

Compassion and Divorce

As you read the following story, place yourself in the shoes of the young student, then answer the survey questions below to see if you are able to use the principles of non-resistance in your divorce case.

Aikido

Aikido is defined as: a Japanese martial art of self-defense ...that uses the principles of non-resistance in order to incapacitate the power of the adversary.

An aikido teaching story:

While riding the subway one day, a young Aikido student was accosted by an angry, drunken, foul-mouthed rider who, before confronting him, had struck a young woman and knocked her and her baby to the floor. Feeling able to take him on the student got ready to use his newly learned Aikido skills.

Right then, however, another rider, a small, old man tugged at the drunken man's sleeve and said, "I notice that you enjoy drinking." Fuming, the drunken man swore at the old man, trying to shrug him off. The old man, however, persisted, telling the drunk how he and his wife sipped a bottle of saki each night in their garden as they watched the slow recovery of a little peach tree injured in a storm. Shocked that the old man dared to continue bothering him, the drunk actually began to listen.

Watching all this, the student was astonished when he saw the drunk begin to cry as the old man asked him if he had a wife with whom he could drink his saki. Leaning on the old man's shoulder, the now sobbing drunk explained that his wife had died in childbirth the year before. Since then he had lost his job and started drinking all the time. The old man listened to his tale with great compassion. As he got off the train at his stop, the student realized that what he had seen was a great Aikido master at work.

Reframing

This Aikido parable provides a lesson in reframing for those who perceive themselves as needing to take on the adversary as disputes arise in the course of their divorce.

Survey

- Do you perceive your spouse as a threatening adversary who needs to be taken on?
- Are you getting yourself ready to practice your martial arts skills?
- Are you willing to try to see your spouse from a different perspective?
- Are you willing to listen for the story behind the confrontational behavior?
- Can you think of a way to help yourself see that your spouse may have some deep-seated wounds that call for compassion rather than a fight?
- Are you willing to approach your divorce with more compassion for your spouse?