

1822 Oak Bay Avenue, Victoria, BC 250 519-1030 www.greenspiritresources.com

“Put Your Back Into It” by Diane Lade

Try this experiment: put your two hands on a clear stretch of wall, and push, noting where you exert effort and what parts engage.

Now, imagine you are going to actually move this wall, slide it a few feet in the direction you are facing – or imagine you are organizing to push-start a car. How do you reorganize yourself to begin?

I’ll wager you placed your feet and pelvis a little further back, maybe readjusted the height of your hands on the wall and the connection of your arms to your back?

When you push this time, how is it different from the first time? Do you have a much clearer connection through your heels to the floor? Does it seem your arms do less, in fact, and your back is working more? If you stop and start slowly, can you feel the engagement of the back of yourself, which is absolutely necessary for acting with some power?

A number of clients have expressed interest of late, in learning to exercise in an intelligent way, for strength, heart health, and staying energetic and mobile. Many of you have heard me talk about having a “smart butt” – learning to engage the power of the hip joints and the back of yourself, both to reduce pain in back and knee joints, and to allow you to keep doing all the activities you love.

This organization applies to walking, running, lifting, pushing, pulling, bending, sitting at computer or piano – pretty much everything you engage in. Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais called it ‘potent’ and he preferred to say ‘acture’ rather than ‘posture’, since even sitting is a dynamic activity.

Multiple causes, such as a sedentary lifestyle or developmental or traumatic patterns of collapse or guarding leave many of us without the ability to generate real power through the skeleton. Likewise too much tone can interfere with clear and easy self-use. This fundamental lack of support also prevents resolution of pain, knee, lumbar, or SI joint instability, even with increased efforts at strengthening and exercise. Many of you have done this experiment yourselves!

One of the enjoyable ways I wake up my body/brain each morning, is to run through the varied movements in the classic Sun Salutation series of movements, applying all I’ve learned about self-use in Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement practice. It is a dynamic and

Awareness Through Movement Classes

Fall Term: Sep 18 to Nov 30

Weekly One-Hour Classes:

Wednesday 7 pm - Diane & Arnie Lade

Saturday Workshops:

10am - noon - Diane Lade

September 28 – Folding: Flexible Legs

October 5 – Bending Backward

November 2 – Lunge: Relation of Parts

November 9 – Up/Down Dog

November 23 – Plank: Generate Tone

November 30 – Stand Like a Mountain

Details & Registration:

www.greenspiritresources.com/schedule

thoughtful process, generating strength, stability and flexibility, both in body and mind.

When done with this knowledge of 'potent acture', taking the time to find one's optimum organization in each movement, it makes for an elegant addition to one's repertoire of intelligent exercise!

I invite you to join me in a new class time, six Saturday mornings this term, in extended

2 hour class format. Classes can be taken separately, or as a series. We will mini-workshop the movement elements in Sun Salutation in challenging and interesting Awareness through Movement lessons, enabling you to enlarge your movement capacity through skill development. This will set you on a path of better organization for all other activities, to enjoy and sustain all you choose to do. ☯

Volunteers Needed: As Diane is training in and integrating Peter Levine's Somatic Experiencing trauma recovery work into her Feldenkrais practice, she would like to practice with some volunteers - let us know if interested.

Somatic Experiencing is a body-awareness approach to trauma that restores self-regulation, aliveness and wholeness, based on our innate ability to overcome trauma. www.traumahealing.com

Ageing by Willigis Jäger

The following is a letter written this year by Willigis Jäger, Arnie's teacher and mentor, following his 88th birthday. Published with his permission, and translated by Arnie, who spent time with him this summer for his third year at Benediktushof - Center for the Spiritual Way in Holzkirchen, Germany.

Founder Willigis Jäger is a Benedictine monk, a Zen and Contemplation master. He is influenced by both Christian mysticism and Eastern Zen traditions, while at the same time transcending the traditional concepts of religion found in both Christianity and the religions of the East.

His understanding of an overall spirituality – which he calls "East-West Wisdom" - is based on the Perennial Philosophy. He is also co-founder and initiator of spiritual centres throughout Europe. His vision of a global spirituality is described in his numerous books, and is practiced by an ever-growing community throughout the world.



Dear Companions on the Way,

I recently celebrated my 88th birthday. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your good wishes. I wish you too could reach this age, if not more.

Again and again the question of ageing has been asked of me. What is the situation with ageing? We live in a culture where being young is glorified, while ageing receives little support and understanding. We feel obligated to stay young. But human life is a perpetual becoming. This applies even as the bodily forces subside, and hearing and sight are diminished. Just then the meaning of life is renewed in a decisive manner. Living through this extreme situation can lead to an unprecedented encounter with oneself and to a whole new openness to the meaning of life.

How can we respond positively to ageing?

1. Accept the process of ageing and say Yes to these changes in life. We can then discover new opportunities that only ripe old age can give, and this time will not be a passive decline, but rather the fulfillment of human existence.

2. Old age is a time of increased turning toward the ground of being, which is our true life. It gives us the chance to be wise. For a long time we were locked into the care and responsibility of family and livelihood. In old

age we can slowly distance ourselves from things and gain an entirely new perspective on love, the world and people. Wisdom cannot be learned from books, it comes as a result of gradual growth and maturation.

3. The interest in and enjoyment of beautiful things, music, literature and religion grows. Psychology tells us that people do not even live to half their physical and mental capacity. Many rooms in the house of the soul are sealed and never opened. Some older people suddenly discover new opportunities and energy sources that they had no idea they had until now. To use this latent potential is our task. It's never too late to discover unexplored areas of our personality and develop them. Our life is timeless. In the words of Luther "If I knew that that world would end tomorrow, I would still plant my apple tree today."

4. Meeting Anxiety. First, we need to distinguish between knowable fears and anxiety. These fears refer to something specific, such as illness, marriage/partnership problems, injuries, slander, and so forth, while anxiety is usually more vague and unspecific - a mood or feeling without any specific object. This anxiety is often what torments the elderly. It threatens the personality, and can paralyze and destroy. Anxiety hinders us from letting go of that which we cherish and cling to. But anxiety and the feeling of threat, that may arise, can also have a beneficial effect, in that it moves us to realize and accept our limitations. Thus through anxiety, a wholesome experience of the reality of our own mortality can come about. Anxiety can then be a saving experience.

5. Don't let worries depress you. A Japanese man was asked by a missionary, what led him to become a Christian. Without hesitation he replied, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear." (Mathew 6:25) And he continued, "During the course of my life I had many worries about my health, my children, the future, about growing old. I never felt myself right or happy, but then I read that passage from the Sermon on the Mount, about the providence of God who takes care of the birds in the air and the lilies in the field. Thereafter I felt liberated from all my anxieties and fears."

6. Accept suffering. The crucial task in old age is and remains (as in life) to end suffering. In the sufferings of old age man experiences the whole meaning of the words of Jesus, "Amen, I tell you: unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it produces much Fruit." (John 12:24) One then understands another saying of Jesus, which he once spoke to Peter, "Amen, I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." (John 21:18)

7. Mourning. The older you get, the more often we must take leave of loved ones. It is very important that we accept this loss. Letting go is one of the most difficult tasks of our lives, and yet one of the most important. All we hold too tightly is deadly for us. If we hold the breath we suffocate. Whoever holds on prevents him/herself from growing and maturing. Even with a loved one, we should not try to hold on, otherwise we stop them from their completion. We must mourn. From this grief comes gratitude for our time together and hope for another meeting.

8. Religious dimension of ageing. "Everything has its own time." (Ecclesiastes 3) Ageing gives us the opportunity for religious maturity. As our physical forces decrease, we can experience the divine ground of being becoming the fundamental aspect of life. In our impotence and weakness the timeless ground of being, which is our true nature, is perfected. When we cannot do anything more, other than to accept others' loving-kindness, then the timeless ground of being awaits us.

9. Dying, to live. In this modern age mortality and death are hidden and difficult to accept. For physicians, death is too often viewed as a final breakdown that we must struggle against. Only our limited ego-consciousness sets us apart from the universal, timeless life. So how can we alleviate the fear of death? Only when we are willing to die can we say Yes to life. We know that our time on earth is very short. But if we realize that our true nature knows no time, we understand life and death quite differently. All suffering and fear comes from the fact that we do not know who we really are. This mortal life, here and now, is an expression of eternal life. We can call it God's Life, for God is the name of this ground of being from which everything arises.

Death is the mystical crossing - a return to the source of Being. The true mystic does not separate between this world and the hereafter. For what we call this world is but a limited reality that we experience with our mind and senses. 