

## Thirteen Rules for Instructors: #10

Friday, March 23, 2018 C. Curtis

Good evening everyone. Tonight we are discussing the 10th of Tohei Sensei's "Thirteen Rules for Instructors." This one is basically how to teach, how to treat your students with patience and kindness.

There are probably a number of awakened, or enlightened, people around the world that, no matter what is happening in their day to day lives, no matter what form of experience they are going through, grief, anger, anguish, happiness, success or failure, still they have a deep sense of calm peacefulness in their mind/body.

We like to use the metaphor of the ocean, because it is so easy for you to see that there may be a hurricane on the surface of the ocean, but it is a big body, and deep in the ocean it is very quiet and calm, no matter what happens on the surface. So this is possible for human beings, but it's not common. Maybe it takes a long time, lots of years, maybe even lots of lifetimes to begin to experience this that I am talking about.

So, when we are looking for how to be in a situation where we are responsible to hold others, to embrace others in such a way that they trust us, in other words, a teacher, (of which you are all either teachers already or teachers in training), our practice is that when we receive something good in our lives the we practice being very grateful, and when something happens in our life that does not seem so wonderful, maybe something that seems bad, we practice this way by looking deeply into it, and seeing the "silver lining," the opportunities that exist.

Ultimately, there is no such thing as negative and positive. Those are relative conditions. No matter what is happening, the same thing is always happening to you. There is only one thing happening. That is easier said than experienced. Right? So, this practice of, when living in the relative world, how to treat equally that which happens that is good and that which happens that is apparently bad, is very important. And through this practice, we prepare ourselves, our mind/body, to experience this depth of peace that is always here.

So, with that in mind, I want to read this for you. The original 13 Rules #10 is:

*"Spare no effort when you teach. You advance as your students advance. Do not be impatient when you teach. No one can learn everything well at one time. Perseverance is important in teaching, as are patience, kindness, and the ability to put yourself in your students' place."*

Sayaka, would you read the Japanese please? (she reads) Thank you very much.

And then I will follow right away with our latest translation and editing:

*"Don't hold back when you teach. Understand that a student's progress is your own progress. Also, don't hurry to see the results. No one can master something all at once. Know that*

*teaching requires patience. You should teach others with kindness, and from their own point of view."*

Most of it, I think, speaks for itself: patience, kindness, support. As a teacher you are always supporting, without judgement. So, how do you teach the students' from their own point of view? Anybody?

*Student: I think it is a matter of just knowing your student, who they are, how they learn. People learn differently. Like a few years ago, Shinichi Tohei Sensei taught that if you read something you can learn maybe 10 % of it, if you watch somebody explain it to you, you can get maybe 5% more. But if you actually show someone else what you have learned, then you are successful in knowing the subject 80%. And I think it is not necessarily their point of view, but how to they learn. Because everybody learns differently.*

Yes, I almost changed this "point of view" to "level of development." However, and it may be that no one agrees with me, but, for instance, when Suzuki Sensei would come to a seminar to teach, (and I find that I say this to myself more and more often now), he would always take his little green book out and say, "Fellas, I am going to teach you the basics, and that's it. These other guys, they can teach you all the fancy techniques that you want, probably better than me, but I am only going to teach you the basics." People thought that, by "basics," he probably meant how to do a nikyo. Well yes, and no. What he meant by basics was what is behind the technique, what's behind what we do. In order to discover what is behind the Aikido moves, he always taught what he called the "side discipline trainings." Included in that was meditation, Ki Breathing, Sokushin no Gyo (bell misogi), and weapons training (primarily bokken, not jo. Cutting bokken one time.) He said if you work on these things, then you can understand everything else.

Keeping that in mind, if we say to only teach the student from their own point of view or from their own level of development, where they are at, basically, that would mean that you would never be able to offer a beginner, for instance, anything of any advanced import. Most beginners want to know how to do the techniques only. They must take their tests. They are primarily concerned with how to do the "stuff," right? Maybe even some people come to Aikido, or they think they are coming to Aikido, to learn to defend themselves against other people. Perhaps that is a side-effect of Aikido practice, but it is not the point at all. The purpose of practicing Aikido is to be one with the universe. And I don't care if it is the first day that you are in my class, that is what I am going to teach you. That's what I will teach you and that's what Suzuki Sensei would teach you. We have plenty of instructors who are very capable of giving you all the other stuff. I could do that too, and during seminars I do, but you notice that I don't teach the Wednesday and Friday technique classes now. I let Jeff and Tracy Sensei's do that now. And that's good. That's the way it should be.

What I am leading up to saying is, teaching you Aikido from your point of view, means exactly what I do now. You might not know that's your point of view, but that's what you really want to know. And it's not really even something you want to know, in the way of knowledge or

technical form, you want to be held. You want to be with someone whom you can trust and will not hurt you, emotionally, physically, or any other way.

If you are training to be an instructor, and following these 13 Rules, then this is what you are learning of offer, whether their kids, or high school age, or adults. Same. That's the cake. The frosting is there too, and it's fun. It's great that it is there. I noticed the same thing happened with Suzuki Sensei and with Tohei Sensei. When they got older, they just...well, when you get older, you just change. Your values, your priorities of what you want to share before you have to leave, become more and more what your experience is able to provide. And if you can also provide something that someone else can provide, then let them provide it. You spend your time providing what you have to offer.

OK, so, any comments or questions? You are all here with me. I mean, you are going through this with me all the time. We have these discussion groups and classes together. Sunday I am often teaching these principles when I am teaching weapons, so you are going through this with me all the time. Do you have nothing to say or ask? No opinion, no view that you would like to share? Just like, OK, and that's it?

*Student: Regarding the teaching of students from their point of view, you say there is the cake and there is the frosting. So, is part of the frosting what Tracy was saying about how Shinichi Tohei Sensei had shown these different types of learning? Do you think it is part of the frosting to offer different types of learning procedures, so that when you get to the cake that is more acceptable?*

Right, yes of course. You know, what Shinichi Tohei Sensei is saying there is, if you just take a seminar you will remember a good deal of it, but not as much as if, after the seminar is over, you immediately teach someone, or even just tell someone, about what you learned. So, we usually have a short discussion at the end of the seminar, or the end of a class. For the last five minutes we ask you to please discuss with your partner what it is that you learned today. I got that, of course, from Shinichi Tohei Sensei, and the idea is that you are communicating it to someone else right there while it is fresh in your mind, and that helps you remember it. Shinichi Tohei Sensei says it's like 20% retainage if you just take the seminar, 80% if you teach someone what you just learned. So this is a technique of teaching that is very useful for supporting the students' learning. But it doesn't talk about the type of teaching, so much. Does that address your question?

*Student: Yes, thank you.*

*Student: Sensei, you emphasize otomo training quite a bit, and so how is that level of teaching different from what you are teaching to the class?*

Well, for me it's not different. I gave a talk the other night to the students who are getting ready to take their Shodan tests, about how to learn and prepare yourself to practice otomo. And I said you have to learn by "finding a need and filling it," in and around the dojo, as part of your practice. And there is no end of needs to be filled. And then, gradually, you can take on practicing otomo with the various teachers, and then finally maybe you get to practice otomo

with the main teacher, after a period of time. And the reason that we need to do this, is because this is the way we learn everything. We prepare our mind and body for the new level of energy that is going to move through it. Whenever we develop in a more advanced way, a higher level of energy moves through our mind and body. That's why I say, it's the same on the mat as when you are doing otomo. When you see yourself fail, it can be a crushing blow, it can be something that you accuse yourself of being an idiot for, or not being a very good otomo. But that only happens because you are not used to that level of energy. So, in this sense, it's like we always say, someone who is a master of something has just failed at it more times than you have. That's not a joke. That's actually the case. When you succeed, you are just pleased. When you fail, you have to deal with that. You have to deal with the energy of that. And it's going to be more and more and more, as you practice otomo, taking care of your teacher. This level is going to get higher and higher. In this same way, when you are in the class, and you are training with your fellow students, the longer you do that, the higher the level of energy that you are dealing with. And you have to prepare your mind and body to receive that, otherwise you will become disturbed, too disturbed, depressed, angry, maybe leave the dojo. This happens.

This is why I emphasize that otomo is so important in our practice, such and essential aspect of our practice. Here at this dojo, and even for all the students that I teach in Hawaii and in other parts of the world, I am always emphasizing how important I think this is for you to practice. And yes, it's really nice if you have a teacher that understands otomo, and you can do it with her or him, but it is basically finding a need and filling it. And finding a need and filling it, while not being noticed doing that! That is the hardest part of otomo, fulfilling needs without being noticed, without anyone knowing that you did that, particularly the teacher. Well, probably he knows, but you do your best. It's called "intoku." We practice without asking anything in return, without expecting any results. This is really hard, because we all like results. We all expect a return on our investment. But we are just preparing ourselves to live on a higher level. That's what we are doing every day. And every time we fail at something, that's the good news.

*Student: Sensei, I am continuing to ponder the suggestion that you teach at the level of the student. As a teacher, you are teaching students of all different levels. Don't you actually see a different level of their capacity than they may? So, aren't you actually teaching, possibly, at a level beyond what the student might consider he is capable of, but he actually is?*

Could you say that one more time?

*Student: Do you sometimes teach at a level a little beyond what the students think they are capable of?*

Always. We are always pushing the envelope. Always I am trying to find better ways to help the student understand. But at the same time, mirroring something to the student that the student does not yet realize is necessary.

Jeff often says that he heard me say something over and over again for many years, and then one day I said it and he went, "Oh, that's what he means by that!" Right? It was just a little out

of his reach, each of those times. But I didn't give up on it, because, well, you know me. I just repeat things over and over again. Then some day you go, "Oh!" I remember training with Tohei Sensei in Japan, and retiring into the dormitory room with 7 other people in bunk beds, lying on my back in the bed, and I remember lying there and thinking, "Oh, that's what he means by that!" And you know, I had heard it for hundreds of times. This is the way it happens for all of us, right? Again and again. When you go to train with Tohei Sensei, for instance, or when you go to a seminar, don't you often feel like, "I thought I knew what was going on and now I am one day into the seminar and I have no clue. I don't understand anything any more." And then, by the end of the seminar, you have learned something.

So, in this sense, this is kind of what I am talking about, regarding failure. When you see that you are not what you think, that earth is not what you think, that life is not the way you thought....As long as you think, "Oh well, I basically know what's going on here. I've got it," this is not the case. It's not the case that the enlightened person has figured it out, and now knows what's going on here. The awake person also knows that they don't know what's going on here, what's coming next, but they don't care, they don't mind. It's OK, because it's impossible to know. But the "expert" knows, or thinks he knows. So don't be an expert. Because you can't know. If you really look, you will see that it is impossible to know anything at all.

For instance, take any subject. There is an infinite amount to know about any subject. An atom or even a map. There is an infinite amount of things to know about how it went together, where all the materials came from, etc. etc. you could never keep up. You couldn't possibly know everything about anything. Since it is infinite, there is no end. It is not that there is so much, but if you really study, you will learn everything about anything, because the closer you look, the more you realize you don't know. It's infinite how much you can learn about anything. So that means that no matter how much you know about it, you still know an infinitely small amount.

This is the kind of thing that you are pushing the student to get. You are not trying to push them to learn the next step in the curriculum. That's happening, but all by itself, because we use the form, we use the curriculum for that purpose. But what you are really doing is try to help the student awaken, awaken, awaken, a little more, a little more. And all the while, ultimately, the student doesn't even believe that there is such a thing. So that, the first time they see that things are the way they are, they are going to go, "No way, that is not possible!" Because it is just not the way that everybody sees things. Everybody sees things relatively, and independently, with little boxes, little borders, little packages. There are not borders. Everything is interdependent.

That's why I say, when you see something you don't like, that's you that you are seeing. It's not them. There is no such thing as "them," in that way.

So that is one of those things that some day you will be lying in bed and go, "Oh ho. So that's what he meant by that!"

OK?

*Student: Thank you, Sensei.*

*Student: It seems like a stupid question, but you are talking about the cake and the frosting, and it seems like you explained the cake part as the understanding of what's underneath. Not just the form and the arts, but the underlying understanding. And you said there's the frosting too. So what's the frosting?*

I missed the last thing you said there.

*Student: You were talking about the cake as the understanding, or that which is underneath the form.*

Yes, the frosting is all of the stuff you do, the falderal. The things that we do to keep the students interested, so they will keep coming back. Even in other forms of study, where they don't have martial arts, they don't have all of these movements and different things. But they still have invented what Shaner Sensei calls a "pedagogy." They still have to invent one, whether it's a Buddhist group, a Zen group, or whomever, there still has to be interaction where the teacher provides some level of conceptualization for the student to follow. It often is not as physical as we are. We are at a dangerous level of the physical, in fact. If you get more physical than we are, it's going to be more and more difficult to actually get it, because then it depends too much on physical prowess. And then the students think that is what it is all about. You don't want to be fooled. You don't want to fool yourself. But, on the other hand, all of those things that we do are enormously entertaining, and feel really good, when you learn to do them well. Like, udamawashi. Wow, amazing. Just a simple movement like that. When you learn to do nikkyo. Nikkyo is not easy to do correctly. Koteoroshi, not easy to do correctly. Even ikkyo is difficult. So when you learn a form like that, and you see what it is coming out of, and what is arising that causes that to happen, and then you can perform it, your body just performs it, it is enormously pleasurable. So those things are really...well, they are just fun. I am hoping that you see that I am always having a lot of fun when I am doing Aikido. And I want you guys to all have that much fun, at least. Please, please enjoy yourself completely.

And of course, it is different for every one of us. Everyone has different capabilities and so forth. I am thinking of students who are still training, after 20, 30, 40 years, or longer, and really can't even do some of the techniques anymore. Some of the things, their body just won't do them. But the level of energy that they are capable of experiencing, I can see, is much, much higher.

You know, my oldest son went to school in Japan at Waseda Univeresity for a year as a visiting student. I went to visit him there, and he wanted to introduce me to one of his teachers, because she was an Aikikai Aikido student. She was about 48 I think, at the time. And I was older. So I asked her who her teacher was, she told me, someone I knew about, and I said, "What do you like about Aikido? Why do you do it?" And she said, "Well, I just love to get out there on the mat and mix it up with those men and knock them down. I really love that." And I said, "That's great. So, you are getting older. How is that going for you." And she says, "Well, it is not going to last very much longer. I can certainly tell that, because my body just doesn't do it like it used to." And I said, "What will you do, when you are not able to do that any

more?” And she said, “I will stop. I will quit.” I said, “Really? Is that all there is?” And she goes, “Yeah, what are you talking about.” Nobody had ever....she had no idea...she was 4<sup>th</sup> Dan, and so she had trained a lot, but... Well, I didn’t want to give her a lecture and tell here she could do Ki-Aikido. I was not going to do that. So I just said, “OK, please enjoy yourself. Nice to meet you.” And I left.

So, for us to be having this kind of discussion is unique to Aikido, I think. Maybe not. You know, it is really up to the teacher. It’s not so much up to the school. But it tends to be more like this in Ki-Aikido. You see the way Shinichi Tohei Sensei teaches. I mean, Koichi Tohei Sensei was famous for teaching you how to do things. And in Aikikai, O’Sensei was famous for going, boom, boom, boom, “Do that,” and again, boom, boom, boom, “Do that.” There wasn’t a lot of actual teaching going on then. It was just show, and now you do it. And you do it a lot, until you are just beat down, until you are worn out, and then you still come back and do some more. So, that is a certain way of learning something. But Tohei Sensei came to the West, where people actually asked questions, and he had to learn a whole different way of teaching, in order to teach people what’s behind this. And Ki is what’s behind this. So, that became the way we teach in a Ki-Aikido dojo, pretty much. Well, Suzuki Sensei taught me, and I certainly don’t do it like everybody else does, but this is the way we do it here.

*Student: Out of curiosity, you mentioned Tohei Sensei coming here and people asking questions, and then you also mentioned otomo earlier, and how you also serve as otomo, assisting other people. I am interested in you going to teach in different places. I imagine you had to adapt a lot to do that too.*

Well, yes, I have to go to a lot of different countries, different cultures. You know, when I first went there, to Germany and Holland, well, they didn’t get any of my jokes, for one thing, and you know how funny I am! The Dutch and the Germans are quite different, and the Spanish again. It’s like when you go to Japan to do Aikido. It’s very different. It’s not the same as here. We are doing a Japanese martial art, and we are very traditional here in our dojo, but even so, it’s not the same. Like Sayaka is often saying, “Well that’s just their culture. They see things differently.” So yes, I have to teach Aikido from all these different cultures’ point of view. In that case it means, with their frame of reference, because they have values that they have established through the years, and they want to hear it in those terms. So we talk about it a little differently in each place. And it’s not like I have that all figured out, like, “OK I’m in Germany now, I’ve got to do it this way.” No. I go to the seminar, and I look and I listen, and begin teaching, and I see, “Oh, yeah.” The more I do it, probably the more efficient it is.

I have also taught in Russia, and quite often the Russian interpreter turns to me and says, “You can’t say that here. They won’t know what you mean. Say it differently.” So then I have to rephrase it so he can translate it. And the same thing has happened with Carlos in Spain, when he is interpreting for me. He will say to me, “Nobody is going to know what you mean. I don’t know how to say that. Say it again. Say it differently. Say it to the Spanish people.” “Oh, yeah, right. I get it.” So, it is quite different. I mean, you are from Brazil, and so you can imagine if we went there we would have to adjust accordingly. I went to teach with Suzuki Sensei in Brazil, in Belo Horizonte, back 20 years ago, and they just did not know what to make of him.

Like, when he and I went to Europe together. We were in Sweden, and they just came to him in a group after the seminar and said, "You can't talk like that here." And Suzuki Sensei didn't understand. "Well," they said, "We have equality here. We are all the same." Sometimes he would say "men do it this way, women do it that way," and they did not like that. We were way behind the times over here. It wasn't like that over there in Europe. There is much more equality there, much more commonly respected. So it was really good for us to go over there and have the experience and fail in that way, because, uuu, big energy. And you would never hear him say that again.

I remember now, what he was saying in Sweden was, "When you do Sokushin no Gyo, you bleed. Broke you mouth, but you fellas much yell! You got to do it till the blood comes out of your throat!" And they just said, "That's stupid. We are not going to do that." "Oh. OK." Yeah, so different cultures. Here on Maui, he would say that to us and we would just say "Oh yeah, we know what he means."

It has been an enlightening experience going all over the world and teaching in different cultures. This is "putting yourself in the place of your student."

OK, thank you very much.