

“Everything that has ever been done in the history of humankind was only possible because we are able to move...Movement is the most extraordinary thing ever developed by living creatures. There is no other reason for having muscles, no other reason for having nerves in those muscles, and probably no other reason for having a brain.”

“Gut” by Giulia Enders

I found this quote quite interesting coming from someone who was not specifically talking about movement, but about the life in our guts

We are living in an unimaginable and incomprehensible time. In San Diego Everyday when i wake up I think it can't get any more insane than yesterday and voila it does. I am old enough to having gone through the 1950's where we had to practice getting under the desk at school to protect us from an atom bomb from the Russians. I have to laugh every time I think about the absurdity or that but it pales in comparison to what is happening in the world politics now and especially in this country.

So as I think to myself what can I do? There are political, moral and humanitarian actions I can, and should take. And there is personal actions I can take for myself and for others. I can cultivate my practices that i hope and imagine balance out the insanity of the world politic with some positive, loving and good energy. I sit and I move. Movement and Stillness two sides of the same coin. I will limit this to movement and just say how important having a sitting practice has been for me.

Movement is life. That is an obvious statement that Moshe Feldenkrais made popular. We know that when we stop moving life starts breaking down. Those of you who are involved in one of the many variations of the conscious movement arts are bathing and floating in the source of life. You are taking what we do, i.e., move, and refining, polishing and cultivating that source, and yourself in that source.

Movement is change. Change is a constant in the universe. Movement is a valuable tool and resource in exploring our relationship to what is. And what

is is that things are gonna change. We have the possibility, and opportunity, to use our movement practice as a study in our ability to accept and be with change. Our movement studies can be seen as a resource, and a tool, in cultivating our gracefulness when dealing with change. (More on that later!)

Movement is energy. When we move we generate energy and energy is life and life is ever changing. An old expression I enjoy quoting is “energy is like love, the more you give the more you get!”

Movement is an elixir of life. Often I think of the many people i have known throughout the years who have continued with some level of a movement discipline and practice. As they age, they are filled with life force, are healthy, look great and are happy. Of course not all and I am generalizing, but still it be like that. To me this says staying in movement is one way to gracefully age, cultivate our Ch’i, as well as enhancing the quality of our lives.

When we move we wake up, our kinesthetic self is stimulated, our brains function better, our breathing, circulation, neuro/muscular/skeletal system, organs, hormones...all the things that make us who we are, are nurtured and refined

The Movement of our feelings, thoughts, emotions, and actions all hold the potential to facilitate our unfoldment and evolution. Movement allows us the ability to express, create and transform who we are, who we want to be, and where we want to go.

Having and sharing (those of you who teach) movement that supports people reconnecting with themselves, others and the world around them is, from my perspective, a counter balance to the craziness and disconnect we are witnessing in much of the world today. Sharing with others this possibility of coming back to the body/mind/spirit, can help and support balance in this unbalanced world and time we live in. More and more people are going to need to reconnect. Conscious Movement teachers are going to be more and more in demand. Even if it is simply within our own families and friends.

I want to come back to what I mentioned earlier in this letter concerning “gracefulness when dealing with change.” As many of you may know, and many others not, after 45 years of association with San Francisco Dancers’ Workshop and Tamalpa Institute I was terminated. It was a very unpleasant and painful experience for me to go through. It humbled me concerning “gracefulness when dealing with change.” I was, and am reminded, that I am in a process and sometimes what and how I wish myself to be is not how and where I am. And I accept that. I accept that I still have work to do and I am not always graceful in balancing letting go and acceptance of what is, with standing up and speaking my truth and having the right for it to be heard.

I have a theory in dealing with changing patterns with myself. As I create new neuro networks of behavior there is always gonna be a place where I will be pushed to my limits and fall back into old patterns. Then it is important for me to get back to the work of what I am trying to move forward with and further establish and strengthen the new neuro networks because down the road there will be another situation to arise to challenge me and I may very well fall flat on my face again. All I can do is get up and get back to the task at hand knowing that each time I fall and get up and get back to work the new neuro pathways are getting stronger and eventually the new desirable pattern and behaviors will be stronger than the old ones and my actions and responses will reflect that...and the recognition that I am in a process.

I would like to finish with this little proverb that I saw recently on Facebook and was an important reminder...

No matter how cool,
talented, educated or rich
you think you are, how you
treat people tells all.
Integrity is everything.

All the best in 2017. The goal is important but the journey is where it is happening.

I use to like to imagine, and share in classes, what would it be like if all the world leaders had to spend 30 minutes each morning doing a little movement, relaxation, and visualizing connecting to themselves, others and the world around them. I wonder how that would affect them and the world we are collectively creating.

I am someone who basically lived a life in various manifestations of movement. From the age of 9 my identity and self awareness was very much influenced by my playing sports. I could do it well, i had success and got positive input from both inside myself and the outside environment I was living in. At 16 I began to focus on basketball. I worked hard at it and had success. It allowed me to go to college and university because I was good at playing that game. I learned discipline, team work, when to go for it and when to let the game come to me, and when it did, to take it.

When I stopped playing basketball at 22 years old i soon found Yoga and that led me to dance and martial arts. Transitioning to Yoga and dance was not an easy move for a young man coming out of the macho world of sports. Going to classes that were predominantly female was not easy. My thinking, perspective and energy began to change and open. Transitioning into martial arts was much easier and familiar and the dance and yoga mind began to seep into the martial arts and offered me another way to view them.

And off I went, bridging the two worlds of dance and martial arts. In the beginning for a couple years i continued teaching yoga. When I began studying with my long time teacher, colleague and friend Anna Halprin, she saw something and offered me the opportunity to teach classes at the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop. It afforded me the opportunity to continue to bridge the spaces between dance, movement and martial arts. Many years later I am still doing it.

The past number of years as the artificial intelligence world began to grow and dominate our world it occurred to me that the work and art of movement was becoming more and more important to help balance the impact of all the technologies flooding our lives and consciousness. Now with this new era of politics and insanity I am more than ever convinced of the importance of movement in all its possibilities for myself and for others.

To facilitate others in coming back to their Body/Mind/Spirits. To witness people all over the world becoming so disembodied with the phones always on and overloading us with information, with computers and all the gadgets that pop up everyday is disheartening. The disconnection with self, others and our environment through this IT revolution, for me is scary and sad.

One way I feel I can confront this situation, as well the malaise with large numbers of people struggling with the social/political situation is to share my experience of and through movement. I am talking about movement that brings us back into our bodies, that helps us embody ourselves in the present time. That helps us be in contact with ourselves, others and the environment.