

## Spotlight on Charlotte Hatch

ITP Mastery teacher and coordinator and founder ITP San Francisco

### *How did you become involved in ITP?*

On Jan. 17, 1991, the US bombed Kuwait from ships and planes. This was the beginning of Operation Desert Storm, our attempt to expel Iraqi troops from the country. I was very depressed about this turn of events. That day George Leonard invited me to his house and explained that he, Michael Murphy, Annie Styron Leonard, and Eric Riswold were starting a weekly group called Integral Transformative Practice. He asked me whether I'd like to join. My whole being said YES! I felt so happy to embark upon a positive journey.



### *What do you appreciate about the practice?*

What I appreciate the most about ITP practice is that it has affected my whole being. I feel so different now than I did on that day in 1991. Then it was as though I had snarls inside. I wasn't caring for my body well; my mind was frequently spinning in circles; my emotions were either stuffed and ignored or exploding out with too much energy; and I had no idea where my talents and joys lay. From this description you might think I was non-functional, but I had a job, a family, an Aikido practice. From the outside I was doing well. Not so much inside.

### *What keeps you practicing ITP?*

Every time I practice, I reestablish my connection to my whole being, my ITP community, and my affirmations. When I fall off the practice path that connection begins to waver. The result of wavering is increased chaos within and, after a while, without.

### *How did/do you benefit from participating in Mastery and now, the Integral Leadership Program?*

As far as Mastery goes, I think the Mastery team, those who organized the sessions, got the most out of the program. Every new cycle we looked at last year's plan and found ways to improve our expression of the practice. Doing this and leading the same exercises over and over for 10 years never got old for me and really deepened my experience of the practice. When I started in Mastery I didn't understand or like Staying Current. After 10 years it became one of my favorite areas of study. This has improved relationships in my life a lot.

***Can you share some of the benefits of the new IL program?***

The Integral Leadership program puts the practice rubber to the road! Whereas Mastery was about learning and doing the practice to bring internal balance into our lives, IL is about learning and doing the practice and expressing it in the world. Growth from the inside is manifest in leadership in the world outside our personal beings. Being in this program is a challenge to each of us to make the world a more harmonious, beautiful place for all. This is greatly beneficial to us because we're learning to express that part of ourselves that's uniquely us and fulfill our mission on earth.

***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?***

As I'm studying Aikido simultaneously with ITP it's sometimes difficult for me to separate their influences on my life. In one area this is easy, though. Staying Current.

I was a "people pleaser", which is to say that I wanted to please everyone. This resulted in me getting pneumonia twice, getting injured in yoga class, coming home to find that friends had come into the house while I was gone, had eaten a meal, and left the mess to clean up, etc. Once I took Staying Current seriously, which I didn't do until my 5th year of Mastery, I really saw that Ground means more than growing energy roots. It means that I had a place to stand on the ground; that place was mine; and I belonged there. This support helped me to express my feelings. I learned to do this in skillful ways so that others didn't feel I was blaming them for my experiences. I accepted responsibility.

I felt the meaning of being my own authority.

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

When I feel resistance to the kata I give into it for a while. Then I start to feel the consequences of my resistance. A good trick of the trade is to say to yourself, "I'll do a little bit...just the first 4 moves of the kata." After I do that, most of the time the rest of the kata flows out of me.

***Tell us about one of your most powerful affirmations.***

I really like this one: I'm one with the spirit of the Universe.

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

I feel so fortunate to have found ITP and the community is just fabulous. It's such a treasure to sit with others, to share whatever we need to about our lives, to move our bodies safely together, and to feel the joy of evolutionary love. Where else would I find this?