



Aikido Center of Jacksonville

Guide To Etiquette

In Aikido, etiquette is very important. Etiquette is based on sincerity, common sense and consideration for others. Any kind of etiquette that has to be rigidly enforced is not true etiquette. Budo training begins and ends with respect. There are no elaborate rules of etiquette at the Aikido Center of Jacksonville, but as a Japanese martial art Aikido has its own rules.

Proper observance of etiquette is as much a part of our training as is learning techniques. In many cases observing proper etiquette requires one to set aside one's pride or comfort. Standards of etiquette may vary somewhat from one dojo to another, but the following guidelines are nearly universal. Matters of etiquette should be important in all aspects of an Aikido lifestyle. Please take matters of etiquette seriously.

1. Upon entering and leaving the practice area of the dojo, make a standing bow in the direction of O-Sensei's picture, the kamiza, or the front of the dojo. Also make a standing bow when getting on the mat followed by a seated bow to O' Sensei's picture. One also bows before leaving the mat.
2. The proper way to sit on the mat is seiza (formal sitting position). If your knees get sore or you have any injury, it is allowable to sit crosslegged. Avoid sitting on the mat with your back to the picture of O-Sensei.
3. You should not leave the mat during class; however, if it is necessary, approach the instructor and ask permission before leaving the mat. Bow to O-Sensei's picture, the kamiza, or the front of the dojo before leaving the mat.
4. Be on time for class. A few minutes before class time you should be warmed up, lined up on the mat and seated in seiza with the highest ranking student on the right. If you do arrive late, sit quietly in seiza at the edge of the mat and wait for the instructor to nod you to join in the class.
5. Sit quietly until the instructor enters and gets on the mat. At the beginning of class bow to O-Sensei's picture, or kamiza, with the instructor, then bow to the instructor saying: "Onegaishimasu "(oh-nighguy-she-mahss), which means "please do me a favor and let me have the honor to practice with you."
6. During class the instructor will demonstrate the technique to be practiced. After the demonstration, students should bow to the instructor and then find and bow to their partner. Before practicing the students again say "Onegaishimasu", asking permission to practice with each other. They should then begin to practice the technique demonstrated.
7. When changing partners during class, one should acknowledge the partner you are leaving as well as your new partner with a bow.



Aikido Center of Jacksonville

8. Your partner is not an opponent. Techniques are learned through him and with him, regardless of his rank or ability. It should be a pleasure being the person thrown (Uke) as well as being the thrower (Nage). Each movement teaches the principles and spirit of Aikido.

9. Care should be taken to be aware of your partner's ability so that injuries do not occur. Nage should always be watchful for signs that Uke is in pain. Uke's attack should be under his full control and Nage should respond likewise. Uke's "job" is to attack sincerely and then follow through maintaining as safe a posture as possible. Nage's "job" is to move off the line of attack, redirect Uke's momentum with a technique and peacefully resolve the attack with the appropriate throw or pin.

10. If you are having trouble with a technique, try to figure the technique out by watching others. Effective observation is a skill you should strive to develop in your training. If you still have trouble, approach the instructor at a convenient moment and ask for help.

11. After receiving assistance or correction from the instructor it is considered polite to bow and say "Hei"(yes) or "Domo Arigato" (thank you).

12. Do not attempt to instruct or correct your training partner unless you are authorized to do so. You may help your partner by leading them through the technique if you understand it and they do not.

13. During class, if the instructor is assisting a student in your vicinity, it is considered respectful to suspend your own training, sitting out of the way and observing, so that the instructor has adequate room to demonstrate.

14. The instructor will signal an end to the practice by clapping. When you hear this, bow to your partner and then quickly return to the line, sitting in seiza to observe the next technique demonstration. Carry out the instructions of the instructor promptly. When the instructor indicates that practice is to resume, students bow to the instructor and promptly resume practicing.

15. At the end of class bow to O-Sensei's picture with the instructor, and then bow to the instructor saying: "Domo Arigato Gozaimashita, Sensei." (doe-moe-ah-ree-gah-toe go-zah-ee-mah-she-tah, sen-say), which is a formal "thank you." The phrases "Domo Arigato" or "Thank You, Sensei" are also acceptable. After that, the students remain in seiza position until the instructor leaves the mat or they are dismissed by him. At this time it is proper to bow to each student with whom you have practiced saying: "Domo Arigato" (doe-moe-ah-ree-gah-toe), which is an informal "thank you."

16. It is the responsibility of senior students (sempai) to see that the rules of etiquette are understood and followed by the members of the dojo. The senior students should assist the beginners in learning the proper bowing techniques, beginning exercises, and ukemi.



Aikido Center of Jacksonville

17. It is the responsibility of each dojo member to see that the various needs of the dojo are met. These include:

a. Paying dues promptly. Membership dues provide a place for training and a way to show gratitude for the teaching you receive.

b. Making sure the dojo and mats are clean and presentable at all times. Cleaning the dojo is an active way of showing respect and thankfulness for what we are learning.

These needs should be anticipated by the students and not be prompted by the instructor. Meeting the needs of the dojo should be done cheerfully, without complaint and to the best of one's ability. This is as much a part of Aikido training as the repetition of techniques. It is the responsibility of each student to cooperate in creating a positive atmosphere of harmony and respect in the dojo.

Some Do's and Don'ts

These "Do's and Don'ts" are to show respect towards the instructor, fellow students, and yourself, and to insure safety in the dojo.

1. Do not sit on the mat with your back to O' Sensei's picture, or lie on the mat with your feet toward the kamiza.

2. Do not bring food, gum or beverages onto the mat. It is also considered disrespectful in a traditional dojo to bring open food or beverages into the dojo.

3. Remove watches, rings and other jewelry before practice as they may catch your partner's hair, skin, or clothing, and cause injury to oneself or one's partner.

4. Please keep your fingernails and toenails clean and cut short.

5. Change your clothes in designated areas (not on the mat). No shoes on the mat, please.

6. Your gi should be mended and clean, weapons should be in good condition and in their proper place when not being used.

7. Remember you are in class to learn and not to gratify your ego. An attitude of receptivity and humility is therefore advised. Do not engage in rough housing or needless contests of strength during class.

8. Do not talk when the instructor is talking. Keep talking to a minimum while training. The best way to learn Aikido is by watching and doing.