

IN THE DOJO

AIKIDO OF SOUTH BROOKLYN NEWSLETTER MARCH 2020

Upcoming Events

- March 9-14: youth and adult kyu exams
- March 20-22: seminar with Andrew Sato shihan at Valley Forge Aikido, PA

Social Media

Students and parents, want to share your dojo experiences? Send 3-5 sentence testimonials to josh@mindbodyartsinc.com for posting. Inspire others with your unique story and journey.

Trial Classes

We'll be offering trial classes for all ages (kids and adults) on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for the entire month of March. By sharing your stories (see above), you may inspire others to get on the mats!

Other Offerings

Yoga: Kids' yoga is offered on Wednesdays. Private instruction is available for adults.

Music Together: Music classes for ages 0-5 years. For info: www.trebletimemusic.com.



The Dojo

The word dojo literally means “the place of the way.” A dojo is a unique space dedicated to the pursuit of learning, meditation, and personal improvement and growth. The dojo is a brick and mortar establishment as much as it is an idea. Any place “the way” is practiced could be a dojo. A dojo does not have to be defined by its architecture or interior decor. A dojo is mostly defined by the people who gather and practice there.

Nevertheless, there are some special qualities and responsibilities associated with a dedicated training space like ours. We have the opportunity to train during class times and during off hours, we can store equipment and uniforms, and we can sit quietly for a moment of grounding in a serene





Delayed Gratification: #irony

Over the last two months, we've been working to increase our presence on social media. The most popular question about our efforts, asked by teachers, students, my parents, etc. is: Is it working? Are we reaching new people? Are new people joining the dojo? My very confident up-talk reply is *maybe*. Our online presence has definitely grown, and I am convinced that our increased presence is associated with some increased interest in our art and dojo. However, causation? So far, I just cannot tell. I'm not sure if a direct link between our online and real-life popularity will ever be detectable. The feedback is surprisingly ambiguous, and there is no direct or immediate gratification. I find this rather ironic given that so much of social media is predicated on instant gratification. The process of spreading aikido via social media is actually a lot like learning aikido: daily practice produces marginally detectable improvement until one day you realize your body is doing new things. If we continue to incrementally improve and increase our online presence, will we be contributing to an explosion in aikido's popularity? There are aikido teachers advocating incorporating "new teaching methodologies" to make aikido easier and more instantly gratifying, but slow, steady, incremental growth is really the only path on the mat or on the internet.

-Josh Paul, chief instructor

environment. It is a place where people can gather and linger. A dedicated dojo is the focal point around which an intentional community revolves. In these, and other ways, it is decidedly different from a gym, school, studio, or shared space. Because it is the hub of a community, maintaining the dojo is a community activity.

Traditional Japanese martial arts like aikido have connections to Buddhism and Shintoism (the indigenous religion of Japan).

Cleaning and cleansing—literally and metaphorically—have a central place in both traditions. Likewise, cleaning the dojo is as much a ritualistic practice as it is practical. It can also be a bonding activity for the community. Much of the dojo's serenity and atmosphere is drawn from its cleanliness.



The dojo's cleaning rituals include dusting the walls, shelves, and

racks, cleaning the bathroom and windows, sweeping, and vacuuming. The sidewalks are swept or shoveled when needed, and a few times a year, we pick up the mats and vacuum whatever lies beneath.

Basically, if it is there, it should be cleaned, even if it cannot be seen. And anyone and everyone should take the initiative. Permission and/or instruction are not needed, and rank and age are not exemptions. Make cleaning part of your practice, and the practice will become part of you.

Upcoming [Aikido World Alliance Seminars](#)

March 13-15: Hemlock Bluffs Aikido, Cary, NC

March 20-22: Valley Forge Aikido, Norristown, PA

April 30-May 3: Spring Camp, Kiku Matsu, Chicago, IL

June 26-28: Kyushinkan Dojo, Alpharetta, GA

Upcoming [Local Seminars](#)

March 18-20: Jan Nevelius shihan, [Bond St Dojo](#), NYC

June 5-7: Mitsugi Saotome shihan, [Bond St Dojo](#), NYC

