

Pure Aikido

純
粹
合
氣
道



Aikido Visionary:
Marcus Encel's 46 Year
Quest for Mastery

Interview by David Black 🇺🇸

Today I am thrilled to have the opportunity to chat to Marcus Encel, the Founder and Chief Instructor of Pure Aikido in Melbourne's inner city suburb of Collingwood. According to his webpage, "Marcus Encel trained in Japan under Saito Sensei. His focus is how to apply Aikido in the modern environment." 🙏

合氣道



合氣道

Hi Marcus, thank you for taking the time to talk to me today. You have had quite a journey with your martial arts practice.

Yes, that's quite the understatement. I first learned martial arts from my mother's best friend Norman Stains who was a gun shearer and participated in the little known shearing wars between shearers using the Australian and the New Zealand wide comb. He was an expert in Knife fighting amongst other things. As a genuine Aussie bushman, he had a huge array of skills from expert Hunter and shot to having worked in Jimmy Sharmans Boxing Tent. He taught me how to make a fist, throw a punch and use a knife. He would carry a razor sharp knife in his pants without a sheath.

I began training in Aikido when I was 14 years old and I'm now 60. I guess I'm a second generation Australian Aikidoka having learnt from the original people to bring it to Australia and have been training ever since. I started training primarily under David Brown who is the best of the Hombu style Aikido practitioners in Australia and still is. He even trained Bob Jones in Aikido. I also trained under Sugano Sensei who became head of Australian Hombu Aikido and he was a Deshi of Morihei Ueshiba O'Sensei.

In the old days, we used to train out of Caulfield Judo school run by Arthur Moorshead. Arthur was captain of Australias Olympic Judo program back then. Arthur was a black belt in Aikido, and the first one to teach it in Australia. He was teaching a bunch of his senior students, and when he heard Sugano Sensei was in Melbourne he asked him to take over the school as he was a Deshi or direct student of O sensei, the founder of Aikido. Which he did, and then promptly decamped to Sydney installing Arthurs senior students as heads of the school. But Arthur was an amazing martial artist and a great guy and he just let them continue but he withdrew from teaching Aikido. I always enjoyed Arthur's Christmas parties amongst other things and admired him greatly as a martial artist in person.

I trained in Aikikai Aikido until I saw Iwama Ryu Aikido (Aikido from OSenseis Shrine) and I immediately knew that was what I was looking for. Ultimately, I ended up going and becoming an Uchi Deshi in Japan and training with Saito Sensei at the Aiki shrine.

I've had many trips to Japan from a year to week around 20 times.

Most of the Australian Aikido schools broke up in the 90's and I was left in the cold. I opened my own dojo in 97.

Saito Sensei died and I havnt had an Aikido teacher since. There are a few good people out there, although not many, and none of them do Aikido like I do it, so I run my own show. I'm part of an international collective, the Institute of Aikido International, which brings a bunch of different martial arts and Aikido schools of differing opinions together for training and insights. There are disagreements of course, but it's a great forum to make a case for your methodology.

And that's the kind of brotherhood I'm interested in!

After some time of not having my own teacher, I started doing BJJ under Pete de Been. I think I was 38. I went on to win a couple of Pan-Pacific gold and Bronze in the Mundial. I taught BJJ for sometime time, but I blew my shoulders out and just decided to focus on my first love, which was Aikido.

I've had a lot of martial arts experience over the years having learnt good old Aussie streetfighting, sparring with my friends who were a very scary bunch doing martial arts from boxing to Taekwondo and streetfighting all sparring them with my Aikido.

I'm always doing something new, I believe it's fine to cross train as long as you keep up practice in your primary area of interest. If the cross training takes away from time on the mat, then it's become too much. Otherwise the door is open.

I took up Kyudo during the pandemic and concentrated on handheld projectiles as well. Currently, I study in Muay Thai and Panatukan/Kali a couple of times a week.



Can you tell us about your parents' connection to the founder of Aikido and how it influenced your decision to start practicing Aikido?

My father was one of the first people doing business in postwar Japan. He was selling audio equipment.

He was a champion, weightlifter and health nut. At some point, he wanted to learn intelligent self-defence and got an introduction to O'Sensei from one of his business contacts. At the time he was in Japan with my mother, and they both did Aikido together. Apparently O'Sensei said that dad didn't have much talent that he used to much brute strength, but that mum was very talented and had a lot of ki. Mum did have a lot of ki. She was an opera singer and actually a good fighter, but not in a trained way. Whenever I fought my older brother, I would taunt him after he punched me and say "you can't hit half as hard as mum".



I didn't actually make any decision to train in Aikido it was decided for me. I always wanted to do martial arts when I asked my parents to pay for karate. They said they wouldn't do it and that it would make me more violent but they would pay for Aikido classes. They said I could get a paper round or do another job. If I wanted to learn karate and punch people all the time I didn't like the sound of doing a paper round, so I did Aikido. The first few weeks I thought where's all the kicking but within two weeks I was hooked.

What was it like being an Uchi Deshi of Morihiro Saito Sensei at the Aiki shrine in Japan? Could you share some memorable experiences from that time?

For a start, I didn't plan my trip well at all, and I gave no consideration to the weather whatsoever, and I arrived in winter when it was snowing. Now I hate the cold, and I had summer clothes with me it was a hideous experience living in a paper house in the snow with almost no heating I had never experienced anything like it. The training was hard, but for me, it was far harder in the psychological area. There are bunch of people who were intense rivals from different cultures. Living together in a small space being asked to cooperate. It wasn't easy.

In those days, I wasn't good at handling conflict. I can't say I'm great now, but I'm infinitely better than I was. I would return bad energy with more bad energy. I was not popular. The Japanese liked me by and large, the Westerners disliked me intensely. They primarily use some bastardised versions of Japanese etiquette that not even the Japanese subscribe to. It was ridiculous. However Saito Sensei's, Aikido was sublime and no one was in any doubt that Sensei was one of the last Samurai, and could fight to the death. At any instant, should he feel it necessary. He was a very brave man, and he died like a champion, refusing all painkillers and medicine, because he didn't want to linger as a shadow of himself and a burden on his family.

I had been left out of the grading process by the break up of Aikido in Australia and Sensei gave me Yondan two weeks before he died. He said he would've given me a Godan, but he'd never promoted someone three ranks at a time before so it would have to do, he said he felt sorry for what I've been through.

He was in his wheelchair, and I have this strong memory of him, stopping as we were walking around the shrine grabbing little flowers smelling them and smiling. He savoured every moment of his life and went out on his own terms. One day the Doshu (head of the world Aikikai) and son of the founder came to the dojo with a whole lot of the most senior Aikido people in the world for the Taisai ceremony. It was freezing, and I had my leather jacket on, and a balaclava. As a Deshi, I was being run ragged with 1 million little duties, and I was carrying some stuff into the dojo for the feast since I was in the small antechamber. As I took my shoes off and came in, he started screaming at me and chopped the balaclava off my head with a lightning blow from his Togatana. I was a little stunned, but at the same time I had to repress a smile, because I thought it was pretty cool. In any case, since he could be frightening, when he was angry, and he would yell in a thunderous voice in a way that would make your blood curdle and one instantly knew that it was possible he could hurt you. Anyway, he bellowed at me to move the kerosene heater. Now these awful old kerosene heaters that were at the dojo were a bit bigger than a pair of buckets, and they had a wire handle to pick them up, which would become unbearably hot when they've been working for awhile, basically as hot as a stove. So I was fiddling about trying to get my sleeve around my palm, so I could pick it up and sensei I looked me in the eye and ordered me to pick it up immediately and I knew what I had to do it. He was staring me directly in the eyes, so I nodded, apologised, took a deep breath and grab the handle with my bare skin. It burnt me instantly, and I have this memory of sensei, staring intently into my eyeballs and me lifting up the heater as steam came off my hand between his locked gaze and mine in that freezing room.

I carried this heater to the corner of the room, and he thanked me satisfied, and gave me a pat on the back and a smile. My hand was quite severely burnt and took weeks to heal, which made weapons training Unbearable, but by the same token, I knew this was where I was supposed to be with a real Samurai, a genuine old school, martial artist, and a man that could fight to the death at a moments notice without a care for His own life at the same time with the penultimate skill in the martial arts.





Another time he came into the deshi's chamber in O'Sensei's house.

It was before class and he was sore and he ordered the deshi's to give him a massage. He had maybe five or 10 people one doing calf, each hand, each etc. he kept looking at the clock, but little did he know the clock has stopped, and at some point, he realised he was late for class, and he became completely infuriated.

He screamed at us all for allowing the clock to run down, and we all knew something terrible was going to happen.

This was the first time he had ever been late for training in all of his years of martial artist.

He made us gather all the watches and clocks in the place and put them in a pile outside, we knew our asses were on the line and in front of everybody, he smashed them all to pieces with his bokken (wooden sword) looking, satisfied, he went to practice, but not before picking up the deshi's Little TV and throwing it through the window, and then going outside and smashing it to pieces with his bokken. We were all just happy we were still alive.

But apart from these occasional outbursts, he was an incredible man in so many ways, and I feel privileged and honoured to have trained with him and under him.



How did your transition to BJJ come about after the passing of Saito Sensei? Could you tell us about your experiences in the BJJ community?

There was no transition for me to Brazilian Jujitsu. Allot of techniques work in competition and some are illegal. You just learn to colour in between the lines although fighting off your back is not really an aikido skill. I just started to train in that as I mentioned previously. It's not a martial art as I know it, but more of a lifestyle/sport, although it's practitioners , don't see it that way, but then for the most part, I wouldn't call them traditional martial artists.

Although having trained at Carlson Gracies academy in Copacabana which was more traditional martial arts school, but my favourite teachers were definitely old school. Carlos Gracie jnr, Marcino Feitosa, Gordo (inventor of the half guard) etc. including my teacher, Peter de Been although he was more a martial artist after the style of Norman, a gritty hard-bitten Aussie fighter. Now Pete was not the kind of guy to hold your hand or guild the Lily, but he was an amazing teacher and I have huge respect for him. he is the pioneer in BJJ competition in Australia and everybody should hang up their rivalries and take that hat off to him before getting on the mat again and trying to take the Pan Pacs. There's a lot of rivalry between teams but it's no different from in Aikido. There's always that bullshit going on. And I'm very Brazilian style in my attitude you don't betray your teacher. I always choose who I think is the best teacher and I stick with them for life I'm never going to have another Jujitsu teacher and I think the same about all martial arts, although I know it's popular now to have 1 billion teachers. But at a personal level, I always found the Dominance fighters to be really nice.

But back to your original question, there was no hard transition for me. I could always fight and wrestle, but I wasn't used to deliberately going underneath, and I remember the first time someone asked me to go into the guard around 1998 or something I thought he was gay. I thought it was ridiculous, but I probably got swept and submitted So I realise this stuff was good and it's focused on an area that needed work. Making fighting off your back and asset is a sound strategy, although I never believed that all fights end on the ground to me going to the ground means you might die in a streetfight. In my experience of going to ground in gang fight means you get a head stomped.

But within two weeks of starting, Pete made me go into a competition, but I didn't even know the rules. It was like nothing I've ever encountered, not having done a competitive, martial art. I'll never forget it

I was looking at this guy. He looked like Roberto Duran and he looked like he was gonna kill me. He was staring at me in pacing up and down, and I was really scared of him, and as we circled each other, I just said f@#k it and I grabbed him by his mean face and cranked it. He tried everything to get out of it, but I broke a bunch of his teeth and cut his lips before he tapped out. Afterwards, he started going crazy and complaining about his teeth and his mouth and my mate kept yelling out if you didn't like it, you should've tapped earlier. I thought that was pretty funny. Then I fought this guy that reportedly had been a white belt for eight or 10 years. He was pretty big, and he kept on asking me not to hurt him and he seemed like a nice guy I said "look mate, I can't promise you that but I'm not gonna try to. I'm just gonna try and win!"

Anyway, I It disarmed me a bit.

We circled around, and I threw him with Koshinage. However, he managed to keep hold of me, and I slammed on top of him in side control. I didn't really know what to do. I would normally have started smashing him in the face with shomen uchi and I kind of messed around a bit trying to work out what to do.

It was there and that he got under my arm, took my back and choked me out. That was a lesson I never forgot. And that was my first two weeks in Jiu Jitsu. I learned about under hooking something we don't really use the same way and Aikido.

I had a lot of amazing times in Jujitsu. It wasn't very natural for me having so much experience staying on my feet or fighting to stand back up, but I loved it and gave a lot of my life to it.

I came away with a good swag of medals I just wish I'd started when I was younger because I was basically at middle age when I started.

How did cross-training in different martial arts, including knife combat and other striking arts, complement your Aikido practice?

There's already knife in aikido but in general That's really a difficult question to answer, but I'd say conditioning is very important and primarily conditioning that prevents or cures and rehab's injuries is of obvious benefit, plus any strengthening and flexibility benefits. I have a different opinion than many people currently have about training. I think it's best to specialise and then fill in your gaps although obviously, if you are going to be an MMA fighter a proper one, who fights professionally. You will need all-round skills but for actually fighting in the world or in an army or street fight I think being a specialist is best. My opinion is that you only need a brutal attack, a defence and a counter attack and that's a complete martial art right there. If you look at all the best fighters in any discipline, be it Judo boxing whatever they only have a few moves that they excel in.

To me what makes a great martial artist is someone who knows what they do and that has a solution for every problem that can be thrown at them. I use Aikido as my core skill and along with that using the hanmi or the half stance is the key to attack and defence. So apart from combat experience, and some new reflexes, primarily what I get from different martial arts, apart from historical and general interest is it exposes me to all of those different techniques, and that I develop defences and reflexes (recognition) from my own art to counter them. It's Jack Dempsey saying don't hook with a hooker don't jab with a jabber. I don't try and fight someone at their own martial art. I try and use my aikido against all the martial arts I've learnt. So if someone can box I won't try and box them back I'll try and tie up their hands for example if someone is kicking me really well, I will try and close with them really fast if someone is a good grappler, I'll probably strike using Aikido. So cross training, gives me familiarity with the different attacks and defences and anything I like I can do in an Aikido way and just absorb its strategy. Styles change, but the realities of combat are the same across all disciplines.





Could you share some of your most memorable moments or achievements in BJJ competition, such as your Pan Pacific Gold and Bronze medals?

Well, always the worst thing for me in competition was the weight cuts. I would almost always fight the younger people who had more endurance, and could cut more weight or pack a bigger frame into the same weight. It felt like I do most of my preparation dieting, and in fact, I did my best work when I didn't diet at all and fought in the wrong weight class just went out there and said I'm gonna win pretty or I'm gonna win ugly, but I'm gonna win and just threw caution to the wind. Some of my most memorable experiences I can't talk about. Winning bronze in the Mundial's in Rio was a highlight of my life, but probably more than anything was my first Pan-Pacific gold. I had broken up with my girlfriend and was very depressed and been down for about six months when I fought in that competition and I had a brutal fight with a guy that was bigger than me. He was rattling me around and I threw him with a kokyu throw. The rest of the fight was him trying to hit me with a triangle, which he was really was a desperate fight to stay out if it but I won against a much more experienced competitor. I also for gold won and lost to him the next year. I had some memorable defeats, of course.

Another fight I think it was the Victoria no-gi and I fought a guy who I thought in my first ever Jiu Jitsu he a lot of steroids, and was now like the hulk with a head like a spark plug. I went to throw him, guard, but I passed his guard and held him down for the whole fight. He must've weighed twice as much as me. Now I know that some schools hate not submitting a person, but I don't give a crap about that.

A win is win nobody remembers a loser and nobody remembers how you won.

In this case, he was just too strong for me to submit, but I kept on circling around him every time he tried to buck me off, or get his guard back, and I got the gold. Right after, Pete gave me my purple belt on the mat, and I was very proud and happy. It was a great sense of achievement. Definitely one of the most memorable things was the first time I went to Brazil. I didn't know what had hit me. I just kept on meeting beautiful girls and going out with them as a consequence of partying too much. I missed weight. In the worlds you have to designate your weight and you can't fight higher so I was out of that years competition. I was very ashamed. I remember walking out there and waiting in, somehow hoping that something would happen to the scales and I would be allowed to fight but it didn't happen and I had to look Pete in the eye and apologise and apologise to the whole team, but of course they didn't care.

Oh, one last thing when we were there and Big Mick won Gold. He was the first Aussie to win gold in the worlds. As a team, we were so proud and boy did we party hard that night.

What motivated you to take up kyudo and other throwing skills during the lockdowns? How have these practices influenced your overall approach to martial arts?

I have done archery as a kid and I've blown out my shoulder and had it reconstructed, but I was still very weak and of course bored and lonely in the lockdown. I thought that the Kyudo method of drawing would be good for my shoulders which it was and it kind of goes from there. We have a shoot every Sunday after training and throw some other metal projectiles. I don't think it has a direct bearing on what I do. I mean I think I've done so much Aikido that everything I do is Aikido. I do like the sensation when I do a good shot that I feel my ki tangibly travel between the distance and affect the target.

But it's very much like a normal practice, just with the distance extended. I learnt to throw Shuriken from Sensei in Japan and have a Shodan but with my new shoulder, I started to throw everything except the kitchen sink now I'm pretty good, but I'm too old and too many cybernetic bits to reach the kind of potential that I would like to. It's a shame, but none of my students are interested in this stuff. But something that was very hard for me to learn as a teacher is that you're not teaching yourself your teaching other people what they need to know. Not what you would like to know so you have to meet the student where they are and not be like a bad dad you can't project what you want on to a person you have to help them fulfil their own potential.

What inspired you to start Pure Aikido in 1997, and how did it evolve over the years? Could you share some highlights from your journey?

My decision to start teaching was simple. I trained with Barry Knight, doing Iwama style. I refused gradings from Sensei in Japan, because I thought I would show my respect to my teacher and get it from him. He recommended me. Unfortunately, he resented my skills and he somehow interpreted my gesture as evidence of disloyalty. Over the next few years, he would give black belts to people who only train for a year or so, where, as I have been training for 18 years without a black belt.

He'd make them jump out from behind things and attacked me, and I would beat them mercilessly, and then get the blame. One day just before my exams and university, he demanded that I take my black belt exam out of the blue. I said it was impossible. I was about to do all my tests at university, but he said that was irrelevant and if I wanted to stay I had to do it. And furthermore, it was \$450, which was a princely sum in those days, and I was getting Government payments to go to university (less than the dole). I had to hit my poor mum up to pay for it out of the blue. Anyway, I did my Shodan and aced it. But the negativity continued but being a loyal dog, I didn't take the hint and leave.

When I open my first art studio friend of mine wanted to start teaching, and I offered to let him start a dojo in my studio. Barry said yes, and that he had to come once per month to take class and inspect. Now you have to remember this was not my class I was just letting my mate take it in my studio. Anyway he didn't call Barry often enough and we both got kicked out of the club. After awhile, I had a falling out with this friend over rent. When he moved out I had no where to train and my mum said you should just start yourself. So I did. Right out of the gate I had a student from the army and my mate who was a bouncer and a boxer. Got me teaching bouncer recruits before doing security work and that's what got me through till I started getting more permanent Aikido students.

You mentioned focusing on Aikido as a holistic martial art. Can you elaborate on how you balance the technical, meditative, and combative aspects in your teachings?

Well, it's not an easy task as Aikido has a huge syllabus. There is meditation, moving meditation, seated, meditation meditating in normal practice. There's combat self defence, your self development and so much more.

Basically, I think once Aikido is personal And develops over time. I'll try and give my students the basics as was taught to me by Saito Sensei and then how to adapt it to their needs, personality and physicality. I have students that just come for friendship and health and I have others that are far more interested in fighting so the recipe is very different with each person but at the same time I have to create an environment where everybody can train together now.

I know that Aikido has got a bad rap lately and a lot of that is deserve it. because if you haven't seen the art and all you can see on the Internet are incompetent fools that it doesn't paint a good picture. What people have to remember and especially me as a teacher is that civillian, martial arts are designed , so everybody can participate and achieve self development. I think that traditional arts have been looked down on because sports fighters don't think they work but I think it's teachers that don't work for example, if you got someone who did boxer size and just hit pads in the heavy bag and did some footwork drills and tried to put them in a fight or spa against a skilled opponent they get smashed, and nobody would expect them to be able to compete with a real fighter. But some of these traditional martial artists think that based on gentle training they can get in there with a killer and do well they're crazy. Having said all that, I don't want the training to brutalise people who have not been exposed to violence, so some of them can't fight and some of them can, and I get them to all train together. And it builds everybody up. I always tell everybody that being on the Mat's is like life. Whatever your problems are mentally or with your ability to communicate with other people. whatever is wrong with your personality it will come out on the mat and that's your opportunity to fix it, and there's a hell of a lot of self development right there.



But I believe the essence of Aikido has largely been lost and if it's not grounded in combat reality, then it's a sham. But yes, I tried to help the student achieve their own goals not mine. So we have general classes that are focused on everybody. We have a beginners class and we have a combat class. We used to have a meditation class which I stopped when I had my daughter, and she was very young just based on time constraints, but I'm looking to start that up again.



How do you cater to individuals with varying goals and levels of physicality at Pure Aikido? Could you share your approach to creating a training environment that accommodates diverse needs?

Wow, that's a really complicated question. I don't know if I can answer that in 1000 words or even 10,000 but to shorten it I have tried to teach to the person's goals and often not the goals they state, because they don't know at the beginning and may not know after a few years I try and teach them based on what I see and judge that they need over time. And I get to see their natural self because you become pretty exposed over the course of a martial arts journey. I have a masters in teaching so I've got some ability to analyse it and I'm an analytical person. But essentially, it's about what is your dojo's Creed (kun)? What are its goals then you have to apply those to the individual. And you have to get genuine buy in from the students. Some students will lie obfuscate to try and just get what they want, but you have to learn to realise when that's happening and basically ask them to leave or to see your way of thinking because they will be very detrimental to the dojo and you won't be able to meet their needs. You can't have essentially a sociopathic person training with someone who's been through physical trauma it's just not on. You might be able to accommodate them in the full contact arena but certainly in my dojo, I don't tolerate, bullying, racism, homophobia, or any other ism, or ist. The dojo is a place to develop new character traits not to bother other people with your preconceptions. In short, if a person doesn't believe in the dojo and the dojo's creed, they shouldn't be there. But if they do believe in it, they're enough skills and facets of the art to teach them what they need to know for their Aikido over the course of time. I don't want too huge of a dojo where I don't know everybody. I know all my students intimately and I wouldn't have it any other way. This is old school teaching where you have to trust and believe in them and they have to believe in you. When there is this bond, you have the ability to teach them, and guide them on their journey, which is not the same as your own journey. And you can never put yourself on a pedestal. I am a flawed human I know that, and I don't pretend to anybody else to be something different.

You mentioned viewing Aikido as a constantly evolving practice. Can you talk about how your understanding and expression of Aikido have evolved over your 46-year journey?

I could write a book on this question. I've got whole training diaries, filled with how to do (Men uchi - vertical head strike). Everything in there is valid, but it's not the totality. It takes a long time to learn what the essence of a thing or a technique is when you adjust accordingly. You have to constantly be prepared to re-evaluate your methods. But buy and large, I don't think I've got anything wrong, but I've had different stages based on my age, personality at the time, and students. Physically at 60 I can't train or even necessarily do all the same techniques I could do it 25 or even at 50. So I make adjustments. For example, I'm very good at striking with my hands, elbows, knees, head. But I've had a lot of head injuries, shoulder, injuries, etc and I've had a lot of surgery to my shoulders. Although I can still strike well, I've been advise not to hit the heavy bag daily so what does one do? I took up the previously under developed element of my game which was kicking, and I've been studying a lot of that in the past year or two. Now I could always kick powerfully and at the right time with an aikido setup but I never practiced it as a primary striking method so I'm changing it up using my feet much more.

Also, these days I don't train so much to test my Aikido under different circumstances, because I know how it works, and I know that it does work I focus more on the art. Plus there comes a point in your training. When are you have been freed from physical fear in the sense that you're not worried about being bashed, or taken advantage of. Now there will always be people that can beat you up, but after a certain point, you have to realise that you can fight easily well enough to either avoid or take care of 99 out of 100 conflicts you would have to be a lunatic to think that your life was well spent training for things that don't need to happen. Ultimately you keep training in the martial arts because of the self development and your love for the game, because once you can fight you can fight there always be a bigger dog in the yard. And every ghetto is gonna have someone tougher than you are even if you're the best in the world, you're not the best in the world every day every hour. I used to be very angry and abrasive and I guess there were times I needed to be earlier on, but I've been liberated from that and I love my friends and most of all I love my daughter. My heart is filled with love and I want it to be that way it feels much better, and I train with more love, not vengeance. If you seethe with conflict you will find more of it.





Before we wrap up, is there anything you wanted to discuss that I haven't covered?

Yes, if I may, I just like to say to your readers that Aikido is a wonderful martial art. I know people look at bad representations of the art and think that it sucks, but that's not the reality. In the old days O'Sensei, used to teach Aikido only to experts Minoru Mochizuki and Kenji Tomiki were deshi of Jigoro Kano founder of Judo and O'sensei. They were sent to help gather techniques for Judo's Goshin Jutsu kata. You can see that influence today. In the old days, no martial artists questioned whether Aikido works or not, but it would become popularised in the west by being taken up by the peace movement and people saying stuff like there's no striking in Aikido, which is completely false. Basically a lot of the translations about Aikido are just plain wrong and this passiveness was used as a marketing tool and so teachers who have learnt under those circumstances and can't fight began changing techniques and teaching other people and so on till it just got ridiculous but if you can find a good teacher, this stuff is super effective. If you look at the list of, O'Sensei's closest students they were some of the most famous martial artists in Japan at the time that you have to understand that people who used to learn Aikido were already martial arts experts. They didn't need to learn how to do a roll or where to put your foot how to throw a punch. They were already masters in the craft, and I think Aikido as an art has never done a great job of teaching those basics, cause there was already the assumption that you were or are a warrior when you started Aikido is basically super high level, martial, arts, techniques, strategically it's not that you can't do them in another martial art but Aikido is a place where highest level martial arts are practiced. Basic and intermediate level martial artists can't pull off the techniques that are often taught in the basic curriculum. It would be like trying to get a beginner in boxing to do a pull counter or a check hook.

The other problem is that Aikido is done today it's like a library it's not the full martial art and I'll give you an example. O'Sensei said there are no 1-2-3 method in the martial arts he was referring to prearranged forms like 1-2 and three step sparring. But now that is 99% of Aikido training. Saito Sensei said he had to systematise everything he learnt from a Sensei, so he could teach it to large groups of people, but this is not how you teach on an individual basis.

Aikido works well. We just don't refuse students who are never going to be fighters.

Aikido is generally taught in a seminar format think of - if a boxing or BJJ coach came to Australia and gave a seminar he wouldn't generally be getting everyone to fight hard hed be teaching principles and techniques in a cerebral way. In the old days, one practiced traditional Japanese martial arts and Aikido in kata form and did Jiyu waza free form and test fights and real fights. He also said that as keeper of the shrine, it's his obligation to teach exactly what O'Ssensei taught him, so it's like a library of Aikido. It's up to the practitioner with the right teacher, to learn how to apply those principles and strategies encapsulated in the kata to real world scenarios be they fighting offensively, defensively in civilian or military life or defending your home and family. The same applies to meditation.

Thanks for taking the time to chat to me today Marcus.

Pure Aikido Facebook page interesting video and topic can be found here:

<https://www.fecebook.com/pureaikido?mibextid=LQQJ4d>

https://youtu.be/iU_R_LRqBUs?si=7ubAVzrjvP52G5TQ

<https://youtu.be/L7kqbsVVLFE?si=q-wWXv5f80Uj3m26>

<https://youtu.be/05ibzob1iz0?si=mTnYqJGrvvlF-1wd>

https://youtu.be/ct_NviJ4p8k?si=ldepQIWqB9F5JSRf <https://youtu.be/D8rKP7phYwM?si=up44JdsCzSNmolh8>

https://youtu.be/tY_8w8Zlt_1lk?si=W_dfoyznaG_1t2bg1d

https://youtu.be/_1BSWZww5E7w?si=aeEcplb-HJEwNrMz

<https://youtu.be/-gPSza94y1A?si=37UHmFSGNbk396zc>

https://youtu.be/LkR87N6nNPA?si=d3jrxLV7EP_lqTqe

