

The Importance of Practice

by Lydia Dugan, ITPI Board Member and Co-Leader of ITP Houston

My search for inner peace, happiness, enlightenment and God did not bear fruit when I was looking “outside.” The transformation from the being that I was 55 years ago to the being I am today, happened slowly.

In the beginning I had a regular practice of yoga and meditation that was unbalanced. Something was missing for me. My transformational journey took me to Esalen Institute in 1990 where I studied Leonard Energy Training with George Leonard. This was a pivotal time in my life. While at Esalen, I also connected with Michael Murphy and was inspired by his exploration of exceptional capacities later described in his pioneering book, *The Future of the Body*.



Artwork by Rich Sigberman

George and Michael were and still are my mentors, having a great influence on my life. George would often say that long term daily practice was the key to success in anything you wanted to master. After my first experiences at Esalen, I was motivated to move forward on my path of practice.

After reading *The Life We Are Given* in 1995, I realized that Integral Transformative Practice (ITP)—encompassing the four pillars of mind, body, heart and soul—was an effective roadmap for transformation. These four areas of long-term practice are for me where the “rubber meets the road” in moving from intellectual knowledge to a balanced, transformed life.

Transformation is all about change from one state of being/understanding/awareness to another. Change is difficult for me. I am in a constant state of resistance, kicking and screaming all the way. My teaching partner, Joe Hirsch, looks at me, smiles and gently says, “How could it be any other way?” Change requires diligence, intention and support.

Sometimes support shows up unexpectedly. I was shocked when I realized that my husband was a great teacher for me. His insights about me were grist for my transformational mill and helped transform me in my daily life with him and others.

Transformational practices without community can be difficult. Since starting my ITP group, I have a practice community that shares my goals of personal balance and growth. After years of steady practice, my life reflects those goals.

The affirmation that has helped me grow the most is, “I am wealthier and wealthier, healthier and healthier, every day in every way in a manner good for all concerned.” The health and wealth I affirm each day grows deeper inside of me. That’s the power of the ITP affirmation practice, and they do work!

My most recent affirmation for 2014 is, “I respond to my Soul’s calling and raise the sails of this ship welcoming whatever adventures await me.” I am grateful to be sharing my adventures with my ITP community.

Thank you, George and Michael.