

Personal Practice as Ongoing Transformative Research

By Jill Robinson, ITPI Member



Integral Transformative Practice can be visualized as a four-legged stool, with each sturdy leg representing a core value of ITP: theory, practice, community and research. While there is an abundance of resources on the theory guiding ITP, reinforced by an incredibly supportive community in practice, the “research” component can sometimes be overlooked.

Merriam-Webster defines “research” as:

1: careful or diligent search

2: studious inquiry or examination, especially: investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws

3: the collecting of information about a particular subject

Our own personal practice is not too far off from this approach for gaining knowledge to embody our fullest potential and authentic selves. Rooted in daily activities grounding and centering our beings, we are consistently stepping into a place of intentional inquiry. The Kata,

Staying Current, Affirmation work, LET exercises, these are methods in which we collect, observe and experiment with information to aid in our personal evolution.

Even if this scientific language doesn't quite resonate, it is interesting to notice how it feels to view our personal practice within this change of context. Through a lens of scientific method, there is an invitation to be curious, less attached to outcome and a widening of possibilities in how we approach our transformative path. The emphasis is less on a final outcome and instead honors the *ongoing, active examination* of our evolution. We learn to enjoy a commitment to long-term practice.

It is interesting to reflect on the critical role "research" played in the unfolding of ITP and how we experience it today. In *The Life We Are Given*, it shares what ITP co-founder George Leonard was hoping for when the first experimental class met in 1992:

- To work toward creating an integral transformative practice, one that is appropriate for the current American (and global) lifestyle.
- Through this practice, to offer every participant the opportunity to enjoy increased centeredness, health and growth in body, mind, heart and soul.
- **To experiment with transformations of the body and of all human faculties, from the ordinary to the extraordinary or metanormal.**

Developing an integral, transformative practice was at the forefront, as was a spirit of curiosity and inquiry for the extraordinary. A practice both grounded in the parameters of daily life, and *"continuing human evolution, including the possibility of dramatic transformations through long-term practice."*

To push beyond our habitual narrative, and to realize our extraordinary capacities requires ongoing inquiry into the possibility. Every time we perform the Kata, participate in an LET exercise and engage in our affirmation work, we are conducting research into our evolutionary potential.

As *The Life We Are Given* reminds us: *"The more you know, the more there is to know. By your very knowing, you help create more knowing. The knowing gets richer, more fascinating for as long as you live. The more you create, the more you can create. The more you love, the more you can love. A profound practice never ends."*