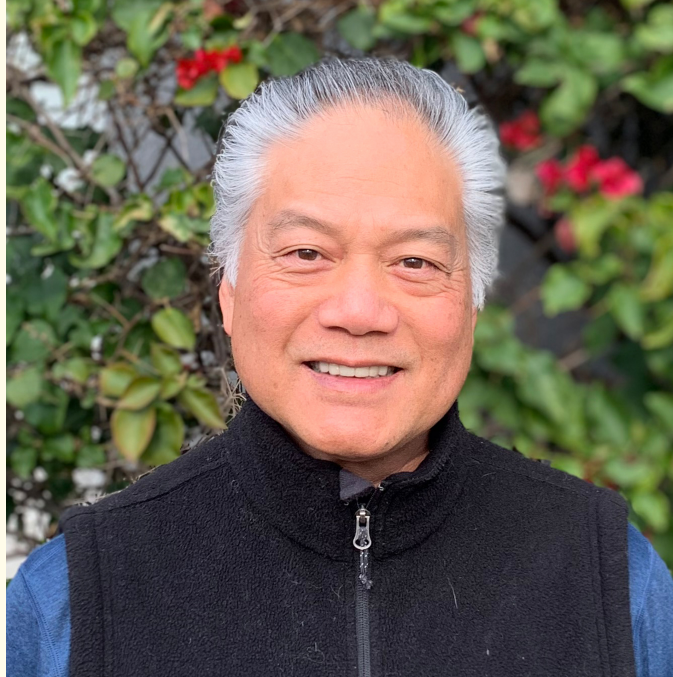


ITP Community Spotlight on Michael Choy

ITP Palo Alto Group Leader



How did you become involved in ITP?

Years ago, my friend Father Seán ÓLaoire, Ph.D., took an ITP workshop with Barry Robbins. Seán believed that our path of spiritual growth could best be developed through long-term integral practice and encouraged us to start an ITP group with our spiritual community, Companions on the Journey. In 2004, Barry Robbins, Pam Kramer, and Erik Riswold supported Brenda Greene in starting [ITP Palo Alto](#), and I became a member of the group at that time.

When does ITP Palo Alto meet?

ITP Palo Alto meets every Saturday morning for 2 hours and 45 minutes. During this time, we do the full Kata, have personal sharing, and have a 1 hour and 15-minute program presented by a member or an external presenter. We take turns leading the Kata and scheduling/presenting programs. All our members know that deep learning occurs when a member steps on the mat and presents a program.

Through ITP, what insights have you experienced that have made the biggest impact in your daily life?

The LET exercise “Take the Hit as a Gift” is a mindset I try to embody whenever I fail or have regrets. I know that I learn more from my failures than my successes. Here is one transformative lesson I experienced through ITP:

In 2004, Barry Robbins told me that being a Dai'myo (Samurai Leader) in the Samurai Games (invented by George Leonard) was one of the most transformative experiences of his life. In 2006, I had an opportunity to be the Dai'myo of the South and battle against Joshua Wylie, CITP, Dai'myo of the North. At the end of the final battle, as the winning Dai'myo, I was given the honor of telling the history of my victory. That evening Joshua and I started a month-long conversation about what he had learned about his personal behavior patterns from our battles against each other. Joshua took this insight from the Samurai Games and used it as a transformational springboard to becoming a Psychotherapist. Being the winning Dai'myo, I initially did not see any reason to change my personal behavior patterns. However, after speaking with Joshua, I realized I made the exact same battle decisions as Joshua, and my Samurai team got lucky. I also realized that I had many of the same personal behavior patterns as Joshua and that I could learn from his transformational insights. I also realized that Barry was the losing Dai'myo in his Samurai Game, and he used his hit as a gift.

As a practitioner and co-leader of the Palo Alto group, what ways have you seen your collective practice evolve? What elements/exercises have remained foundational?

When Brenda Greene co-created ITP Palo Alto, she felt it was important to cultivate love and respect for fellow members. Brenda would say, "If we can't get it right in our little community, then there's no hope for humanity." We adopted the practice of Consensus for our Community Decisions. Over the years we have been fortunate to have programs with Paul DeLapa on Consensus Decision Making. Every new member of ITP Palo Alto receives a Quaker pamphlet named BEYOND CONSENSUS Salvaging Sense of the Meeting.

You are currently co-facilitating the ITP workshop "[The Magic of the Integral: Discover the Wonders of Body, Mind, Heart and Soul](#)." Which concepts and practices are you most excited about presenting?

Roger Marsh, Eric Carlson, and I are very excited about presenting Soul during the first weekend of [The Magic of the Integral](#). We will help participants hear and recognize the voice of their Soul. Once they hear the voice of their Soul, they will be able to use this guidance for the remaining 4 weekends as we explore Body, Mind, Heart and Integration.

What elements and resources from this course have been particularly helpful and transformative for your own practice journey?

Over the past couple of months, Roger and I have been developing the course **Living from Soul**. Sharing thoughts and receiving sincere questions have helped me hear the guidance of the soul. Workshop participants will be experiencing the exercises, inquiries, and insights that we found transformative in our personal explorations of soul.