

Spotlight on Kim Kristenson-Lee

Mastery in the Heartland and ITP Houston Member



- *How did you become involved in ITP?*

In 2002, I went to an ITP workshop at Esalen Institute in Big Sur, CA, led by George Leonard and Annie Styron-Leonard. Esalen is the birthplace of ITP so this was a very special opportunity. I was intrigued by George, a past Esalen President. I bought the video (yes, video in those days!), the *Tao of Practice*, to learn the kata. Later, I discovered that I'd already purchased *The Life We are Given* and the *Tao of Practice*, via an IONs promotion. Prior to Esalen I could not figure out the kata! With the context provided by the workshop, it was now meant to be. I grabbed my email handle, katalyst@comcast.net, the perfect prompt to practice!!

Ultimately, I found a nearby group, Walnut Creek ITP. I joined and stayed many years, until moving to Texas in 2011. Then, I joined Houston ITP. I may be the only bi-coastal ITP transplant. If there are others, chime in...!

- *What keeps you practicing ITP?*

My Houston ITP group (now) and my Walnut Creek ITP group (prior to 2011) have kept me engaged and grounded on the path of practice. I love the authenticity and positive intent of the people there, many of whom I have known for many years now. Weekly ITP meetings are a basecamp for the extraordinary. In how many settings can we dip into such a positive well of energy, along with a group of companions helping each other fulfill their potential?

- *What do you appreciate most about the practice?*

That it is integral – it uses all our intelligences! Our full capacities emerge as we cross-train mind, body, heart and spirit. We become more emotionally-connected, physically grounded, spiritually aligned, and mentally-sharp. It is amazing to tap into all modes. Working in just one or two areas is not the same. Each area of intelligence opens others in a multiplicative flow.

I spent a quarter century in organization development in the corporate world. Without an integral approach to goal-setting and development, well-intended change efforts usually fall *far short* of their potential. Even organizations that want to be more integral can't do it without a very deep effort. Incorporating the integral grows over years of practice and requires a critical mass of sponsors and change agents.

- ***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?***

When we reflect on our intentions deeply and capture them, we create a blueprint for the future. Our plans never unfold as planned, but they may manifest in the most unexpected ways when we have an idea for where we want to go.

Pairing my ITP affirmations with a planning process from my work life has been incredibly powerful. In 2011, I used a template from my planning job, called a shaping curve, to paint a 5-year view to 2016 - family/children, work, community, health, and the like. At that time, it underpinned my affirmations. Then, I put it away for years and didn't think about it, consciously. During 2015 and 2016, I went through an amazing wave of change: adopting a new child into the family, acquiring a cabin in the mountains, broadening my community involvement, picking up a martial art practice, and then retiring from my corporate job at the end of 2016, upon meeting key milestones. I was on my computer early in 2017 and I found that shaping curve...aha!! It was very unsettling how many elements of my long-term scenario had come to pass, as written. I don't know if I would have had the conscious capacity to make them happen but somehow, I was supported or led in change. Now I am working on my 2021 view.

- ***How do you benefit from participating in Mastery? Your ITP Group?***

My Houston ITP group keeps me on the path of practice. In addition to that, I've benefited tremendously from participating in the *Mastery in the Heartland* (MIH) program. One of the most enriching aspects of MIH attending was the opportunity to meet many supportive, inspiring and authentic people.

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

Carl Jung, the famous Swiss psychiatrist said, "...God is the name by which I designate all things which cross my willful path violently and recklessly (and) upset my...views, plans and intentions..." In other words, we lay our plans, but bigger patterns determine the direction, rate and pace of our progress!! Still we must persist in our practice and smile at the road-ride we are on.

My approach: Try to treat myself kindly and suspend judgment a bit (toward others too). Become a friendly self-observer. Break out of seriousness. And...this is so important...maintain some connection to an ITP community, either at meetings or via email.

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

I have just started working with 1 or 2 new affirmations. I have been focusing on renewal because to me, it is a positive term. Renewal is not fixing something that is broken, or even trying to change others, it is about restoring to full potential, and it is ongoing. Interchangeably, I use, "***My ability to help others renew and rejuvenate is limitless.***" and "***I embrace and share renewal.***" I have been in a time of renewal; renewal is a life practice, and so the new affirmations focus on that. I have other affirmations for other areas of my life.

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

Dear ITP community: You are part of the cultural immune system! Integral practice generously shared is an anecdote for the materialism, addiction, and social isolation that we see in the media and may experience in our communities. The ITP community can be a humble group, so I offer a Peter Block quote: *We are not defined by our deficiencies and what is missing. We are defined by our gifts and what is present. We choose our destiny when we have the courage to acknowledge our own gifts and bring them into the world.*

As George Leonard used to say, "Let's take this practice to the world...!"