Shaolin monks. The monks discovered that chi kung not only improved their health, but also increased their power in martial techniques. Many martial styles today use chi kung to increase their effectiveness.

Any science and research that deals with chi energy is called "chi kung" in China and "kiko" in Japan. Both terms mean chi training. Chi training can be practiced with a focus on breathing, while moving, or in stationary positions. Chi kung requires time and effort and has always been closely connected with Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, the medicinal arts, the Martial Arts, and the fine arts.

Martial traditions train practitioners to collect and direct the chi. Chi can be directed to muscles and tendons to increase strength or to produce weight changes. It can also be focused in one spot. Energy may be directed through the voice (Kiai) and in some cases even silently. In the Martial Arts there are two large categories : external, or hard styles, and internal, or soft styles. The external styles mostly derived from Shaolin Boxing. There are many different forms of Shaolin Boxing divided into northern and southern types. The basic forms come from animal movements: the dragon, the snake, the crane, the tiger, the leopard, the monkey, and the eagle are the most well known basic forms. External systems emphasize building chi in the muscles, tendons, and limbs through special exercises. The focus is on regulation of breath, training of bones and muscles, ability to advance and retreat, and unity of hard and soft.

Internal systems derive from early Taoism. In the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu writes:

Nothing under heaven is softer and weaker than water.
Yet nothing can compare with it in attacking the hard and strong.
Nothing can change place with it.
The weak overcomes the strong, and the soft overcomes the hard.
Everyone under heaven knows this though none can put it into practice.
(Chapter 78)

The internal systems are based on will, vital energy, effortless and spontaneity. In the internal systems, chi is generated in the body instead of the limbs, and is led to the limbs to increase power. The best

known internal systems are T'ai-chi, Hsing-i, pa-kua. Aikido is also an internal form.

Body-mind oneness

In the West, training the body means exercising to make the body strong. It is not connected with training the mind or spirit or improving the personality. In the Eastern traditions, training the body implies training as a human being. A practitioner trains the mind and spirit and improves the personality. Training the body into new capacities awakens new aspects of the self and new functions of the spirit.

Zen often refers to "body-mind oneness," a state in which there is neither movement nor stillness and everything is put to rest. When we meditate, the mind is directed not to outside things but inward. We focus on the movements of the mind coming from inside. In our ordinary states, we are usually aware of the proprioceptive and kinesthetic movements of the body, but not of the mind. However, the mind is also in an active state, which is usually different from that of the body. In the state of body-mind oneness, the mind and the body become inseparable.

In our ordinary state of consciousness, bodily sensation is experienced as different, in kind, from the narrow sense of mental states such as thinking and imagining. Even though no change occurs in bodily sensation in the initial phase of meditation, wandering thoughts arise one after another. In such a state, body and mind are felt to be distinct. An ecstatic state is an experience in which this distinction has disappeared. The goal of a martial artist is to reach this state of no mind, which is achieved in meditation through training bodily movement. ⁵

The state of no mind, is a state of flow and freedom. where we can experience our whole self as one with no distinction or conflict between body and mind. In such state we can move freely in any direction without getting stagnant or distracted by the changing situation. As Takuan, the Zen master of the most famous swordsman of Japan, said:

⁵Yuasa Yasuo, *The Body, Self-Cultivation and Ki Energy*. 23.

If one places his mind on the opponent's sword, the sword will take hold of his mind. If one places his mind on timing, the timing will again take hold of his mind. And if one places his mind on his striking sword that will take hold of his mind. All this is stagnation of the mind and will result in opening up a weak spot before one self. ⁶

Bruce Lee describe the same state:

Remember you are "expressing" the technique and not "doing" the technique. . . like sound and echo without any deliberation. It is as though I call you, you answer me, or when I throw something to you, you catch it, that's all. Your task is to simply complete the other half of "oneness" spontaneously. There is nothing to "try" to do. In the final stage. . . techniques are all forgotten. Everything simply "flows."⁷

the body in psychology

In contrast with Eastern thought, which sees the body, mind, and spirit as an indivisible whole and focuses on the body as an instrument for self-cultivation, Western thought took a very different approach. In accordance with Newtonian science, the body was separated from the mind. The dualism and objectivism which accompany this split are fundamental to western science and the development of Western civilization.

In recent history, Western thinkers have not been concerned with the body. Most westerners identify ourselves in terms of the mind, psyche, and ego. In this perspective, the human being is exclusively a mind identifying with ideas and separated from the rest of nature, and the body is a lower entity outside our identity. Allopathic medicine, and its view of the body as something that can become sick and treated by outer agents only is an example of it, christian religion is very clear in its views of the body as

⁶Yuasa Yasuo. *The Body, Self-Cultivation and Ki Energy*: 31.

⁷Wendy Palmer, *The Intuitive Body* : 131.

an entity against spirituality. Over time, and through the religious, medical and educational systems, the body became foreign territory, as we Westerners totally identified with our intellect having no relationship or awareness around our bodies . Over the last 100 years in the West, various groups started to explore the human body in relationship to physical, mental, social, and spiritual life. These groups have introduced approaches which contrast the dominant mechanical view of the body and the separation of the body, mind, and spirit.

The development of body-oriented therapies can be traced to the 19th-century gymnastics movement in Europe and America. The pioneers of this movement experimented with healing based on movement, sensory awareness, sound, music, and touch. Their alternative view of the body differed from the dominant models of medicine, physical education, and religion. The gymnastics movement focused on the body and on forms of movement and expression that came from within rather than from cultural imposition. ⁸

By the 1960s, body oriented disciplines were flourishing. All the different somatic approaches share a common focus on the body and on the relationship between cognitive and emotional processes. They explore movement, emotions, and mechanical structure in relationship to consciousness and spirituality.

Methods such as the Alexander technique, Autogenic Training, the Feldenkrais method, Rolfing, Progressive Relaxation, Sensory Awareness work, and Reichian therapy all began to pay attention to the body instead of trying to change it and control it. Some of these schools were developed by people suffering from conditions that the current medical paradigm could not treat. Experimenting with their methods, they discovered psychological as well as physical therapeutic effects. Somatic approaches believe that transformation of bodily experience can increase self healing capacities and reduce symptoms.

Another place where a connection between the mind and the body started in the west, is in the development of Psychosomatic Medicine. Psychosomatic Medicine came from the marriage of Biomedicine and

⁸ "The Way of the Flesh: A Brief History of the Somatic's Movement." Don Hanlon Johnson. *Noetic Science Review*, Spring 1994.

Psychoanalysis and was pioneered by Felix Deutsch and Franz Alexander. From the Psychosomatic point of view, disease cannot arise only from physical or chemical cause. The body contains psychic elements, and emotional factors are involved in different physiological functions. Psychological processes can be transmuted into bodily manifestations. In this perspective, health is a homeostasis between psyche and body.

Psychosomatic medicine and research is based on Freud's concept of conversion, in which unbearable emotion is repressed and appears in the form of symptoms. Conversion is an attempt to relieve some of the tension produced by repressing the emotion. Thus, a conversion symptom is a physical manifestation of an unconscious emotional tension which cannot be expressed. For example, if one is angry and cannot express his anger through actions such as shouting, accusing another, or hitting, the anger will be expressed through conversion symptoms in organs which are used for the expression of rage, such as the larynx. The symptoms express both the repressed emotion and its rejection. Conversion symptoms attempt, but fail, to provide full relief from the tension of repressed emotion.

Felix Deutsch was a physician who studied the relationship between Internal Medicine and Psychoanalysis. Deutsch emphasized that constitutional factors are not enough to clarify and complete a clinical picture. The course of an illness can be understood only in the reaction pattern of the patient. He also outlined the role of the instinct and instinctual repression in organic illness. Deutsch said that the autonomic nervous system tends to release emotional conflict. Symptoms of the autonomous nervous system thus express repressed symbolic content that the patient tries to communicate. Deutsch's ideas were highly unusual for the time, and he was mocked by other physicians.

Deutsch also studied the relationship between emotions and body postures. In *Thus Speaks the Body*, he stated that every individual has a basic posture which is a combination of different single parts. All the parts are related and change in one part will change the whole posture. He believed that the various postures were represented in the unconscious, that they were characteristic of each person, and that they represented personality patterns. He said that the basic posture was formed by repetition compulsion, but that during free association involuntary

movements broke through. These breakthrough movements vary depending on the person's repression, the symbolism of the movement, and the person's inhibition. The basic posture changes if there is a change in psychodynamics and a need for new postural expression.

Franz Alexander, another pioneer in psychosomatic research, contributed the concepts of "differentiated conversion symptoms" and "vegetative responses" to the study of mind-body relationships. Alexander said that symptoms related to the vegetative system are not the expression of repressed emotions, but normal physiological responses. When we are afraid or angry, vegetative physiological processes are at work. The adrenal system is stimulated, sugars are mobilized, the blood pressure is higher, and blood is redistributed from the splanchnic area to the muscles, the lungs, and the brain. These normal physiological processes of rage and fear do not relieve anger but accompany it. Only the chronicity of emotional tension makes such a condition pathological. Patients suffering vegetative symptoms such as hypertension are under constant or frequent emotional tension which is not relieved either by conversion symptoms or by legitimate expression such as physical or verbal expression. This tension is not repressed, but rather unexpressed.

Studies in psychosomatic medicine was one of the first western scientific approaches to challenge the dichotomy between mind and body. Such approaches were the first steps in the development of holistic and systemic approaches. Although radical, these approaches still maintained much of the mind-body separation. Their models follow the laws of cause and effect that separate and see experiences as pathological. The psychosomatic pioneers took a purely behavioral approach and tried to control physiological responses through biofeedback and relaxation.

Many contemporary psychological approaches that study the relationship between body/mind, focus inwardly, trying to find the relationship between physical and psychological, and to develop ways of healing through self-discovery and understanding. From such a view, illness is seen not only as destructive and degenerative, but as having the potential for healing.

Next I will introduce the basic principles of process work.

Process Work

Process Work is a modern psychological system developed by Arnold Mindell, a physicist and Jungian analyst. Process work has philosophical roots in Taoism, Alchemy, Shamanism and indigenous thinking, and uses concepts from Jungian psychology, physics, and communication theory.

Like Taoism which believes in the inherent wisdom of nature, Process Work also follows and observes nature. It is a descriptive paradigm with no preconceived idea about outcome. Like alchemy, Process Work believes that the solution to a problem is found within the problem. Like its shamanistic forebears, Process Work shares a love for mysterious invisible worlds-the interface between the spirits and other realities, as well as the realm of dreams.

Process Work has a finalistic and teleologic point of view, one which believes that what is happening is right, meaningful and useful. Psychological phenomena is not viewed as pathological, but instead as meaningful events with an inner structure, an evolutionary purpose, and a goal. Like Jung who used amplification to unfold unconscious psychological material by asking for associations to different images, Process work also uses amplification in order to unfold processes and find their meaning for the individual life.

Ideas from physics play an important role in Process Work. One of the fundamental laws in physics is the law of conservation of energy. Physicists discovered that all the energy involved in a process cannot be destroyed, but can only change to other forms. Based on this idea, Jung and Freud proposed that the psyche consists of energy that can be either conscious or unconscious, but that it cannot disappear. Process work also uses the properties of the law of conservation. A process is not described in terms of energy but in terms of information. Not all information is consciously expressed and perceived. Information that we are not aware of is not lost, but conserved. This information that lies beneath our awareness causes disturbances in communication and resides in our body and body symptoms, in relationship and world conflicts.

Another concept that Process Work borrows from physics is the idea of the observer's influence on the observed. One cannot observe and

describe nature objectively, and observed objects can be understood in terms of their interaction with the observer. In this perspective, two people are not simply two separate individual psychologies. Both are part of the field which is a charge that can be felt when you come in contact with. ⁹ In the psychotherapeutic relationship the therapists are not neutral observers, but involved participants who can contribute in order to help the field express itself more fully.

Process Work uses the concepts of communication theory. Information theory sees behavior as communication. Every verbal and nonverbal interaction is communication. Information includes a sender, a message, and a receiver, which are parts with a particular relationship to one another. Each pattern of information tries to complete itself. One manifestation of this process is signals-components of information-which make the sender, the message, and the receiver explicit. All information is a reaction to someone or something. We need to know the message, who it is from and for whom it is intended. Information intends to bring a new light to the system, and it will continue to send messages until the system changes. Based on information theory, Process Work explains human behavior in terms of communication.

Process Work uses dreams as another manifestation of information which is partially hidden from day-to-day awareness. Mindell expanded dream work to include body experience. He discovered that symptoms are mirrored in dreams and that dreams are mirrored in the body. He formulated the concept of the dreambody, in which dreams and symptoms are seen as manifestations of the same background entity. Mindell defines the dreambody a multi-channeled information sender which asks people to receive its message expressed through dreams and body symptoms. "The dream body is the empirical name for a mystery which appears in practice as dreams and body life. . . the part of you that tries to grow and develop in this life, your wise signaler, giving you messages in many different directions"¹⁰

Human experience is very complex. Many things are happening within each person every moment, with some things closer and others farther from awareness. Process Work follows and unfolds experiences. The

⁹ . I will explain more about the field in chapter about relationships and community pg41 and pg51

¹⁰ Mindell, *Working with the Dreaming Body* : 39

dreambody manifests itself in the phenomenological world through various channels and it becomes polarized into primary and secondary processes, two dynamically related poles which make a whole. Primary and secondary processes are the representation of continuum of awareness. Like the yin/yang polarity, primary and secondary processes are interacting opposites, trying to bring awareness and to balance each other.

Experiences that we embrace belong to primary processes. Secondary processes are disavowed experiences and parts of ourselves we don't identify with. Secondary processes can be seen as the "other," the disturbance. Secondary processes are farther from awareness. They happen to us, are unintentional, and disturb our primary identity. Usually the disturbance itself is not the problem, but our split relationship to it creates difficulties.

Information that represents a secondary process appears, in double signals. Double signals are the result of incongruency between information that is acceptable to us and that which is not acceptable. When we are congruent, there is no split between ideas, beliefs, feelings and actions. Double signals appear at times of incongruence when parts of ourselves are in conflict. Information that is further away from awareness and unacceptable will appear in double signals through tone and volume of the voice, in body postures, incomplete movements, sentences or words that don't make sense, symptoms, relationship conflicts, world events and synchronicities.

Double signals appear because we have edges to our secondary processes. Edges are at the borders of our identities. Our primary process operates out of certain belief systems. Edges are places of tension where opposing belief systems engage in conflict. When we work on edges, it is possible to become more aware of the different parts, belief systems, and feelings and to become more fluid with different experiences and identities.

Process refers to the flow of information that is always moving and changing. Information manifests in signals and we perceive it through different channels, or senses. We see, hear, feel, and move. These senses are the simple perceptual channels: visual, auditory, proprioceptive, and kinesthetic. There are also composite channels, made up from simple

perceptual channels, like the relationship channel and the world channel. Process work sees channels as occupied or unoccupied. An occupied channel is occupied by the primary process. A channel is occupied when we use it with intent. An unoccupied channel is one that isn't occupied by the primary process. Something that the person is not identified with occupies that channel. Information about secondary processes comes through unoccupied channels.

Information manifests through different signals. When you start to follow a signal, the whole message unfolds and you find the sender. Signals are generated by dream figures, which can be described as aspects of the psyche. They represent communications from the dreambody and have both collective and personal elements. Dream figures are apparent in double signals, in dreams, in other people, and in the environment.

Signals sent by the primary process are intended, congruent with verbal communication, complete, and make sense. We are congruent when our intention and what we communicate are in agreement. When we are incongruent we send a set of signals that contradict or complement each other, but are incomplete. Double signals express the very messages that we try to avoid. For example, a person who is angry but who has a belief system which does not accept anger, may speak in an angry tone of voice but not be aware of his tone. Double signals are often incongruent with verbal material, don't make sense, are incomplete, go against primary intention, and have a different character than the primary process.

Process work fosters a dynamic view which values the interaction between different parts. It facilitates the communication between psychic polarities as they manifest through the different channels of communication, including not only the parts we know and identify with but also those parts of ourselves which are not accepted by the primary process and which we are not aware of. Mindell says:

"Dreambody work or Process Work applied to the body, is a matter of sensing your body sensations and allowing them to direct the way in which you live. Following the dreambody is a most important task. It is the channel for what some call the dream maker and what others refer to as spirit or the unconscious. Native Australians call it "dream time". Shamans

refer to it as "becoming a warrior on the path of heart." ¹¹

Now that I have explained the basic principles of Aikido and Process Work, I will begin to look at how these approaches view inner work, relationships and community.

INNER WORK

process oriented methods of inner work

Process Work is interested in the dreaming process, the sequence of experiences that are present in the individual. The dreaming process refers to our dreams and also to our body sensations, relationships, world experiences and synchronicities.

We are usually aware of and focus on sensations which are in agreement with our identity, our primary process, while repressing and neglecting everything that is disturbing, our secondary process. Process work attempts to bring awareness to all these different aspects of our personality. Experiences are interrupted because we have edges to certain experiences represented in secondary processes. Around edges we find figures with belief systems that are stopping the flow of experience.

Process Work works towards awareness, it embraces the totality of our experience, the primary as well as the secondary aspects of ourselves and gives them space to live. It approaches the individual through dreams and body experiences which unfolds in order to unravel their meaning and purpose for our lives.

My personal experience using process work

As I stated earlier, living in a very constrictive culture where individuality and psychological understanding were not supported much and where the most important thing was to grow and fit the stereotypical roles prescribed by the social standards, I was in a conflict with my

¹¹ Mindell, *the shaman's Body* : 23

culture, and I never felt very related to or understood. Any attempt to live out my individuality was put down and judged. Most of the time I was feeling depressed, a victim in reaction to outer judges, paying little attention to my inner experiences. At the same time outer figures and their judgments became an internal struggle, a conflict within myself with both roles present; the one of the victim and the one of the oppressor. In the end I was constricting my self, developing an inner fight with parts of myself pushing me down and depressing me, telling me I am good for nothing, and other parts that feel more excited about life and want me to live my own power

Usually I think of my self as a person who is depressed, scared , easily victimized, not very well able to express my feelings and engage in relationship. At the same time I have a lot of strength and intensity lying behind what I consciously perceive of as "me" This secondary identity exists in my dreams and body experiences conflicting with my primary identity of feeling weak. I have a lots of edges and judgments connected with the experience of feeling strong and powerful

A lot of personal history and figures are linked to my edges, with their social codes, values and belief systems. In therapy I worked a lot on my depression, my mood swings, and my edges and difficulties in relationships. Behind my depression there is a lot of fight. A lot anger and criticism. The central conflict I am working on is a fight between wanting to be free and to express my feelings and impulses. One side of that conflict is all the internal voices and judgments that are putting me down feeling that I am stupid and useless and the other side is my desire to free myself from all that judgment and negativity and connect with my power.

I would like to give an example of how Process Work works with the dreaming process, using a dream I worked on :

I was in my mother's house. My mother had a boy friend and they were living together. He was a younger man, a lot younger than my mother. They were living in an old building in the center of Athens. On the top floor they had a hot tub. I wanted to have a bath with my mother. My mother was willing to take me up there but she wouldn't stay with me at the hot tub. She had to go back to her boyfriend. I was a little upset and I

didn't trust this man much. He was making fun of me. He was asking me about work, he was asking me if I have any work. I answered that I worked twice a week-one time I got paid and the other I didn't. My mother was walking in the other room. She looked very old and her boyfriend was looking at her in a way that made me sure that he didn't love her. I didn't like him, he was causing me pain. He was talking on the phone and when I asked him what he was talking about he became very shy and afraid, his shoulders went up and he looked scared. Then I was somewhere outside. A party was happening. My mother was dancing alone, she was almost hidden and she was looking very sad. Her boyfriend walked by and he looked very suspicious. I followed him. He was holding a gun. He was walking on the streets with an automatic gun in his hand. It was scary. In one corner there were very many policemen in a line but nobody would say anything to the guy. Finally 3 of them attempted to arrest him. One policemen took him down but the guy somehow freed himself and left.

All the figures in a dream are different parts of myself. I am the mother who is old and depressed, the boyfriend who is walking with a gun, the police. Depression is closer to my primary identity. The boyfriend is farther away from my identity. I don't know much about this person and he is disturbing me, I don't want him around. Who is he? Why does he carry a gun? The police, are also another part of myself-hundreds of policemen.

Process Work enters the stream of experience, amplifying and unfolding the dream figures in the different channels they appear. The dream consists of visual images, as dreams happen in the visual channel. In this dream, the boyfriend is further from my awareness. He disturbs me, I can not identify with him. To be that figure is something difficult for me, immediately I have an urge to go into it, I want to separate myself from it. I prefer to lie down and relax, to go into the bath tub, to stay quiet. I lie on the floor trying to relax, to find out more about this man is frightening to me. I feel my body and I change from the visual channel to proprioception. I have a lot of tension in my body. Going into that tension I find a rageful figure, very angry. I start to punch a pillow and throw things around, the man in my dream is also present in my body experiences. I express the feelings of this figure in movement. The person who assists me tries to put some resistance before me. I started to push against her but I need to push against something stronger than a person. I

started to push against the wall trying to move it, I felt that I almost moved it. It felt very strong, I came to an edge again and I stopped.

I become the wall trying to find what I was pushing against. When I became the wall I started to criticize myself, and to be very sarcastic. I am really like a wall in my sarcasm and criticism. I find all the things I do stupid and meaningless, and as an extension to that I tend to diminish everything with a "so what" attitude, and nothing can move me.

This figure carries all my power. Going into that figure I found that it was extremely powerful. The other part is my victim side, the part of me which feels put down and is very angry and throws a fit, and has an edge to feel powerful. I am afraid to go over that edge and I become depressed. The experience of being a wall and to experience my self as powerful is a secondary experience for me. I need to identify with that power and live it in the world and the ways I relate to people. Having edges to this part of my self reinforces my inner fight and my self hatred.

My experiences in the dojo

For me, Aikido and Process Work are complementary ways that I use to work on my self. Aikido empowers me and gives me the necessary love and respect for my self, at the same time it gives me valuable insights, and trains me in relating to others through the body and the body signals

In the beginning of my Aikido training, I learned something I should have known all my life: that this body is mine and this life belongs to me. I am responsible for it and I have the right to live and protect my life. This sounds simple, but it was a realization I never felt the same way before this happened. My teacher invited me to attack him, to give him a good punch right in his stomach. In a moment I found myself pinned to the floor. To my surprise, I wasn't hurt or angry with him, I didn't feel any pain or any humiliation, in the contrary I felt like all of me came together. I felt strong and that I owned my body, I was very present in it. I was almost ecstatic. Even in an simulation, when you are in the face of death or injury, something changes in you, there is a moment when you strip yourself from all the social and cultural beliefs and you stay with your very own body in the face of death and disappearance. These are moments when the demands of culture and civilization, of consensus reality and how it characterizes you, fade away. "This is me" I thought, "this is my body, it all mine and I love it". I experienced a great sense of boundaries

as well as connection. This was one of my first experiences on an Aikido mat. There is a big gap between what I felt at that moment and what I can do in my everyday practice. Especially at the beginning of my training when I was trying to learn the movements and coordinate my body; not knowing how to move, not having enough control of my body while I was attacked, was resulting in a lot of feelings of frustration, anger and sadness, and also ecstatic experiences like the one I described. Such experiences, and the possibility to grow in this direction, were strong enough to drive me to go back and practice.

Later, reading a book, I found a similar description:

I felt a deep sense of coming home -- a returning -- like waking up and remembering the part of myself that hungers for experience of essential contact. The Buddhist call it taunter, the part that knows real satisfaction from entering the energetic vortex of universal life and breath, rather than standing back and observing. ¹²

Practicing Aikido gave me the opportunity to work on my body and also at the same time to have insights about myself. During practice I was confronting all the elements of my personal psychology. I had to work with my fears, my tendency to withdraw and not meet my opponent, my resistances to everything inner or outer. When I first started to practice Aikido I felt like a dead fish. My life's history with all the different kinds of personal and cultural oppression I experienced lead me to an almost complete personal disappearance. In the dojo as well as in other places, I very easily become afraid and intimidated not being able to defend my self very well. When I was practicing on the mat I had similar problems. It was difficult for me to grab or attack anybody and when someone was countering my attack, I was usually very afraid going down even before anybody threw me. I love my introversion and my yielding nature and I also like to feel strong enough and free enough to express more loud and aggressive parts that exist within me.

Sometimes in the dojo we used a practice called Randori: one student sits in the middle and all the others circle around and attack. As the person who is in the middle has to lead the attacks and eventually

¹² Wendy Palmer, *The Intuitive Body*: 3.

throw his attackers one after the other. It is a very complicated and demanding exercise. To be successful, the person who is attacked has to lead the attack and not just wait for it. People who are advanced in their training can perform it correctly, but everybody, including beginners, practices Randori. I remember one day when I was in the middle: as usual I remained frozen with my scared, intimidated personality, in a constant internal struggle criticizing or justifying myself and not doing much. My teacher sat on the outside of the cycle screaming at me "Move! Move! Do something!"

Through movement, and the engagement in a ritualized combat, Aikido helps me not to indulge in the down quiet parts of my self that are the dominant parts in my personality, but also to find access to the more aggressive parts of myself. At the same time Aikido doesn't glorify aggression and killing, but rather by contacting aggression it further transforms it into power. I always remember my first aikido teacher who was always telling me, " if someone attacks you in the streets, hopefully you can invite the person for a drink. This is what aikido is about". Practice in the dojo helps me to connect with my excitement for life. I practice not to give up, but to use myself and my aggression in order to grow. In my training I have to be constantly in an intense relationship with my opponent. Someone attacks me and I have to avoid this attack. In practice I am working with my fluidity or stiffness in movement, with my tendency to freeze in the middle of a situation and to give up, my fear of contact. Aspects of my personal psychology that I work in my private therapy come up in my Aikido training as well. In the dojo I approach these elements of my psychology exclusively through my body. My fears, frustrations, anger, love, excitement, each bring certain body states. In our world the most common thing is to intellectualize or interpret experiences, but aikido intervenes by connecting the person with the body and body sensations, increasing kinesthetic and proprioceptive awareness, which in turn creates more feeling relationships with one another.

Practicing Aikido helped me develop a different relationship to my body. Having to deal with the threat of physical attacks and studying my reactions and interactions in such situations, gave me a bigger respect for my body as well as for other people. It provided a way to connect with my power and through that I am slowly throwing away the invisible heaviness that came in the form of depression, self-criticism, and overwhelming

emotions. As I started to like myself, feel freer and lessen my resistances, my interactions with my environment improved. Aikido approaches the human being on the level of her most basic need: the need to protect and live life. It challenges the dynamics of submission and dominance. Putting equal importance on learning how to attack and defend ourselves when attacked and also learning how to fall and surrender. Confronting attacks and learning how to fall diminishes fear. Training builds a sense of empowerment, self-security and self-love and helps increase courage and self-confidence. One who practices Aikido studies the conditional patterning and responses around attack. Aikido alters these patterns and offers new ways to approach life's situations by teaching how to stay open to what is happening and blend with it. For me, a very common way of responding to an attack is to withdraw or to become overly agitated. I found that my body reacted the same to a physical attack as it did when I attacked myself with self-criticism or when I got hurt by others. I tended to either go inside and lock myself in there, suffering from moods and depression, or to burst out in anger when I could not take it any more. Either of these responses caused the individual to lose control of the situation, which may be a set up for further hurt. Learning to stay open to these inner or outer situation and interact with these situation is much safer for my physical as well as emotional body.

Although Aikido may not work with specific psychological experiences it works indirectly with these experiences and with the feelings of anger, hurt, and revenge. A lot of time when I practice I find myself to experiencing very deep emotional states and coming in contact with my sadness and pain, while at the same time It gives me a way to express aggression and fight back.

I would like to share a story : In the dojo I had to train with a man who was much bigger and stronger than I am. I didn't like him much because he seemed rigid and had an attitude that he was strong and powerful. We were training together in an exercise where he had to hold both my hands from the front and I had to fight his openings (an opening is a weak point, a point vulnerable to an attack) upset his balance and throw him down. He put a lot of force on me, did not allow me to throw him and smiled at me. All the issues I had ever had with my oppressors appeared in front of me during my encounter with this man. I went into an altered

state and to my surprise I threw this guy so hard that he could hardly believe it. The moment he got up I threw him down again. I enjoyed finding his openings and throwing him down again and again. This was really strange. Normally I feel intimidated and accept other people as being much more powerful. I usually hold back out of fear or because I don't believe enough in myself. I tend to identify as somebody who is weak and gives in easily. I was also surprised that I could throw him so hard. Experiencing my self as powerful is an experience over my edge.

We had to do the same exercise ten times and then change partners. When we were done I was sitting on the mat trying to quiet myself down and my teacher invited me to work with her. In the beginning she asked me to throw her down ten times and then we reversed. I found it very difficult to hold her. She was moving me around the floor and throwing me down, but I couldn't keep a good hold on her hands. She told me, "hold me, keep a hold on me." To try to keep holding her and follow her movement was even more difficult and exhausting than throwing my previous partner.

In order to be able to hold her, I could not react to her movement or resist it too much. Instead I had to follow her movement while at the same time stay close to my own movement and intention. This reminds me of the story of the Taoist in the river, who survives the torrent and stays unharmed because he adapts to the movements of the river and knows how to go in with the descending vortex, and come out with an ascending one. It is also the equivalent of staying with my experience and follow what is happening and developing my awareness instead of moving away reacting and rejecting my experiences. This is a big project because I have been pushed down so much I developed a mistrust of my own perceptions. I usually run and fight off my experiences rather than getting into them and staying close to them. The man I was working with surely has to work on his own personal history, identifications, sexism, cultural conditioning. I am grateful to him for allowing me to use his body to work out my own things. I hope he learned something too. Now I respect his strength and I am not so intimidated by him and certainly he doesn't laugh at me when we train together. Over time our relationship improved. I came to like him and also see his tender and vulnerable sides. Even if we are not, and we will never be, best training partners because of our big physical difference when we are together we can enjoy training and learn from each other.

Aikido and Process Work as methods of inner work

In a traditional dojo people don't process their experiences and they are not interested in finding the information and the meaning of what they experience, although Aikido practice is a valuable form of inner work. During practice one can learn a lot about oneself and the relationships of oneself to the world. Training develops a close relationship to body sensations, feelings, and impulses. Aikido has also a spiritual element. Ueshiba sensei expresses this spiritual aspect when he says : "there is more to a person that we knew, there is a bigger universal purpose and reason for life."¹³ Process Work shares this belief, having a teleological approach. Teleology is a term that exist since ancient times. It can be found in Aristotle's concept of "final cause" or telos. Teleology states that all phenomena have a purpose, a definitive meaning and value for life. Jung stated that the unconscious has a teleological function. It appears in a clinical situation and is a natural healing power. Analysts assist a client to discover this innate power rather than impose it from the outside.

Recently, certain teachers from the West are connecting Aikido with different schools of psychology and body oriented therapies, adding psychological knowledge to it's methods. Aikido, in its psychological applications, locates human problems in social conditioning and past histories of trauma. The basic belief is that past traumatic experiences and the ways we learn to cope in the world through parenting, socialization, education, have formed our ways of responding to life. These experiences organize our bodies and our ways of living in the world. The approach to the body is not to try to correct it but to discover and alter these tendencies, and bring awareness around how we become our conditioned tendencies. Awareness of past events and the effect they have on our body and our psychology enables us to contain our experiences and all the different energies that exist within our bodies.

In the Aikido approaches, the body is the primary vehicle for self discovery. The body is the main source of information about oneself. In addition to the proprioception and kinesthesia of the body the visual and auditory channels are also used. Working on the body, we work towards

¹³ Aikido today magazine, Robert Nadeau : 10

what is called "conscious embodiment", the ability to include all aspects of ourselves and to be present with all our experiences, to withstand feelings of aggression, fear, shame as well as love, connectedness, and intimacy. Conscious embodiment requires us to tolerate the rushes of energy that exist within us and stay with sensations as they arise inside us and become friends with these sensations and feel ourselves fully without blocking experiences or moving away from them. Instead we learn to let them arise, to stay with them, and let them complete and be expressed as an action in the world. Conscious embodiment is the ability to contain energetic experiences and the emotional character that is formed from this energy.

In his book, *The Anatomy of Change*, Heckler writes:

If we are fearful of our emotional life, or have been taught strict taboos about expressing certain feelings, we may not be able to completely end something. By inhibiting our emotions we carry this feelings into our life. If anger for example, is forbidden in our self image, then anger that was appropriate but unexpressed at a particular ending will find its way into some part of us. As a burning spark it will smolder in our muscles, organs, and attitudes, finally making us sick. Then this anger from the past inappropriately boils over in other situations we become angry at our children, our employees, the boss, ourself. ¹⁴

In working with people, practitioners who combine Aikido and psychology use sensory grounded information in an attempt to increase kinesthetic awareness and awareness of sensations. They look at the different experiences in terms of energy, pressure, texture, and pulsation. Establishing familiarity with our sensations develops our intuition. Remaining in touch with our body helps us to become more fully awake. This allows more mental and spiritual readiness which has the potential to penetrate cultural biases. The different situations are no longer evaluated in terms of good and bad, nor do they judge the individuals state of being. Instead we let our deeper sensations transform us and find new ways to deal with life, we find answers that come from within, from our feeling states rather than solely from our intellect and preconceived

¹⁴ Richard Storzi Heckler, *The anatomy of change* : 51

ideas.

In order to stay with sensations as they arise, one tries to cultivate concentration, examining what one feels, tastes, and sees without analyzing or explaining the results. Aikido's aim is to fully feel and relate to ourselves and to bring awareness to our feeling sensations. It also attempts to develop qualities that are missing in our lives which have the potential to facilitate the relationship to ourselves and the world around us. These qualities are not imposed from the outside or even from our intellect instead they are found in our body and our sensory grounded experiences.

Process Work has a similar goal. In the *Shaman's Body*, Mindell writes, "Dreambody work or Process Work applied to the body is a matter of sensing your body sensations and allowing them to direct the way you live."¹⁵ Process Work, however, does not approach the person only through body sensations. Secondary processes and disavowed parts of ourselves are expressed through our symptoms, dreams, fantasies, addictions, relationship problems, synchronicities and all the things that happen to us without our intention. Process Work does not focus on the how we became who we are, our social conditioning. It does appreciate the importance of personal history and trauma, and the cultural social influences, but it places a greater focus in the purpose and meaning of an experience. It believes that disturbing secondary experiences contain the seeds of our personal and collective growth and development, and it tries to discover on how secondary tendencies are manifesting in the moment what their purpose is and how they are useful for the individual.

It sees the individual as a multichanneled communicator who receives and sends messages from different channels related to human perception: visual, auditory, proprioceptive, kinesthetic. while incorporating the relationship channel and the world channel in individual work. Parts of ourselves that we are not aware of and we do not own signal messages not only through our body and our sensations, but also in experiences we have with other people and in the world. Relationship and the world channel are sources of information carrying important messages contributing to our personal growth and wholeness. Process work follows and unfolds processes as they move through the different channels of communication, connecting people with disavowed

¹⁵ Arnold Mindell, *Shaman's body* :23

experiences and finding their inherent meaning for the individual life.

Aikido teaches centering and grounding which allow the individual to be attentive to the different energies in our bodies. In martial training staying centered is essential. The center is located somewhere below the navel and movement originates and evolves from there. When you wrestle with an opponent you take the balance by upsetting the center of the opponent. In inner work to focus on one point exclusively may lead to losing awareness of everything else that happen in the body. When you work on ourself, being centered is not a somatic or mechanical thing, it is the ability to receive a message that is coming from our bodies and the ability to see, hear, and feel whatever is present. We need to establish a relationship to a center in order to stay with the received information without distorting it. Sensations we are not able to tolerate in ourselves we reject and project to the outside. Grounding in martial arts refers to our ability to feel our connection with the ground, to be rooted. When we work on ourselves grounding is the ability to stay connected with experiences, and to be able to support them and ground them. It is the ability to support our experiences in the same way that the earth supports our weight.

Aikido uses "entering" and "blending" to meet an opponent, these terms refer to the ways one meets an attack. When you enter into a martial movement you don't oppose or block the attack directed towards you. Instead you move towards the attack in order to meet it. When you blend with that movement and incoming energy you become one with it. Blending with an attack gives you the potential to control it and redirect it. Similarly blending with an experience creates the potential to identify and use experiences instead of separating from them or being overwhelmed by them. In Process Work blending happens when we live our secondary processes. Experiences we have that are initially perceived as disturbances shouldn't be blocked, avoided or repressed and treated as outside forces that have nothing to do with us and who we are. Experiences need to be approached with curiosity in order to explore them and find the information they carry, to find their meaning and their purpose. In this way we are not the victim of uncontrolled experiences, but the masters of awareness in our everyday life. In order to discover the information that is carried in our secondary processes, Process work tries to develop our second attention, which is the ability to focus on the

unusual, amplify it, and become one with it.

As the Aikidoist uses the movement and the force of her opponent to neutralize and reverse the attack, so the Process Worker uses disturbances to find the necessary information for development. Process work believes that what we perceive to be disturbances are meaningful experiences trying to connect us with our dreaming. Secondary processes carry energies, qualities, identities, information for the individual that, if used with awareness, can connect us with our innate nature and essence.

The Aikidoist who operates from a place other than her center risks distorting body sensations and projecting them outwardly. For Process Work such distortions come when you arrive at an edge. When you come to an edge you arrive at the boundary of your identity, the boundary of what we know and can accept about yourself, which affects not only your inner psyche but also your relationships. Edges contain information about personal history and socio-cultural beliefs. Awareness of edges has an effect in your psychology as well as your relationships. To complete the experience and go over edges is important; but equally important is to become aware of edges and to know the things you are not able to tolerate or do and the related values and judgments.

The unknown and unaccepted parts are not lost but they appear in double signals. A double signal is an unintended communication, a message we sent which is not in agreement with our intention and verbal communication. Close to the concept of a double signal is the concept of split off parts which is also used in Aikido. A split is considered a separation from the part of the body that relates to a sensation, feeling situation, or a mental conflict. The term split indicates we have different parts pulling in opposite directions. If we are unified we can open up to others more easily. If we fully relate to ourselves we are not so vulnerable and we are not projecting parts of ourselves onto others. In Aikido three basic centers-the mind, the heart, and the belly- represent ideas, emotions and instincts. These parts can be aligned by establishing a dialogue between them.

Aikido also refers to the idea of the "field." It defines the field as an atmosphere constituted by it's shape and texture, as well as its expansive or contractive qualities. Expansion is associated with more

extroverted happy moods and contraction with more introverted, depressed moods. The intent is to bring awareness to what we unintentionally communicate. In her book, *The Intuitive Body*, Palmer says:

"Our field communicates a particular message to the outside world. I find that what people say verbally and what they communicate through their fields are not always in agreement. This disparity creates stress and confusion in relationships. The other person has to decide if they are going to relate to what we are saying verbally or to what our field is expressing."¹⁶

P.W. also uses the idea of the field not only in individual work and what our individual field communicates but also examines it's applications in our interpersonal and group situations. The idea of a field in process work is a more complex idea which I will explain in greater detail in my reference to relationship work and group work (pg41, pg51)

In individual work aikido focuses on awareness, it encourages awareness of feeling and congrucncy in communication, which means being aware of double signals and identifying with double signals and the information and the energy they carry. In addition to double signal awareness P.W. focuses also on symptoms, dreams, relationships synchronicities as aspects of one's individual psychology, with the intention of bringing awareness to all these different aspects and unfold the meaning they carry for the Individual.

¹⁶ Wendy Palmer, *The intuitive body* :80

RELATIONSHIPS

Based on their basic principles Process Work and Aikido try to approach and facilitate relationships. Aikido comes from a martial background and is interested in finding ways to facilitate conflicting relationships. It focuses on the places where people find themselves in disagreement and opposition. Process Work has a wider approach, studying human relationships in all their different aspects such as love, friendship, intimacy and also conflict. P.W. is not interested in resolving conflicts only but also in helping people to become aware of the dreaming in the background of a relationship.

A relationship is a composite channel of communication addressing different levels : the inner level addresses individual psychology, the interpersonal level addresses interactions and communication between people, the dreams and the myths involved in the relationship. The third level addresses the collective issues present within a relationship such as social values and belief system that are present and which influence our relationships.

Usually, in our everyday interactions we remain involved with the primary aspects of a relationship. We are attached to the content of our discussions, and our primary identifications. We neglect signals that come from non-verbal channels. These signals influence the communication and the atmosphere between two people, but since we neglect them we can not know their messages and their purpose for ourselves and our relationships. Process Work focuses on this unintended communication, trying to bring it to the foreground. These messages, if not received with awareness, will flow into the field of the relationship, appearing in dreams and fantasies, in people's symptoms and conflicts.

One of the reasons we neglect these signals and we are not aware of their messages, is because we have edges to secondary processes; we fear the feelings, energies and figures they represent. If me and my partner we have a conflict and I have an edge being hurt, I will tend to ignore double signals that express anger, if we both have an edge to anger we will tend not to perceive conflicts when they are around, because if we notice it, we may have to go over our edges and express anger. Double signals want to be seen; they need to come to our awareness and

communicate their messages. They provide a path to the secondary process, the dream of the relationship. Process Work follows the unknown and lets things happen without having any preconceived idea of where they should go or how people should be and what they should do.

"In principle, Process Work means following the way of nature. Process is that which is already happening not what should be done. Process is that which has already been thought of, it is going on whenever people meet or think of one another. It is the organic method which creates relationships in the first place. If we could train ourselves to be aware of processes, we could work with natural relationship forces, and avoid the tendency to short circuit life by applying technical strategies or trying programs as short term solutions. " 17

Process Work has developed a model for conflict resolution which provides tools to work on conflict. Conflict resolution techniques use the basic principles that are also used in Aikido. These principles consist of a willingness to include the disturbance/attack instead of blocking it out and the ability to be open to your opponent and acknowledge her/his by trying to empathize and see the world from her/his point of view.

P.W. steps for conflict resolution:

Because we live in a cultural system that considers conflict to be a "bad thing" and something that should not happen, many conflicts are not noticed for a long time. The first step in conflict resolution is to notice there is a conflict, and have the courage to talk about it. Talking about conflicts is not always easy because they disturb the primary process of the relationship-the "who we agree we are." We should apologize to the primary process of the relationship for having a conflict, acknowledge and appreciate the primary aspect of the relationship, bow.

Then go to our own side, have our affect. Many people have edges against taking their own side. See if we can take a neutral position, step out, and look at the problem. Does the whole conflict makes sense? See if we can take the side of our opponents, if we absorb and understand their points of view and where they are coming from. If we feel that we are not able to do so, we should tell our partner and admit that this could be a reason why

17 Arnold Mindell , *The dreambody in relationship* : 5

the conflict cannot be resolved.

These steps are not meant to be linear. We can step in wherever we want and change the order. But all the steps need to be completed. We have to notice what it feels like in any given moment: Do we feel neutral or do we stand on one side? Notice, and then amplify the position. Taking sides is not a mechanical thing but an awareness procedure of noticing where you are in any given moment.

In addition to these steps for conflict resolution, We can incorporate dream and body work into relationship work. One can work on relationship conflicts by picking up our own and the others' double signals. By noticing what else is happening within ourselves or our partner other than the involvement with the content of the conflict. Attention to tones of voices, pauses, movements, postures, sensations, world synchronicities and unfolding the dreaming behind these communications is very important in relationship work.

It is important also to become aware of dreaming up in relationship. Dreaming up is concerned with the interactive aspects of a relationship. A double signal is an interactive process, intended for somebody to perceive it. Information must be recognized even if we want to deny it. A double signal will float around until it communicates the information it carries. Dreaming up is the level of unintended communication in relationships. All the feeling reactions and responses we have to each others' signals. Dreaming up differs from the similar concept of projection. Whereas projection looks at the individual psychology of the person who is doing the projecting, dreaming up looks at the unintended two-way communication which we may be completely unaware of. Dreaming up will appear in our feeling reactions: experiences which are not seen as our complexes or our pathologies-not even our own psychologies-but as the immediate, momentary, experience between two people. Dreaming up has causal and non-causal aspects. Causal refers to the idea that the dreamed-up reaction can be located in missed signals. for example, if I am irritated but not aware of it, I will probably signal my irritation with my double signals, not seeing the signal and not being able to locate that signal on me my partner also might start to feel irritated with me. Non- causal aspects indicate a field which creates the dreaming responses.

Process work views relationship and relationship conflicts not only as personal interactions between people but as part of a larger field. A field is a background pattern which structures relationships and individual behavior. This background pattern influences relationships and it doesn't belong to any individuals personal psychology but involves both people in the relationship. In that sense individual psychology and personal responsibility in relationship is reduced . A relationship process belongs to both individuals involved and an expression of the field. This field is irreducible, you cannot separate the parts and say very clearly who does what and to whom the process belongs.

Inner work is another tool that we can use to facilitate a conflict. Using inner work we can work with the states we go into when in conflict. When we do inner work we notice and study how we look, how we sit, what we feel. If we have any visions we notice what triggers our states. Relationship Issues will be resolved better if we work internally. Doing inner work is not a matter of conceptualizing or even talking about our feelings. A lot of times we say what we feel but rarely do we let ourselves be affected by what we experience. Inner work is a way to unfold inner experiences and relate them to the outside. Inner work requires us to drop out of the connection in relationship and let ourselves explore feelings, pictures, movement, whatever is present. Inner work allows us to be affected by these experiences while keeping our awareness. Inner work can provide a way to dream into the other person, by feeling what our partners feel. Instead of relating we go inside and unfold what we see and feel, and bring that in the relationship. This is a way to relate to the background dream instead of staying involved with the primary content of the conflict and blocking out the other person. When doing inner work we should notice and discover edges. By becoming aware of our belief systems around edges we can work with relationship conflicts. Dialogue and interaction with these figures is important in relationship conflicts. Working on our edges can open us up to our opponent and what they represent.

Another aspect that is present in relationships and relationship conflicts is issues of rank and privilege. Process work examines how the dominant value system shapes relationships and creates conflict. Certain roles, values and behaviors are approved by the culture, and people who

identify with these values and behaviors will have more privileges. Others who do not identify with mainstream values will feel put down and marginalized. Issues related to race, ethnicity, economic status, age, social status, sexual orientation are present and influence our relationships and everyday interactions. Differences in rank and privilege will stop people from feeling free to express themselves. Working on a relationship conflict one has to pay attention to how issues are present in the conflict.

Aikido has no psychological framework and does not approach background states or explore different aspects of a relationship. Its chief concern is to work through and find solutions to the everyday conflicts we have with lovers, friends, employees, parents, and children. It helps people to interact with less painful and more understanding ways when in conflict. Its central belief is to accept the conflict and your opponent and try to stay open to what is happening, instead of staying in endless struggle, denial or resistance .

Conflict in Aikido traditions is considered natural and necessary part of life. Conflict motivates change. In human relationships, Aikido sees conflict as the opposition of wills, principles, or forces. Working through our daily conflicts we have the possibility of great learning. Models of psychology based on Aikido principles, attempt to transform the idea that "life is a contest and we are out there to win and defeat other people." These models challenge concepts of power, strength, and the desire to always win and be right. On the mat we spend equal time attacking and been attacked, throwing and falling. Resolving a conflict is to move away from the struggle of who is right and who is wrong and try to acknowledge and appreciate differences.

The Martial Arts have the goal of self development. One of the first concerns of someone who follows this path is to work on herself/himself and through that to develop the ability to assist others. When in conflict the main focus is to explore the different ways we can respond to conflict, by finding other ways to respond besides anger, resistance, withdrawal or denial. Aikidoists believe that conflict begins within and the more we know about ourselves, our beliefs and reactions, the more we can increase our effectiveness in working with conflicting situations and our capacity to love.

Today with the expansion of Aikido into other fields, people have developed ways to work on our everyday relationship conflicts. When working on a relationship conflict our goal is to resolve the problem at hand and restore the harmony. We make a conscious effort to approach conflicts in a congruent centered way, to identify with feelings and take responsibility for actions. Learning, growing, and cooperating are also goals in the process of resolving a conflict.

The methods used to deal with everyday relationship conflicts are drawn from the basic principles of the martial techniques. The principles of getting out of the line of attack, blending, and leading allow the Aikidoist to harmonize her body with her opponent, rather than going against him. In an everyday relationship conflict, this would mean recognizing people's feelings and opinions instead of negating them or neglecting them. By accepting others' feelings and opinions we do not stop the conflict but we avoid the struggle of accusation and counter accusation; we avoid the pushing and pulling in relationships. The idea is to stay open to the attack without blocking it out, to give the space to the attacker to discover more about why s/he is attacking, and explore the nature of the conflict. One is willing to hear and understand. The methods used in resolving relationship conflicts is to ask questions, clarify, and go deeper into the conflict rather than trying to give quick answers and solutions. Skills used for resolving relationship conflict include empathic listening, reflection, questioning, restatement, and clarification. Aikido practitioners believe that part of the conflict is resolved if we acknowledge the other persons' feelings and needs as something worthwhile: hear instead of oppose.

In order to discuss the different ways Aikido and Process Work approach a relationship conflict. I present here an example taken from Terry Dobson's book, *Aikido In Every Day Life*.. In this book Dobson offers an approach for relationship conflicts based on aikido principles ¹⁸

Paul's lover calls to tell him that she feels shut in by the relationship and wants the freedom to date other people. He arranges to meet and discuss the situation with Mary, his lover.

Paul - Listen to me. I don't want you to date other people. I want to be

¹⁸ Terry Dobson, *Aikido in every day life* : 140

with you. I have no feelings for other people. I care about you. I love you, but I can't accept you going out with other people.

Mary - I feel hemmed in, constricted.

Paul - By what?

Mary - You.

Paul is standing for his side, he knows what he wants, he is centered. Mary, feels constricted and wants to date other people. This is a disturbance for Paul who wants to stay in the relationship, and for the primary process of the relationship that says, "we are happy together." Trained to be open to disturbances Paul, includes the disturbance and does not negate his lover's feelings; he accepts them and he wants to find out more about them.

Process Work also will include this experience, trying to find out more information. Process Work unfolds experiences in order to find their meaning. It also considers the socio-cultural aspects of the relationship who these people are in terms of their roles in the relationship and the social context within which they exist. This information, even if it does not seem relative to the present conflict, is always considered important in relationships.

Paul- Do you love me?

Mary - Yes.

Paul - And I am still constricting you?

Mary - I feel constricted.

Paul - Help me understand how you feel hemmed in.

Mary - I don't feel I have any options.

Paul - I know the feeling. what would you like to do?

Mary- Get out more. do more.

Paul - Anything in particular?

Mary- Travel. Go somewhere.

Paul- Where do you see your self going?

Paul gets out of the way of the attack and does not block out or confront the situation. He doesn't say, "What are you talking about? You feel constricted? That is not possible." The person does not negate the experience of constriction, he accepts it and is interested in knowing more about the problem. He empathizes with the feelings and considers the possibility that he is constricting his partner. The lovers, however, do

not really know what feeling hemmed in means and how it is present in the relationship. Process Work has a similar approach in that it is interested in listening to the accusation and also picking it up in the moment. P.W. tries to find where and how the constriction is happening in the present moment. This brings awareness of how the experience is happening in the here and now of the relationship. Aikido instead tries to find out what to do to help the problems. Is asking, "What can you do in order to feel less constricted?" leads to an interesting fantasy about travel.

Mary- I don't know. To Mexico..... the Virgin Islands maybe.

Paul- That sounds like a good idea. Would it solve things for you if you took a week's vacation in Acapulco?

Mary- (pause) I don't know. I guess not. I don't know what I want.

One person imagines that travel can be the solution to her feelings of constriction and the other goes along with that fantasy. To go along with someone's decision is a strategy that will make the person deal with the reality of the situation. The assumption that people's stated needs are not exactly what they mean might be true since we have secondary processes and experiences we are not aware of. But the travel to Mexico is a fantasy that also needs to be unfolded. We do not know where this fantasy leads. What does it mean for Mary to go to Mexico? what it means does it mean for the relationship? Is the real travel that is important? If this fantasy is amplified it may reveal helpful information, something that the relationship needs.

Paul- It is easier for me. I know what I want. I want you. It must be much harder on you because of that.

Mary- You seem so sure.....

Paul - It's not anything I can make happen. I don't try to love you. Look I don't want to constrict you. I 'll leave you alone for as long as I can stand it. I'd rather you didn't date other people, but I can't force you not to. If you feel less constricted that way, less hemmed in, then that's what you want. If not I will be right there.

Mary- I don't think that is what I want... I love you. I don't want you to go away and I don't care if I never go to Mexico. I want you to be with me all the time.

Paul - I'd like that..

In this example things do not go bad, nobody got hurt and the couple were trying to understand each other and validate each others feelings. Allowing them space to explore themselves and their feelings is important. In this example the couple was able to discuss their conflict and to reach a momentary solution.

In Aikido People in relationship are seen as separate parts in communication that influence one another. Using this approach one has to work internally so s/he know where they are in any given moment and can act in a congruent way. There is much importance placed in resolving a conflict. When in conflict the focus is placed on the person who has the initial problem, and what needs to be done and less on what is happening between people during that conflict. Again, in relationship the focus is mainly on individual work and less in the interactive aspects of the relationship. relationships are viewed as the communication between individual parts and not as fields. Process Work, on the other hand, sees relationships like fields: both people involved in a relationship represent a field and they express different parts of that field. Problems and conflicts belong to the field created by these two people and not only to the individual psychology of each person.

In our example of Mary and Paul we don't know much the atmosphere of the relationship nor about the interactive aspects of this relationship. Information that comes from other than the verbal channel is not focused upon, although aikido's approach to relationships encourages people to pay attention to signals from other channels, such as awareness of space, facial expressions, movements. But there is not focus upon signals. Therefore elements of sensory grounded information, which carries important clues about the relationship are missed. How people sit, tone of voice, where they look, what happens with their bodies, influences the communication but remains unintegrated and outside of awareness.

By not focusing upon unfolding the relationship processes, people involved in a relationship have no awareness of the dream in the relationship and the edges that stop them from realizing this dream. Two people in a relationship have roles which are defined by edges. There are different edge patterns in relationship. Edges can be symmetrical (both people to be afraid to hurt) or complementary, (for instance, one person

may have an edge to aggression and the other have an edge to being hurt) People in relationship have double edges, regardless of whether edges are shared or complementary. When one person goes over an edge and does something that is difficult to do in a relationship the second person will come to an edge. In order for people to feel satisfied, both people need to become aware and if possible go over their edges.

Another aspect that Process Work looks into is the issue of rank in relationship. Process Work considers not only the relationship but also the social context. Aikido tries to transcend social rules and act from a feeling place rather a place of social conditioning. Process Work, on the other hand, makes explicit how social conditioning is present between us in our every day interaction both internally and with each other. It focuses and makes explicit how world-wide social rules and prejudices are present and influence our relationships and the ways we are with each other.

COMMUNITY

Aikido and Process Work both take interest in group life and the creation of community.

Morihei Ueshiba believed that Budo, the way of the warrior, is not about enemies and how to destroy them. Budo is about reconciliation, and the realization of oneness. In Aikido tradition the way to do realize oneness is by absorbing all the different things that come to you, in your own body. He says:

"Lacking oneness, you will likewise be unable to fully manifest in this world the mission of your life as a human being. As we see changes in nature, similarly we see in human beings the flow of emotions between happiness, sadness, anger, and pleasure. Despite such ups and downs you must minute by minute, seek oneness with the volition of the universe. All this means is that one must be able to deal with any and all situations in the great spirit of love and protection towards all things. To be able to do so is to complete one of the tasks of the Aikido practitioner, the result of which is to build a world where the lives of all are a pleasure.¹⁹

What he means is that we very often side with different things or we oppose them according to our feeling reactions; how we feel in relationship to the different people, events. Aikido tries to develop an eldership and an attitude that enables the individual to support and absorb all the different situations independently of the emotional reactions to them.

Aikido does not have a theoretical framework for groups. It mostly approaches groups through the personal responsibility of the individual toward their community. The Aikidoist tries to create an openness to her/his environment and world, a camaraderie where people can leave and grow together.

As in the areas of individual and relationship work, Aikido is extended in the field of conflict resolution in groups and organizations

¹⁹ Richard Storzzi Heckler, *Aikido and the new warrior* : 23 &28

The way they work with groups is also based in the basic aikido principle of openness and absorption of your opponent. This principle of openness to your opponents, outside of the training hall, is the attempt to develop eldership and the ability to support all sides and what is happening without being overwhelmed by your momentary feeling changes. Working on group conflicts they try to create an open attitude and include all the different aspects of a conflict.

One of the most well know Aikido conflict resolutionist is Thomas Crum. In his book, *The Magic of Conflict*, Crum sees our belief systems, and our rigidity and insistence upon these systems, as catalysts for violence. The same function that creates violence in the outer world, takes place internally, also. We are in an internal war where different beliefs are fighting, creating tension within ourselves. When our belief systems are rigid, we create boundaries placing things inside and outside these boundaries. We protect what is inside our boundaries and exclude everything that doesn't go along with our identities and ideas. Everything outside our perspective becomes our enemy.

The model of conflict resolution Crum proposes involves exploring the other side: being willing to understand one's opponent, to embrace all aspects of a conflict-the positions, feelings, beliefs and interests that both sides have, and then to find the common visions and co-create. Crum uses an example where in a business company employees have a conflict with the employer around the creation of an employee lounge: The employer holds the position, "we don't need an employee lounge" which conflicts with the employees' desire for a lounge. Crum goes on to examine the different interests, believes, feelings:

Employer - I want to run my company in the most economical way and lounge will cost money.

Employees - We work better when we're happy and when we feel management cares about us.

Employer - Employees should concentrate on their jobs.

Employees - A comfortable place to relax will make our work more productive.

Employer - If I give the employees a little they will just demand more.

Employees - If you can afford an executive suite, you can afford an employee lounge.

Employer - Employees need more, not less, discipline.

Employees - If the management trusts us and support us, we will be able to make more of a contribution to the success of the company.

Employer - I feel taken advantage of.

Employees - I feel unsupported and unacknowledged.

Listening to this conflict, all parts involved have to find, and acknowledge, their similarities and common visions.

In this example both Employees and Employer want an efficient peaceful working environment. Employer wants responsible and productive employees, and the Employees want to be responsible and productive and to be perceived like that. Both parties want to feel good about themselves. The Employer want to run a successful company and the Employees want to grow personally as well as make a contribution to a successful company.

Their common vision is that both parties want a " peaceful environment where they can be productive and responsible, feel good about themselves and grow while they contribute to the company" From this agreement they can proceed in finding the possible solution to the initial problem the creation of an employee lounge.

As in relationships, here the communication in group work also tends to be verbal and linear. One side talks and the other listens without interrupting. The way to work on a conflict is by asking questions examining the different interests, beliefs, and feelings around the conflict, while using restatement to develop empathy and understanding of the other side. Restatement is a technique where one side repeats what the other is saying in order to feel into their views and also give them the opportunity to clarify their statements. As is, there are no emotional interactions between the members of the group. The goal is to find the common ground. Crum's model focuses more on finding the similarities rather than the differences in a group. The goal is to stay open to one another and encourage opposing parties in the group to understand, acknowledge, and appreciate each other.

Process work has a theoretical framework and a very different approach to groups and group conflict resolution. It sees groups in terms of field theory. Field theory originated in physics with Maxwell and

Faraday. In a study of electromagnetism they found that each charge creates a disturbance or a condition in the space around it, so that if another charge is present it will feel a force. A field is a condition in the space which has the potential to produce a force. It is created by a single charge and it exists whether or not another charge is brought in to feel its effect. Fields can be studied without reference to material bodies, since they are forces traveling in space. They are not always visible, but they are felt when you come in contact with them. Fields don't have specific boundaries²⁰

Mindell sees fields as dreambodies. "Force fields are dreambodies in the sense that the world is a physical body impinged upon by invisible and in part immeasurable forces."²¹ Fields can be felt in our bodies, in relationship and group conflicts and the world around us. We can perceive fields through our senses-through our feelings of love, fear, competition, and through different tensions between people in a group. We can also perceive them through the groups issues and polarizations. Fields influence individual behavior. Human behavior in a group is not only based on individual psychology, but is also a manifestation of the field. Fields organize the identities of their members. In a group people polarize and fill different roles, since the roles are not personal and can be filled by different people at different times. Usually we occupy roles that are close to our identities, but people may occupy different roles. Fields are organized around polarities that are represented through the different roles expressed in a group. Fields use people to occupy the roles in order to bring awareness. The different roles will represent the opinions and feeling attitudes present in a group. Through polarization the background forces will become visible and the field will become aware of itself. Mindell call the roles that form the polarities in a group "timespirits" because they are temporary and can change over time. In a group, the different roles come forward and interact. In any group there are roles which are closer to the group's awareness and they will be expressed more easily, while other roles further away from the group's awareness are harder to express. The roles that are further from the group may be projected outwardly on other groups and people. Roles not openly expressed are felt as an atmosphere. They are experienced as synchronicities or they manifest in ghost roles. For example, fear in a

²⁰ F. Capra, *the Tao of physics*, 1975: 59.

²¹ Arnold Mindell, *the leader as a martial artist*, 1992: 19.

group might indicate the presence of something unexpressed that people fear.

Like individuals, groups express themselves in different channels. The structure in a group can be represented by themes that individuals or sub-groups bring. It can also appear as relationship conflicts, body symptoms, dreams, gossip, or certain movements in the group. Facilitators often experience, within themselves, what is trying to happen in the whole group. Every group has an identity, an intention, a style of communication that defines that group. This identity is the primary process of the group and anything outside of these characteristics belongs to the group's secondary process.

Groups also have edges to the secondary processes. Secondary material, such as an oppressive tendency in a social activist group, will disturb the liberal primary identity of the group. The group will most likely prefer to avoid this part. Process work would attempt to hold the group at this point-trying to provide space for all parts to emerge. Conflicts in groups are evolutionary processes from which new knowledge and transformation will come. Groups are seen as complex entities that involve individual psychology, relationship dynamics, and world issues. Process work is not specifically oriented towards finding solutions to problems. It is more concerned in supporting polarities to interact with each other as it addresses individuals, relationships, organizational, social, and political issues.

The process oriented conflict resolution approach is based on the idea of deep democracy. Our Western societies are built on the concept of majority rule, in which opinions accepted by the majority of people become rules that everyone has to obey. Other views are excluded. People who differ represent the minority opinion on the margins of a group. People who identify with this marginal position will feel unsupported, misunderstood, and undervalued by the majority. They feel oppressed by the majority and are generally against the majority opinion. Mindell says that this system cannot lead to a sustainable situation:

One side never wins alone in human systems. There are no sustainable solutions in which one person or spirit represses another. . . Therefore a viable world work must at least show

the existence and value of all sides and also allow us the transporting experience of appreciating and living each side as it arises after another. The feeling that nourishes this experience is therefore more than democracy, more than the hope for peace and conflict resolution. It is a deeper democracy that respects not only each part but also its capacity to make us whole. ²²

Deep Democracy supports the idea that everything in the field has to be voiced and represented. This means hearing not only the voice of the majority, not only the things we accept and like, but also the difficult parts, the parts that we marginalize. Deep Democracy is based on the view that everything present in the field is needed to complete our wholeness. Every part needs to be expressed and lived. Deep democracy does not look for solutions but supports the interaction between all the different roles present in the field. From that interaction new knowledge comes and solutions can be reached. It is a model based on awareness and consensus rather than on dominance of one set of values ideas or behaviors. In order for deep democracy to work, people in a groups need to have awareness about their feelings and about the different sides of a conflict. Since roles are fluid in a field, members of the group need to know when they are supporting one side, when the other, and when they are neutral. They also need to have the freedom to move between all the different parts. In order for this to happen one needs to be aware and able to accept all the different feelings and parts that arise inside the person and in the group. Deep democracy requires that all parts feel safe enough to speak and represent their points of view.

I would like to give an example of how Process Work works with groups. This is a group process that happened between a group of students that met for a series of classes. This was an advanced group of students, the purpose of the class was to work with each other and have supervision . At the beginning of our meetings studying together was difficult, the atmosphere was cold and people weren't very willing to expose themselves and work together . We had a group process around our inability to work together as a group and we were able to express our fears of criticism. Everyone was thinking that others are better and more advanced and that if they work in the middle and expose themselves they

²² Mindell: *The Leader as a Martial Artist* : 150.

will be subjects of gossip and criticism. In this group process we processed the critic and the thing that puts down people for who they are and what they do. The atmosphere between us changed and we were able to work better together.

This in a meeting of the same group few days later. At the beginning of the meeting people are talking about how last group process relieved the atmosphere and how people are feeling in relationship to the group.

Facilitator. - We are talking about the past. Maybe there is tension now.

Lisa - I have some issues around gender.

At the periphery of the group a woman and a man start to wrestle. Some people make comments about enjoying the wrestlers, some others are concerned, afraid that someone might be hurt. The group invites them to come in the middle of the circle.

Woman - I feel safe. I can take care myself. I also trust the man I am wrestling with.

Lisa - But you are so close, I want to be more involved

The first woman wants to experience her strength and fight a man. She feels that she is strong enough to do it. The group agrees to allow the two people to go into the middle continue the wrestling. Others from the outside are laughing, making comments, some other people try to wrestle. Laughter and a good mood prevail.

Lisa - There is some aggression in the atmosphere.

Roy, a man from the group responds

Roy - Maybe you want to talk about your aggression.

Lisa- It is difficult for me.

Roy- I notice you look at me and I feel scared.

Lisa goes close to him and screams,"I really hate you some times...."

Roy- Why? say more?

Lisa- Because you are on the top of the world.

Roy- You don't know me. I feel really bad some times.

Lisa - Oh! God it's so hard.

Roy- You are right I am on the top. Sometimes my life is great.. I have this part.

Margaret (to Roy) - In the morning you invited the men to the Super-bowl. I felt I didn't have the right genitals to go there.

Eric - I feel bad. I didn't like when you invited Lisa to come out with her anger. The way you did that, you were pushing her down.

Roy feels sorry and apologizes to Lisa. Lisa cries she cannot respond.

A woman from the group stands by her and talks about what is possibly upsetting for Lisa.

Lisa- The fact that the interaction was cut off upsets me; I am glad also that you are there and we can have that.

Roy - I love your passion, Lisa We had great fights and I need to be awake with that passion.

Lisa - I am so angry and I don't know what to do with it.

Roy- I don't know what to do with it either. I turn it into symptoms.

Facilitator - Encourage him to go further.

Roy talks about how difficult is for him to feel it takes a lot. It takes a huge fight or someone to die. I am wondering how people rage and whip. It takes a lot.

Lisa - I am wondering what I want from you?

Roy- What I want is to meet your passion. That would be satisfying for me.

Lisa - I don't want to feel alone in the struggle. I feel put down.

Roy - I respect you a lot. He has moved closer to her and is hugging her.

Lisa - There is more. I want you to be part of the fight. I can't do it alone. It's too much. I think Eric did it, he stood up for me.

Roy - You mean to take risks and say what I feel more when I am with other men..?

Lisa - Ya!!

At the end of the group process people are touched and appreciative.

As I explained earlier groups are fields, they manifest through polarization, and polarities are represented by roles filled by different people. These roles express the different issues, opinions and feelings of a group. Polarities are formed in order for the group to become aware of itself. Roles are partially personal and people in a group can identify with the different roles of the group according to where they feel closer in any given moment. In a group process issues arise organically.

Groups have primary and secondary processes. In this group the process started with the two people wrestling. People express the desire to be met, the atmosphere is warm and friendly. The primary process of that group is "we are a warm friendly group" "we feel safe with one another and we want to experience one another" "Don't stir up the

waters." Then a person came forward and talked about the anger she feels, and another person talked about fear, someone was afraid of conflict. The roles moved from the two people who were wrestling at the beginning, to Lisa who is expressing anger. At this point there is a missing role in the group, what in P.W. is called a ghost role, the one who makes people angry. Roy tried to fill up this role by inviting the woman to talk about her anger. But he himself was feeling down and he couldn't identify as one who pushes people down. Since roles in a group are impersonal anyone in this group can step in and fill this role. The hurter is still a ghost role in that group, people feel shy and afraid to express that role. Process work uses the idea of deep democracy, which is that everything existing in a group has to be represented even roles that are unpopular and that nobody wants to identify with, such as the one of the hurter or the oppressor. But if people are afraid in a group there must be something frightening in the atmosphere and nobody is expressing it. Roles in a group are formed to bring awareness in a group and help the members to process the different issues and feelings. In this example the polarities formed around the issue between women and men and the feelings and the behaviors created by this issue. Women feel put down and hurt by men and men feel on the top of the world, remaining unconscious around the ways they act and the pain they create. Polarities existing within a group process can be processed on different levels. Anybody in this group could fulfill these roles and they can be represented by groups of people who identify with any one role at any given moment. The roles can also be represented and processed in a relationship when two people are working, on behalf of the whole group. Thirdly polarities existing among the members of the group are present within each individual and can be processed internally.

Groups are like individuals, they express themselves through different channels. This group process started in the movement channel with the two people wrestling, but it couldn't complete in this channel. A channel change was needed in order for the conflict to come up and to deepen. From the movement channel the focus shifted to the interaction between Lisa and Roy and how they feel about each other.

Groups also have edges. In this example the group has an edge against anger and fighting. The edge was present at the beginning of the session when the man and the woman started to wrestle and some people were concerned about hurt. It came up again in the interaction between

Roy and Lisa. The group came in when the conflict between them became obvious, and interrupted their interaction. A facilitator should hold the group in such moments and help the people involved to complete their interaction. The whole group needs to work on that edge in order to let the two initial people complete their fight. After working with the polarities and processing feelings and opinions the group will arrive at spontaneous solutions. In this example a solution to the problem is for the men to take some form of social action and talk about how men are contributing to the pain of women by not standing up for them thus raising peoples social consciousness every time that something along these lines comes to their attention.

Process work and Aikido share the idea of one world concept, although Aikido regards groups as having two separate parts with conflicting interests feelings and beliefs. It tries to cultivate empathy and understanding and bring them closer by finding their common visions. For Process Work conflicting parts in a group don't have specific boundaries, but are representations of the field which organizes the identities and the behavior of it's members. Roles are fluid and people can move in an out of the roles, depending on which role they feel closer to at any given time. Polarities in a group and roles that are formed belong to everyone in the group; they are contributing to our personal and collective wholeness. In the example that Crum uses the Boss could find himself sharing the beliefs and feelings that are represented by the employees and also the employees might find themselves to identifying with the bosse's feelings and opinions. This role change aikido tries to achieve by using the method of restatement which as I already explained is the repetition of the phrases that one of the polarities is using. This is done in order to feel more into the others role. This technique has the danger of forcing someone to represent a role when s/he doesn't feel that they identify with that role. It could be a mechanical thing and not a real shift from inside the person. Believing in the wholeness of a group, Process Work works with different levels in a group. What is happening inside the individual or between two people in or in the larger group is meaningful and is expressing the whole. Working at any of these levels is working for the whole group. The Aikido approach stays at the group level without using the individual or relationships as ways of working with group conflicts, or as sources for group awareness.

Another difference between Process work and Aikido is their relationship to problem solving. In their attempt to resolve conflict and find solutions to problems, conflicting parts in groups should represent their feelings, beliefs, and opinions and open up to the other side. This is happening in a more or less linear discussions with not much emotion involved. For Process Work, solutions arise spontaneously from the group when the group becomes more aware of itself. The emphasis is on awareness that comes through the interaction between the different roles. These interactions do not always follow a linear path. Dreaming, altered states, emotional, or irrational parts of the person and the group are included in group work . Since the goal in Aikido is to focus on similarities and co - creation, feelings of anger, hurt and revenge are not discussed. They do not have the chance to be processed and communicated with awareness, they remain unexpressed in the background of the groups life. Process work, believing in the idea of deep democracy, allows and encourages all different parts of the field to be expressed, even unwanted parts for each one of us and for the group. Another important part of group work that is not mentioned at all in the Aikido approach in the processing of political issues, issues around rank, power, abuse, social, racial and cultural differences, wich are very important for individual and group life and when processed and explore the conflicts and feelings they are around these issues as well as the difficulties they create in communication relationships and the creation of community. Processing such issues has the potential to transform social beliefs and prejudices and bring people closer .

Conclusion

Until recently in the west we have been following the Newtonian paradigm, which explains the universe as a mechanical structure. Natural phenomena are explained objectively with precise causal connections. This model views the world as a solid structure with almost no change and with very clear rules which explain its functioning. Scientific knowledge and beliefs form the ways we understand Life and ourselves. Newtonian thinking it's explanation of the universe are also present in the ways we experience and understand our bodies and our experiences. Our bodies are solid objects with very strict mechanical connections and our life experiences can be also explained as unchangeable states that fall under the same laws of cause and effect.

In the 19th century scientific thought started to take a new path, with the study of electromagnetic phenomena and the formulation of the concept of the field, which is a charge that creates a force or a disturbance in the space around it. Matter and the physical world are not any more explained in terms of solid particles interacting with each other but also in terms of energy. These new discoveries are the first places where western science starts to merge with eastern spiritual approaches. These new concepts that came from physics created the basis for a scientific explanation of phenomena like the healing capacities of shamanism, the experience of clairvoyant vision, spontaneous cures etc. Such concepts were always present in eastern philosophies, which from long before were perceiving the human body and the physical world not only in terms of matter but also in terms of energy. Examples of this are The Yogi's subtle body, the TAO the force that fills the universe; The Chinese concept chi which is like a vital force, a breath that gives life to the universe, and is a concept upon which Chinese medicine and the Martial Arts are based; The chakra system which is the representation of a field with centers of energy in our bodies, Shamanism in indigenous thinking and the ability of the shaman to travel in time and space and to come in contact with other realities is another representation of the the idea of the field.

Aikido and process work are two contemporary systems interested in the study of human life. Both approaches share a common root and they are based in the philosophy of Taoism which believes in the inherent

wisdom of nature. Taoism doesn't resist or try to change nature, instead it observes, follows nature and becomes one with it. This is a principle shared by aikido and process as they both follow inner and outer movements and reinforce them in the direction they are already going. Unlike the dominant way of our western civilization, which is mainly guided by intellectual ideas, which separates mind and body and follows the laws of cause and effect, also which finds the causes of a disturbance in order to change the effect; Aikido and Process Work follow disturbances, and amplify them in order to transform them.

Both Process Work and aikido believe in the wisdom of the body and they view the world not as isolated parts in contact, but as an interrelated and interconnected field. Aikido as an intuitive study of human life, is a movement meditation; through meditative movements of ritualized combat, we can study ourselves and all human interactions. The goal of aikido practice is to connect the person's body and mind. The martial artist focuses inward on the movements of body and mind, in order to become aware of the subtle body experiences and to discover the relationship and the dichotomies between mind and body activity. The dreambody, the term used by process work to explain dream and body experiences, is like the subtle body which appears in our dreams, body sensations, body symptoms, it forms relationships and influences the ways we exist in the world. Process Work aims towards bringing awareness to our dreambody experiences.

In its psychological application Aikido practice has the goal of bringing awareness to all the feeling sensations that are happening within our bodies. The belief is that if we focus on and stay long enough with body sensation without judging them or stopping them they will build inside of us and they will appear as an action in the world. Aikido teaches how to tolerate these energetic experiences and the emotional character they represent. One has to be fluid, to follow and identify with inner sensations as they arise moment to moment. Awareness of feeling sensation develops intuition and our psychic abilities to see beyond material manifestation. It is believed that regular practice contributes to knowing oneself and developing sensitivity in relationships and in the communities in which we live. For the martial artist even more important than martial technique is knowing oneself. Practice aims at self realization and individual freedom. Like the martial artist who achieves

self realization by having an internal confrontation with what leads us out of balance, so the process worker is trying to achieve such balance by bringing awareness to inner structures. Inner structures are represented by polarities, between primary processes, our identities and intentions and secondary processes which are feeling tendencies that exist beyond the limits of our awareness. The lack of awareness about secondary processes creates such psychic imbalances that manifest in our dreams, body symptoms, and relationship conflicts. The incongruities between what we intend to do and what is happening to us, create tensions and also contain the potential for greater awareness. Process work, unfolds these tendencies and tries to embrace and bring awareness to all aspects of our experience: the ones that we are aware of and also the ones that we do not identify with and which are happening on the periphery of our awareness. It works with our edges the the dynamics that lead us to stagnation and stop us from identifying with unknown parts of ourselves. Awareness around the different polarities existing within us and our fluidity to relate to these polarities has the potential to create inner balance.

Both approaches crossed my life, and although they come from very different places and have very different ways, studying them has brought radical changes in the ways I perceive and understand my self and the world. For me Process work and aikido cannot replace one another because both have given me unique gifts. Since aikido is a purely physical and intuitive study to translate what it is and how it works verbally is difficult. Overcoming physical boundaries and fears can bring self change. You find yourself in a physical combative relationship where the other person will punch you, kick you, push you down and throw you around and you are expected if possible to fight back and reverse the situation. This is not a permanent state but a constant movement in life. It can also be a representation of our inner conflicts and struggles between who we are and what we believe and who we are not and what we hate and perceive as dangerous. The constant changing of the roles in aikido training is giving you a feeling of the relativity of all things in Life.

Wrestling developed my humility as well as my physical and psychological strength. Such contact with my physical body, helped me to love and accept myself in a very different way than process work did. Process work on the other hand helped me to come in contact with the deeper parts of my self and develop a relationship to my body beyond the

physical. Process work gave me the tools to explore and come in contact with my dreambody experiences; it helped me to connect my dreams with their physical manifestations and discover their meaning and purpose in my life.

Living in a culture where things have to be right or wrong and where I am perceived by the mainstream mostly as wrong, as having the wrong body, the wrong height and weight, the wrong sexuality, the wrong ideas and perceptions, I developed a big inner scream, a strong "No". This is something that traditional psychology calls a resistance process and tries to change, in order to make me more cooperative with the rest of the world. Aikido and process work both have no goal to change that scream or that resistance. They both share the belief that this which can be perceived like disturbance, is a valuable part of me that contributes to my wholeness and something that does not have to be cut off and changed or even healed but it needs to be used and express its message expressed. Both have the goal to help people come into contact with their deeper essence, and to act in the world from that place.

Aikido is a mostly physical path where one has to work physically with the body, and extend the learnings into the more mental and spiritual levels. Process work is a psychological approach primarily focusing on the mental, psychological and spiritual aspects of the body, and it also uses the body to try to discover connections with the mental and spiritual. Both approaches try to cultivate awareness and freedom which allows us to act from inner impulses and a feeling place and not from outer rules. Such awareness has the potential to transcend social prejudice and constriction.

Aikido and process work look not only at our inner life, but also at our relationships to others and to our communities. The Martial Artist works on "knowing one's self", and that is extended to include the ability to harmonize with others and become one with them. The aikidoist blends with her/his environment taking the line of non-resistance. Practice develops sensitivity and the concern for others in our everyday interactions, as well as intuition and the ability to see signals forming as an action in the body. It develops our ability to see intent and to communicate about feelings, both our own and others. Aikido practice aims to eliminate the boundaries between you and other Human Beings and

to sense the world as an entity rather than as isolated and conflicting parts. From this basis aikido offers ways to work on relationship conflicts. It acknowledges conflicts and sees them as a useful process for growing and learning. From this perspective, conflict is not about winning or losing, but about exploring and appreciating differences.

Aikidoists believe that conflict starts within, and in order to solve it, one has to work internally, to own one's feelings, and take responsibility for one's actions, while listening and validating the other side's feelings and opinions. In aikido we have to be aware and be responsible for the influence that we have on the minds and bodies of others. Process work views relationships as a way to experience oneself, and as an expression of the field. Individual behavior in relationships is not just only a matter of each person's personal psychology. Individual behavior is partially created by personal psychology and partially by the field of the relationship, and by the larger context in which the relationship exists. Each person in a relationship is part of a field with a specific structure that patterns individual behavior. Process work is interested in bringing awareness to this background dream of the relationship. It unfolds unintended signals in order to find their message for the relationship and the individuals involved. Process Work sees the relationship as a channel for the individual's awareness and also the individual as a channel for the relationship.

Practicing aikido and having to deal with another person in movement you develop a sensitivity to your own signals and to the signals of other people. Training in aikido is training in the unseen, because very often it will be too late to respond when the other is already attacking; you train to track the intent of movement. This can be extended outside of the mat, you relate to people's movements, (facial expression, tones of voices, little movements..) and you notice what kind of atmospheric changes and body responses are produced. Training in aikido developed my intuition and the awareness of the ways I was perceiving and relating to others. PW brings me to the same places: working on a relationship or a relationship conflict requires the ability to go into these signals and discover their meaning, and bring back the information they carry. PW works on relationships by discovering edges, and the dreaming responses around edges. Knowing more about the belief systems you have, around identities and things you can and cannot do increases understanding and

facilitates the atmosphere and the communication between people.

The last place where Aikido and process work have an impact is the relationship the individual has to her or his community. Both place a big importance on the individual self and both are concerned with freeing the person from social oppression. For aikido the way to do that is by connecting with our innate nature. Aikido training has the purpose of bringing the person in contact with the Self, and developing the necessary strength so you can act autonomously, following your intuition and inner drives, without constriction by outer demands and prejudice. The martial artist tries to integrate rather than avoid feelings of aggression knowing that violence is inside of us and everybody has a part in it.

Aikido works exclusively with the body and also has a code of ethics based on concepts of social justice, benevolence, empathy and an open mind. Training in a dojo where you physically fight with someone, and deal with feelings of anger and the intention to hurt one can transform feelings of aggression and create an openness and an eldership in relationships and groups. This is a paradox because in a context of war people are learning to co-exist and build a spirit of learning and growth without killing each other. The martial artist tries to resolve conflicts and keep the peace without being a victim of the situation. It is a personal responsibility and a personal effort to keep growing and developing an attitude that can support the whole. She knows rigidity creates violence and she tries to examine her beliefs and keep an open mind. In a group she has the goal to support all the different sides, to stay open to new ideas and include all the different positions, feelings, beliefs, interests, and to find the common ground between the different parts of a group. She tries to find the similarities between these parts rather than stay with the differences. When in a group conflict, finding common visions will lead to possible solutions.

Process work, sees conflicts as evolutionary processes bringing new information and potentially transforming groups.

In *Sitting in the Fire*, Mindell says:

If you free yourself from domination from the main culture, you might come in conflict with the world around you. You will come

against the belief system for what is appropriate behavior within different groups. To come in conflict with the dominant beliefs of the group you belong to is needed in order to transform on a large scale. . . People should wake up, speak out and confront oppression. . . Only if all members of a community grow in awareness and power in themselves and others can true change occur. (1995: 45)

Process work introduces the idea of deep democracy, a similar idea with to the belief in aikido that all the different feelings, ideas, interests in a group should be represented. Deep democracy aims to create a space so that all parts of a group can be represented, even feelings and ideas that are not accepted in a group and which nobody wants to represent; This is different to Aikido which emphasises similarities and co-creation but it does have the danger of excluding negative feelings or intense emotional reactions or other differences, or aspects of the group that are present but which we tend to marginalize.

Process Work aims to bring awareness to the background dream of a group, to these aspects of the group that we are aware of and also the ones that are present but we are not aware of. Groups are fields and we perceive fields through the different issues present, and also through our senses, feelings, atmospheres, relationship conflicts, synchronicities. They manifest through polarization of the different feelings and opinions existing in a group. Process work assists groups by helping the polarities to form and interact with each other. Through these interactions the background forces, that exist and form the groups atmosphere and behavior, come to awareness. Process work doesn't address only the content but also the emotional aspects of a conflict, allowing not only linear discussions but also emotional interactions to happen in a group. It places equal responsibility on personal growth and the ability that the individual has to change the collective, but also works toward collective change because there are time that collective work needs to be done in order to help individual growth, like when we have to work on large social issues of racism, sexism, homophobia or other collective tabu that inhibit the individual and it's expression and growth.

There is an ancient Greece Philosopher Empedoklis who tried to explain the world by saying that it consisted of four elements: air, water,

fire, and earth. He said that love unites the elements and the lack of love separates them, each element understand it's own nature and the nature of the other elements that is the same with it's own. The soul who understands everything consist of all the elements.

I believe that process work and aikido are working in similar directions, trying to expand our awareness and encompass all the different elements existing within us. I also believe that process work and aikido will agree that there no love without power. Feeling a victim of our experiences or a victim in relationship and in the world will only result in feelings of anger and revenge. Process Work and Aikido both work towards awareness and growth, they cultivate a warrior's spirit and the capacity to confront herself, and her limitations. The stuggle of the warrior is with herself, she works with fear and the fear of death, the physical death and also the death of an identity and the world as she knows it. She steps into the unknown and confronts potentially dangerous situations with an open mind.

Aikido as a metitative physical practice is an integrated system, that operates on many levels it has the potential to open us up to different people and different aspects of ourselves. Being in a physical combative relationship helps you to become aware of and to master our bodies and our emotions. Also it has the potential to develop our love and sensitivity toward ourselves and our environment. It is different from Process work because in a traditional dojo people usually they are not working in depth on their relationships nor do they process the different issues in a group or deal social and political issues. The main focus is on individual growth that comes through physical practice. In contrast process work maintains that individual growth , relationship work and group work are interconnected. Phenomena are manifestations of the dreambody and an expression of the whole. The process worker works at any of these levels trying to bring awareness and to draw the connections between the personal and the collective levels.

In my personal experience they came together. Their different ways both taught me to look inside and act from inside rather than always looking to the outside. To recognize my own feelings and stand for who I am, ruther than looking out for a set of rules and behaviors. If the biggest fight of the warrior is the one with herself, for me this

fight is translated to been overcoming my sensitivity to the world around me which at times is overwhelming; To overcome my fear, my anger, and my passivity and to open up to life and relationships. My biggest effort in this life is to overcome my feelings of hurt and relearn how to love: to love in a way that is not only accepting but also has the ability to fight. Both paths become incredible valuable in my search.

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