**Gordon Thomas**

I started practising aikido in 1997 through Calgary Parks and Recreation where Yasuhisa Inaba 6th Dan conducted introductory classes. I was initially drawn to aikido by the merging of physical and philosophical aspects into one art. One teacher has described it as “action-philosophy”. What I liked is that the physical techniques helped to ground the spiritual aspects of the art. In 2015 I joined [Aikido for Daily Life](aikidofordailylife.org) under the technical direction of Quentin Cooke 7th Dan. Cooke sensei encourages us to invite to our dojo, teachers from other aikido schools and, thereby affording our students the opportunity to be exposed to differing points of view.

For myself, the overriding quest has always been to explore how aikido helps in my everyday activities. Knowing how to deal with the situations we face on the mat can prepare us for the challenges we meet in the outside world. For the most part, the senseis I have trained under were very clear that the ultimate goal is not about the techniques, it is about the development of the individual. The techniques are merely a vehicle to explore ways to achieve that goal.

I have found that commonplace situations present a stream of opportunities to practice the “aiki” principles which lie at the heart of Morehei Ueshiba’s teachings: dealing with aggression from a hostile work colleague, a playground bully, or, an argumentative teenage child. The list is endless. In addition, what has proved to be an interesting discovery for me is that the attitude we bring to a difficult situation has a great influence on the outcome. Many times, in my business world and personal life I have been able to defuse a potential confrontation by the application of “aiki” principles to bring about a peaceful resolution which is agreeable to all parties.

I continue to receive personal instruction from Yoshihito Shibata sensei of University of Santa Cruz and Quentin Cooke, sensei of [Burwell Aikido](burwell-aikido.co.uk) (UK).

**Sessions**

**“It takes Two to Tango”**

We will explore the role of uke and how this crucial contribution is often overlooked. In a departure from conventional teaching, our focus is on uke not on the nage. To help ground the concepts, we will present simple exercises that can be incorporated into your everyday practice if deemed appropriate.

**“Where the learning happens”**

We will use simple body awareness techniques to demonstrate the power of intention and the corresponding effect on the neuro-muscular system. These exercises will be familiar to practitioners from other disciplines: Golf, Tennis and Feldenkrais.

**Both sessions will be interactive so please come to the practice ready to participate.**