

1. Meditation

Meditation- Breath-based

Comfortably seated

Posture upright

Firmly grounded & comfortable

Close or lower eyes

Draw attention inside the body

Notice sensations

Be present with sensations

Now be with your natural breath

Moving in & out rhythmically rising, falling

Notice expansion as inhale, Contraction as exhale

Effortless rhythm

When mind comes into thought gently draw it back to focus on the effortless breath

Continue (Adapted InSync, 2005).

2. Reading

Everynome- A story of Creation

By Christine Lavdas

3. My Background

In sport (individual & team), in jazz ballet, & ballroom & Latin dance, as a feminist activist, as a clinical & organisational psychologist specialising in trauma with both genders & across time & cultures; in creative women's circles & dance, in defensive martial arts, in consultancy with the Australian Choreographic Centre, as a student and teacher of yoga and meditation and in holistic health.

4. Collective & Individual trauma

- Exists in families, tribes, nations, races & cultures;
- The suppression of the female principle in both women & men over the past two thousand years or so has enabled hierarchy, materialism, imperialism & patriarchy to gain supremacy in the collective human psyche and on our planet;
- The female principle (in both women & men) puts us in touch with our awareness, our inner & outer body, and our intuition;
 - Allows openness & sensitivity to other life forms. It is organic & co-operative, rather than linear, dualistic, mechanistic & hierarchical. It is attuned to our natural world.
- During one, 3 hundred year period in our history, 3 to 5 million women were tortured and killed by the Holy Inquisition of the Roman Catholic Church for such simple realities as a love of animals, walking alone in nature, or gathering medicinal plants. Such women were branded, tortured and burnt alive as witches.
- Other cultures, times and religions also continue to suppress the female principle and this dissociation has become internalised, even in many women. It is often felt as deep emotional pain, inadequacy and helplessness and survived with disconnection or dissociation (Higgins, 2008; Tolle, 2005).

5. The Nature of Being Broken, Disconnected & Fragmentation in Trauma

Heart - closed & contracted to protect vulnerability or always vulnerable, huge gap public & private personae;

Spirit - little or no hope, energy or experience of love, initiative, determination, tenacity, belief, faith or, connection -
A LIVING DEATH.

Mind - determined by traumatic past & catastrophic predictions of future

Body- frozen terror, disconnected from feeling, needs & body to survive, body armouring, tight rigid & protected &/or operating without inner principle, controlled by misuse of power, ego & boundary confusion

6. Dance as a potential process for transformation & a favourable recovery environment

Some key elements

- Dance as a personal practice , social & cultural commentary;
- A primarily non-verbal process with the body; space, time, tension/flow and balance to enable healthy reciprocity b/w body, thoughts, feelings, behaviour & spirit;
- Movement patterns reflect intrapersonal and interpersonal processes of generational, cultural, societal & gender-based violation or validation connecting us with body memories and pre-verbal experiences - the deepest 'inner dance';
- Change in movement influences core processes (fundamental meaning structures whereby we predict and anticipate) across all levels of functioning;
- Expansiveness in our movement facilitates greater flexibility including new neural pathways and connections to meet internal & external demands;
- This dancing is process rather than product oriented;
- It serves as an alternative foundation & process in confirming of a sense of personal power, unique identity, positive personal value & reality;

- Opportunity to come into the senses with awareness & attention;
- We can begin to respond, rather than simply react, we take agency, there is inside out knowing,
- Leading with our hearts, letting go of self or ego, with safe physical expression of emotions, creating narrative (continuity b/w past, present & future) in the form of movement, metaphor, ritual & imagery;
- We might experience authentic joy, compassion, authentic and deep connection, spontaneity & play with Self & others, leading us into infinite unfolding, intuition wisdom & creativity

7. Dance as potential process of transcendence

- We are embodied & yet still **The witness** - beyond observer, observed & observation, communicating universal themes eg of conflict, despair, social crisis, love, joy , hope, faith, tenacity, compassion, trust & delight
- Our **Attention** - is in the moment. There is disappearance of ego or self into Self
- We **experience Spaciousness & Reciprocity** - intuition, spontaneity, playfulness.

Transcendence- Becoming the Dance, Divine Within, Atman, The Goddess, Buddhi

8. Resources

Bloom, S. (1997). *Creating Sanctuary: Towards the evolution of sane societies*. New York: Routledge.

Caine, B. (1998). (Ed.). *Australian feminism: A Companion*. Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press.

Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history*. Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press.

Chodorow .J (1991). *Dance Therapy and Depth Psychology*

Ecker, B., & Toomey, B. (2008). Depotentiation of symptom - producing implicit memory in coherence therapy. . *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*. Vol 21, 2. 201-245. pp87- 150.

Gaia, Thea. (2008). *Women circling, dance & spiritual transcendence*. Personal communication.

Gilbert, P. (2005). (Ed.). *Compassion: Conceptualisations, research and use in psychotherapy*. New York: Routledge.

Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and recovery*. New York: Basic Books.

Higgins, J. (1995). *Traumatic Stress Reactions in Police*. Doctoral Thesis. University of Wollongong.

Higgins, J. (1997, October). The reconstruction of trauma: A brief overview. *Australasian Stresspoints*. 7-10.

Higgins, J. (2000, March). *Therapeutic Process Issues and the Reconstruction of Trauma*. Invited Advanced Level Workshop Third World Congress, International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS), Melbourne, Australia.

Higgins, J. (2005, September). *Dramatic evolution in functioning as a possible response to traumatic events*. Paper presented at the National Conference of the Australian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ASTSS). Perth, Western Australia.

Higgins. J. (2008). *Evolving from Trauma: Frequently asked Questions and Responses*. In press.

King, J.C. (2004). *Cellular wisdom: Decoding the body's secret language*. Berkeley, California: Celestial Arts.

Lavdas C. *Evryome- A story of Creation*. In Christ, C. (1997). *Rebirth of the Goddess: Finding meaning in feminist spirituality*. New York: Routledge.

Midkiff, M. D. (2001). *She flies without wings: How horses touch a woman's soul*. Sydney, Australia: Hodder.

Monk Kidd, S. (1996). *The dance of the dissident daughter: A woman's journey from Christian tradition to the scared feminine*. New York: Harper Collins.

Ogden, P., Minton, K. & Pain, C. (2006). *Trauma and the body: A sensorimotor approach to psychotherapy*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Pantajali B.C. In Stiles, M. (2001). *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali -With great respect and love*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser

Parthasarathy, A. (2007). *The fall of the human intellect*. Mumbai, India: Parthasarathy (www.vedantaworld.org)

Payne, H. (1992). *Dance movement therapy: Theory & practice*.

Pearson, N.I., Lopez, J.P. & Cunningham, M. (1998). *Recipes for healing: Gender sensitive care for women survivors of torture*. Manila: University of Philippines.

Pennebaker, J. W. (1997). *Opening up: the healing power of expressing emotions*. New York: Guilford press.

Rivera, M. (1999). (Ed.). *Fragment by fragment: Feminist perspectives on memory and child sexual abuse*. Charlottetown, Canada: Gynergy Books.

Rothschild, B. (2000). *The body remembers. The psychophysiology of trauma and trauma treatment*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Shinoda Bolen, J. (2005). *Urgent message from mother: Gather the women, save the world*. San Francisco, CA: Conari

Toomey, B. & Ecker, B. (2007). Of neurons and knowings: Constructivism, coherence psychology, and their neurodynamic substrates. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*. Vol 20, 3. 201-245.

Tolle, E. (2005). *A new earth: Awakening to your life's purpose*. Victoria, Australia: Penguin.

Wilson Schaef, A. (1998). *Living in process: Basic truths of living the path of the soul*. New York: Ballantine.

Woodruff, P. & Wilmer, H.A. (1988). (Eds.). *Facing evil: confronting the dreadful power behind genocide, terrorism, and cruelty*. Chicago: Open Court

9. Contact Details

Dr Jeannie Higgins

Web site reference for this

www.higginspsych.com.au

jeannie@higginspsych.com.au

Tel/Fax International+(612) (STD) 02 62827240