



## LEAVING THE RAT RACE BEHIND

**P**aul Barker turned his back on the daily grind to dedicate his life to teaching the Japanese martial art of Aikido and insists it's the best decision he has ever made. "I spent years in jobs, willing away the time so I could start training in the evenings," he says. "It was only later that I realised that the lessons I was learning through Aikido could be used in the rest of my life."

Paul believes that Aikido – which combines effective self-defence techniques with spiritual development – can help everyone achieve true balance in their lives, regardless of their occupation or working hours.

Three years ago, Paul, 59, moved to Bexhill, East Sussex, to concentrate on giving regular Aikido classes. He now has high-flying businessmen and students among his students. "Teaching is my way of giving something back to a martial art that has provided me with so much," he says. "I am very content with my way of life."

Paul has no desire to return to the corporate environment. "I could see myself doing voluntary work or helping animals in the future, but I certainly have no interest in simply making money for a large organisation," he says.