

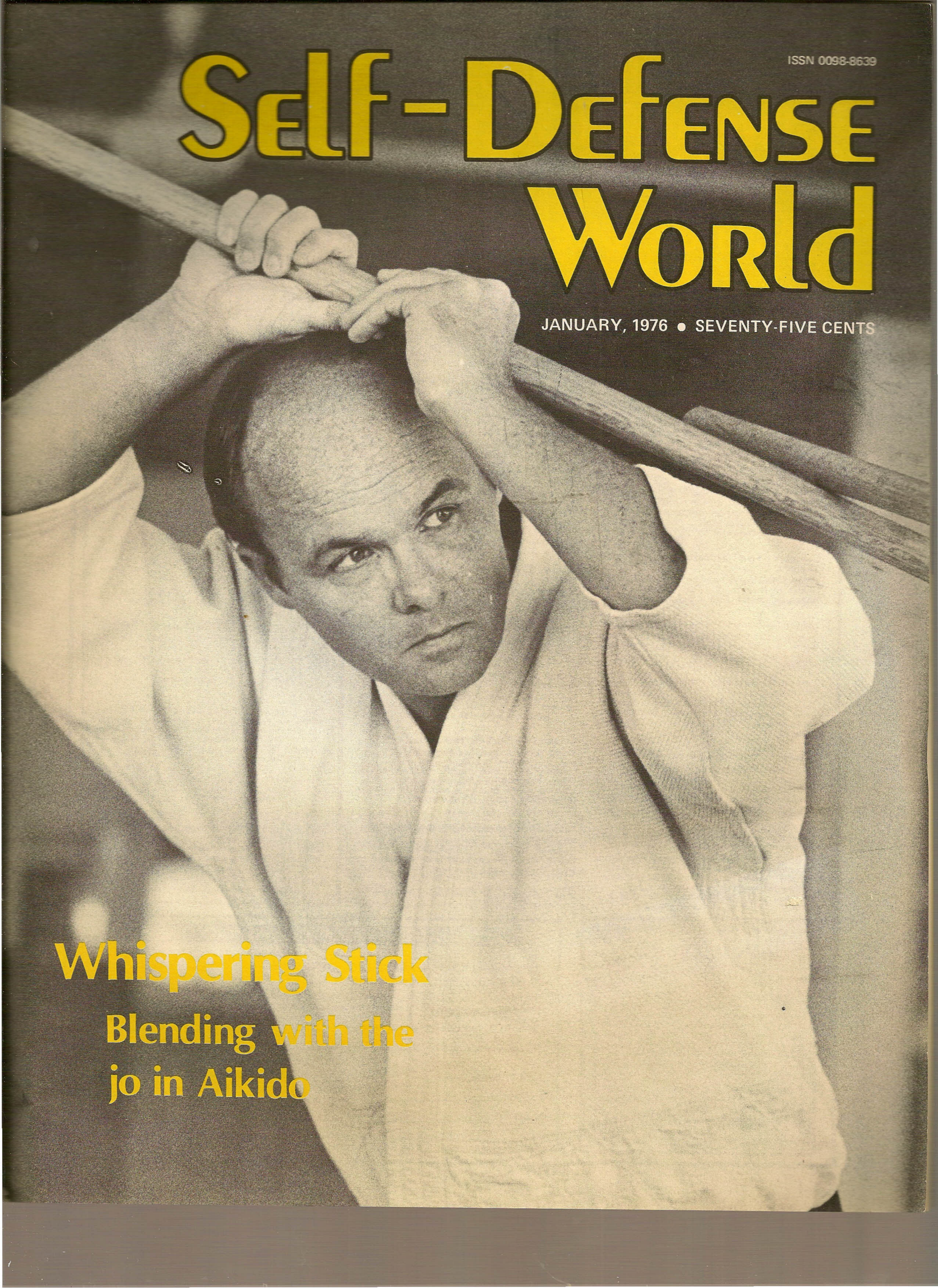
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Whispering Stick

Blending with the
jo in Aikido



Demonstrations can help your students develop confidence, and show the public what your students can do. They can be a positive experience for everyone involved: the demonstration team, your audience, and your host. But they require preparation.

Before putting on a demo you need to think about your purpose. Is it to interest people in the art, attract new students, enliven a tournament, or show your skill? There's different planning for each.

The next decision is who will put it on—your students, guests and judges at the tournament, you? If you have a regular demo team at the dojo you're set. If you need outside help, allow two to four weeks notice.

Your students are probably active in youth groups (scouts, Y programs, church groups, etc.) that would like to see a demonstration. Have your students talk to their adult sponsors. Students who are active in school activities can provide an "in" to put on a demo for an entire student body—a guaranteed audience. One word of caution here. You might let students in your dojo know that they don't have to demonstrate in front of their schoolmates unless they want to. Some youngsters, for their own reasons, prefer to keep their knowledge secret.

Your students' parents may belong

to various organizations or civic groups. You can approach civic groups, your local park and recreation department, and your local chamber of commerce directly. These organizations are usually pretty helpful, particularly if your dojo operates through a legitimate local organization such as the YMCA or the parks department.

Check out the facilities so you'll know what is available. Nothing is more embarrassing than stepping out on a stage at a public school and finding out there are not enough mats. Check on the public address system. Lastly, make firm contact by trading phone numbers and addresses with your host.

Many times the group you're performing for will do the publicity. Give them complete information. If the show is for the general public you may want to do more on your own.

Send an announcement to your local paper. Keep it simple and clear, but include all necessary information. Use the "5-W's" of journalism: who, what, when, where and why. Also include one to two good action pictures (size 5 x 7 or larger), as well as an appropriate caption identifying the people in the picture. Some newspapers require a photographic release to print the picture. Also provide an address and phone number where the newspaper can get in contact with you.

Radio stations will sometimes pro-

vide free spot announcements of your demonstration, particularly if it's being sponsored by a reputable organization, as a public service. Give them the same information as the newspaper. It never hurts to try.

If you are going to give materials to your local media two weeks advance notice is desirable.

I've described how to set up a demo before telling how to design one. I figure, if you can't get a date, you don't need to know how to design one. I would say making the arrangements is more difficult than determining what to present.

Two types of demonstrations are the most common: those at tournaments and those designed to interest people in your art and secure new students.

If you are running a tournament and are known in your martial arts community, many times your guests or judges will consider it an honor that you would like them to do a demonstration.

It's also a good idea for you and your assistant instructors (if you have them) to put on a brief demonstration at your tournament. Your students will take pride in seeing you perform and parents will enjoy seeing what their children's teacher can do.

The demonstration in a tournament *must* be short: five minutes maximum. Develop a hand signal to let demon-

How To Do a Demo



An instructor should always participate at least briefly in a demo put on by his school.

strators know their time is up if they go over the time. It's more courteous than thanking them while they're in the middle of a technique. Demos should be spotted throughout the second half of a tournament, between divisions, before the announcement of winners, etc., to rekindle everyone's lagging energy.

Have something different. If it's a judo tournament have someone put on a karate demo. If it's a kata tournament have someone show applied self-defense. It doesn't really matter, as long as it's a change of pace.

Don't be afraid of losing students to another martial art. Your students will respect you for increasing their awareness of other martial arts. At our ju-jitsu tournaments we usually have demonstrations of one or two other arts.

Once when we were demonstrating self-defense techniques I was attacking my assistant instructor with a real knife. He threw me and the knife stuck in the mat. The audience got quiet. I asked the mat if it felt okay, and said "that smarts" when I pulled the knife out. Sometimes there's nothing else you can do.

You will need another format for a demonstration to interest others in your art. Instead of a five-minute "quickie" your presentation should be 15-25 minutes long: 25 minutes maximum. It should be designed with your audience in mind. If you are doing a demo for a Girl Scout

Troop, for example, try to have as many of your girl students in the demo as is reasonable, doing women's self-defense techniques if possible.

Use your students for this type of demonstration. Select 10-15 of them, a few in each belt rank. Have each demonstrate techniques they are comfortable with, and that are suited to their experience. Be sure to rehearse the entire demo beforehand, as many times as possible, to iron out any problems. If you can get students involved in designing the demo, by suggesting techniques they would like to do, they will feel more a part of it. Be sure everyone knows the date and place of the demo, and how to get there. Let them know the dojo is depending on them.

At this point you might be asking yourself, why not do it alone? No insult intended, but people tend to get bored easily. If you can keep an audience interested for 20-25 minutes you are quite unusual. 10 to 15 participants in a demo can keep it moving and that's important.

You shouldn't talk a lot other than introducing the participants, very briefly describing the art and your dojo, making comments about techniques as they're demonstrated and thanking your audience and host.

How good an instructor you are is reflected in how well your students perform. This is what parents or prospec-

tive students are interested in. If they can see someone like themselves doing a technique then they think maybe they can learn it from you. Of course, you should at least do something brief in the demo yourself (one to two minutes). Your students would like to see you, and it rounds out the presentation.

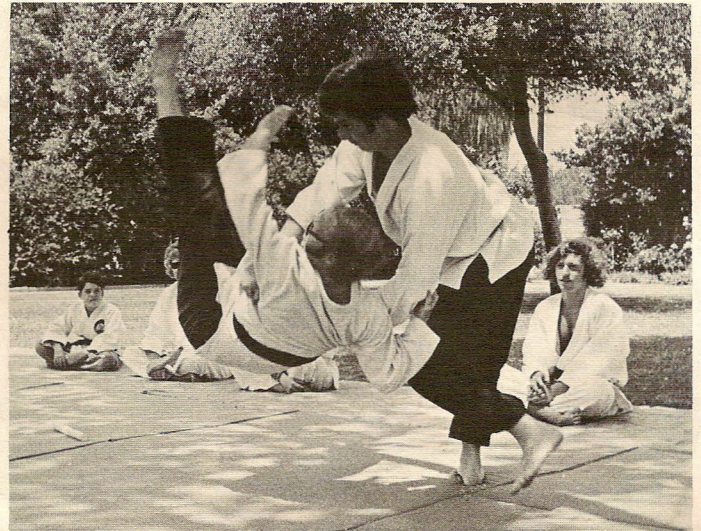
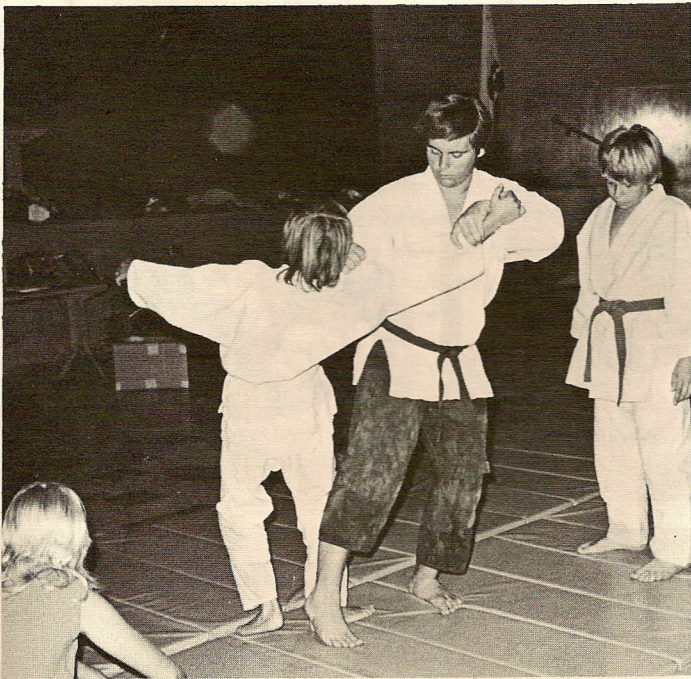
If you are going to do a lot of demos, more than four or five a year, it might be a good idea to come up with a "demonstration team" and a standard format. This can save you unnecessary planning and yet can be varied to suit different audiences.

Sometimes we plant one of our top girls or women in the audience. After doing self-defense techniques for women we ask for a volunteer, and choose the "plant." After she does a couple of sloppy techniques, as a new student might, one of her attackers gets "mad" and commences a freestyle attack on this defenseless girl. Then the audience sees about a minute of how a woman or girl can defend herself. Afterward we tell who the volunteer really is.

At the end of the demonstration be sure to have flyers available for interested observers. Thank your host and audience and stick around for a few minutes to answer questions. Be sincere, and your well-run demonstration will bring you new students and further opportunities to show your art. ●

You have to plan well and keep the show moving.

by George Kirby



Demonstrations let young martial artists display their skill and builds their confidence.