

Spotlight on Autumn Wagner, ITP San Rafael group member

How did you become involved in ITP?

I had always wanted to visit Esalen, and finally had an opportunity to go. Scanning the catalog, I noticed my friend and colleague, Pamela Kramer, was offering a workshop on Integral Transformative Practice. It sounded interesting, so I just signed up for it. I loved the weekend, and was particularly drawn to the Kata. I have always been a physical person, especially with dancing, walking and swimming, so bringing the physical side of things together with heart, mind and soul fit for me. At the end of that year, I heard myself say that weekend was the best one of the whole year. I have hardly ever had just one thing as an obvious highlight, but that year it was clear.

I was very lucky that there was a wonderful local practice group here in San Rafael, at the iconic Victorian Falkirk Mansion. I love our leaders Donita Decker and Tim Cleary, and it is great to practice with Pam and all the others in the group.

What do you appreciate about the practice?

I love the opportunity to get together regularly with other practitioners to do the Kata. It keeps me grounded and moving forward. The affirmations have proved particularly powerful for me, and are really easy to work in with other practices I have around walking, prayers, etc.

What keeps you practicing ITP?

There is a grounded feeling that comes from having the practice. It provides a foundation no matter what else might be going on in my life. A calm settles over me when I walk, meditate and do my affirmations. My mind gets clear and calm and I return refreshed.

How do you benefit from participating in your ITP group?

I love the sense of a loving community, accepting and intimate; weekly sharing brings us close and I realize how human each of us is. Another great benefit is that we host guest speakers, like Michael Murphy. The crowd that comes is unique; intelligent, well-read, erudite, fun-loving and unpretentious. It's fun to lay a spread and proffer bubbly to the larger ITP community!

Can you share a story about how something you've learned through ITP made a difference in your life and/or led you to take some major steps in your life?

My big life-long challenge has been feeling loved. When I got involved in ITP, I was in a pretty good relationship that was not going anywhere. My guy and I were in sync, but not in love.

I worked with a love-related affirmation "I am a loving, lovable and beloved romantic partner" for a long time, and it seemed nothing was shifting. Finally, I decided to do a new affirmation relating more to emotional capacity. I started doing that one, too.

Within a few weeks, someone new stepped into my life. Even though we'd just met, and I didn't know if this relationship would develop, I realized this new person wanted the whole enchilada, not just a weekly get-together. So I decided to clear the decks for someone new. Now I have somebody who calls me "Beloved!" I still have my insecurities, and don't know what the future holds for us, but I'm plunging in and going for love, even with uncertainty. That's huge for me.

What do you do when you meet resistance with your practice?

There are things I do every day with no resistance: affirmations, journaling, reading, etc. There are other things I don't manage to do regularly: daily kata, strength training, meditation. I rely on the practice group to keep me doing these things and try not to obsess about doing everything perfectly.

Tell us about one of your most powerful affirmations.

I have one for my physical side: "I express abundant, positive and centered energy through a lean, supple and pain-free body." Honestly, I feel younger than I did when I started ITP. I have lost about 12 pounds and move with more ease. People often take me for 5-10 years younger than I am (some help there from the hairdresser), but energy-wise I often can run circles around much younger people. Even my wardrobe is more color-filled, form-fitting and fun. I am comfortable in my body.

Is there anything you'd like to say to the ITP community?

I feel grateful, blessed and honored to be a part of a movement that is focused on evolving human consciousness. It is such a comforting feeling to know people whose values and lives go well beyond preoccupation with material possessions and status. It is wonderful to be part of a community where we can be real and joyous together.