

The Art of Leadership: Blending and Balancing Body, Mind, and Spirit

Keynote Address, VASPA Student Leadership Conference
Virginia Commonwealth University
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Overview:

“One of the most universal cravings of our time is a hunger for compelling and creative leadership”(Burns, 1978). As the 21st century begins, diverse field of inquiry have called for a more integrative, cross-cultural approach to leadership research and training. Recent texts like, *An Unused Intelligence, LeadershipAikido, Level Three Leadership*, and *Corporate Aikido* have suggested metaphors and activities crafted from traditional Eastern practices of mindfulness and the martial arts.

Leadership is a process , not simply a position or title. Leadership is within every person. Leadership theory and practice belong together. Leadership can and should be taught. “Transforming leadership...occurs when one or more persons *engage* with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality”(Burns, 1978, p.20) At the heart of leadership efficacy must be the mastery of grounded, focused and authentic presence in the midst of continuous chaos and stress.

What is Aikido? Aikido has its origin in the century old traditions of the Japanese martial arts but originated by Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969) about 1925. It is a form of BUDO ("The Way of the Warrior") An ancient and ethical discipline that was practiced by the Samurai ("one who serves"), a true servant leader. Aikido been called “the way of peace” and “the non-violent martial art.” It is unique among the martial arts in that its purpose is to teach conflict resolution rather than effective fighting tactics. Like other zen disciplines it requires dedicated practice for many years to develop mastery.

Through-the-body learning , based on Aikido principles, leaders can develop and use Inner Mastery skills that guide them in sensing and maintaining a dynamic connection with others, successfully manage and harmoniously resolve conflicts with others through collaboration, not force, while remaining mindfully connected to their own spiritual center.

[Begin the keynote with a brief Aikido demonstration (5 min). Continue demonstrating selected aikido movement as metaphors for the core concepts of Inner Leadership (Awareness- mental acuity/emotional calm) and Leadership in Action (Connectivity- blending with the others point of view/ Influencing others). Throughout the speakers remarks ...A REAL show and tell]

Bio

Jack Richford is a counselor with Chesterfield County School System. He has been in education for 18 years. He holds a black belt in Aikido and has been practicing for 10 years and teaching for 5 years. Mr. Richford has been involved in leadership education for most of his professional life. For the last 6 years he and his colleagues have presented leadership workshops that integrate the philosophy and practices of Aikido. In the Summer of 1998, Mr. Richford attended the Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond, as a teacher-scholar. His graduate project, *Zen and the Art of Teaching Leadership*, proposed integrating traditional Eastern mindfulness and martial arts disciplines into short duration professional staff development models. Mr. Richford has presented workshops for the College Park Scholars Program, James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership, University of Maryland and the 2nd International Leadership Conference, Toronto, Canada.

Breakout Session(s):

I would be available to do Two additional breakouts on topics that fit your themes. In the breakouts we would involve participants in safe, paired movement activities based on Aikido related principles and practices. We have used these exercises in many settings and they have worked quite successfully to look at fundamental conflict situations in new, productive ways. The basic agenda is as follows:

- I. Models and Metaphors of Leadership and/or Conflict
Activity: Drawing on the Leader Within
- II. Dynamics of Leader-Follower Relationships
Activities: Aikido Demonstration
 - a. *Centering*
Activities: How do I “feel” about conflict
Hassle Line
All Boxed Up/Up Against the Wall
 - b. *Connecting*
Activities: Getting off the line (Irimi/Tenkan) Leading their “Ki”
- III. Reflections and evaluation. “Moving” Off the Mat

I have used a number of titles that fit the concepts of Leadership and /or Conflict. Here are some:

Giving in to Get you way
Transforming Leadership and the Art of Aikido
Learning to go with the Flow.
Zen and the Art of Teaching Leadership

We can talk further about your needs.

The WAY of LEADERSHIP

