

## ITPI Spring Newsletter 2020

### Working Theme:

COVID-19 as Practice Partner:

Learnings from the Experience and Practices for Staying on your Path

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#### 1. What are you learning about yourself at this time?



I am so very grateful that I have a wonderful husband who I am sheltering at home with. I never thought that we could spend 24/7 at home and be so at peace. I have found that I can be content and even happy with much less than I have become accustomed to. This includes eating out, attending entertainment at various venues, traveling to wonderful places, and going to outside dance and yoga classes. What I find much harder to do without is the personal contact with friends and family. I do attend many zoom sessions where we gather friends and family to talk, have virtual dinners/happy hours so that I am able to maintain contact. I facetime and call friends and once again am grateful that I have these opportunities that would not have been available even 20 years ago. I now have come up to speed on many apps and platforms that I probably would never have been using without the Secure in Place restrictions!

I also draw in a journal that I have kept for many years. The drawings vary but often they are of birds that I call my spirit birds. I have come to realize how important it is to me not only to have the opportunity to draw but also to see who shows up for me and what message they have to tell me.

## 2. What practices are supporting you?

I have a number of practices that are supporting me. I reach out to family and friends daily by phone and various online options. These conversation and connections ground me and keep me connected to the people who are important in my life even though we cannot get together in person now.

My ITP practice is providing me with my frontline practices. I belong to the ITP San Rafael group and we have been meeting weekly by Zoom sharing the Kata, personal sharing and programs. During this time our group has become even more connected than previously. Our personal sharing goes quite deep and we are all grateful for the connections that we have with each member of our group. I also do the Kata on my own on a regular basis. The movement and meditation allows me to relax and regenerate in the midst of what I perceive as chaos. Now that my friends have experienced the Thursday online Kata sessions they have asked me to lead sessions which I have started to do.

I am also participating in two ITP online programs. In the **Creating Harmony**, series, I am a participant and very grateful that this program is being offered at this time. It was planned way before the Pandemic, but the topics that are being presented are core to evolving during this time of challenge and stress in our communities and in the world. In the other program, **The Nature of Emotion**, I am both a presenter and a participant. I am very grateful that I can help contribute to this program and work with all of the other ITP teachers. We have a special group of teachers and we have been presenting courses online for a while now so it wasn't a big stretch for us to structure programs that support people in their growth in body, mind, heart and soul in the time of Covid.

I also attend and listen to multiple programs presented by renown Buddhist spiritual leaders including Tara Brach, Jack Kornfield, lama Anam Thubten, and lama Tsultrin Allione. The spiritual community has been so generous in presenting many, many programs to support community and our society right now. I am constantly listening or viewing podcasts as well as streaming programs and videos

It is very important to me to keep physically active and I walk for an hour daily, do yoga sessions at home either alone or with online classes, and dance with the Nia community. I am also watching more movies and TV series that I enjoy for their escape value.

## 3. What insights and tools do you have to share with the ITP community?

Now is the time to dive deeply into personal practice. It is an opportunity to be quiet and face our fears and insecurities. Practice has taught me that the only way through these fears is to accept and embrace them. The courage to do this comes from being aware of them and accepting all of our flaws as part of our path as human beings. I

have found the best way to do this is by balancing and centering and allowing breath to flow through my body and being. Just like George Leonard always said! Spirit is already with us and our connection is often found during challenging times such as these. These basic truths are shared by all spiritual practices. I hear it over and over again in the talks and classes. Just as athletes need coaches, we need supporters and teachers on our path. I suggest finding the practices that call to you and really using this time that we are being given right now to go into the deep water. At the same time, it is also a wonderful opportunity to develop your creativity. This can be through writing, drawing, baking, music and so much more. Allow yourself to have fun and not be serious all the time.