

## The Secret Key to Renewing Your Practice

By Roger Kenneth Marsh  
ITP Mastery Teacher, GLEE Co-leader

One of my favorite Michael Murphy quotes is “To practice or not to practice is not the question. The question is, what are you practicing.” Notice we are always practicing something.

Look into the various areas of your life - body, mind, heart, and soul – and you’ll see what you are currently practicing. Let’s look at the body, the more physical aspect of our lives. I bet you have a practice of brushing your teeth; a practice of eating some kind of food and drinking some kind of beverage each day; a practice of sleeping in the dark of the night. These are all practices and they are all choices we make, consciously or unconsciously, over and over again.



The dictionary definition of practice is: to do or engage in frequently; make a habit of; to do repeatedly so as to become proficient. The opportunity with ITP is to consciously choose daily practices that uplift and serve our own highest and best selves, the best of humanity, and even the positive evolution of the planet. Our ITP 9 Commitments are things we engage in frequently, that we are making a habit of, and that we are doing repeatedly so as to become proficient.

Once you’ve consciously chosen and committed to practices that are truly beneficial, you will likely come to a place on the path (some sooner than others) where things get a little old, tired, and lackluster. So how do we refresh, renew, and re-energize our practice? The answer for many in western society is to do something new and different. That’s the automatic default and it seems to work in other areas of our lives. You get a new job, a new relationship, some new clothes, move to a new town, get a different diet, new friends, change the channel, and on and on and on. So why not a new practice, why not change and do something new and different?

Trying new things is important, adds spice to life, and can be seen as a learning process. In my own life, I’ve experienced a fair amount of “not this and not this” until I started finding those things that actually were right for me. Most of us would not have found ITP without this willingness to explore and try new things. However, at some point you realize its time to go deeper, perhaps MUCH deeper. And to go deep you can’t be changing things up all the time. You must commit to practice at a new level.

Along with this renewed commitment, there is a secret key to refreshing and renewing your practice, keeping it vital and healthy, without changing the practice itself and “doing something new and different.” That secret key is consciousness. Consider that consciousness, our focused awareness

and attention on something, makes that something sacred. By being fully present and focusing your complete awareness, attention, or consciousness on and into something like your practice, you will bring it alive in whole new ways. It's the mindless rote doing of something that has our experience of it become old, tired and lackluster, not necessarily the practice itself.

Think about your practice of doing the kata (if you have one). The more fully you bring your awareness into the present, into each and every move and moment of your kata, the more expansive, vital and alive your experience will become. The more mindless, distracted and unfocused you are in a practice, the less vital and alive the experience will be; the more old, tired and lackluster it will become. If you want to reenergize anything in your life, especially your practice, bring more consciousness into it.

At the deepest levels of this practice of bringing more consciousness into something, is sacred communion - the divinity available in each moment reveals itself to you. Or, along the lines of Sri Aurobindo who said "Apparent nature is secret god," the secret god in apparent nature makes itself known. Sticking with a practice and going deeper with it over time facilitates the capacity to experience sacred communion, a divine union, which is the least "old, tired, and lackluster" thing I can imagine!

ITP continues to be one of the most comprehensive and deep practices I have ever found. It allows me virtually infinite capacity to go deeper and deeper. Here's to renewed consciousness in practice! Over, and over, and over again.