

**When I ran away to the circus** last year, I told the course co-ordinators that yes, I was interested in living out a **childhood dream**, but that my main motivation was to *explore the link between movement and the way we think*. I didn't really know what I meant; I just knew that I saw an opportunity for people to feel better about themselves, their lives and their work and I sensed that the body was a way to do that.

Understanding and sensing my body, including through Yoga, was a key part of my recovery from my chronic fatigue, helping me to be aware of my body and my physical needs from moment to moment. As my self-awareness increased, that extended to understanding more about my emotional and mental aspects. This journey of self-understanding was what allowed me to go from working as an engineer in the public sector in my home-town of Perth, Australia, to earning my money as a writer, facilitator and circus performer on the other side of the world.

*What started as a simple desire to be able to physically get out of bed in the morning turned into something much bigger: I was learning how to get my life back.*

**When I hung upside down from a trapeze** in front of an audience in an old Church in England I realised I had done it. I had my life back. I was lucky and I was grateful, and I was also incredibly proud. It hadn't been an easy journey. Not many people get to recover from a chronic fatigue like I did, and not many people get to run away to the circus, because **it's HARD to go against the current**. It's hard to change. It's hard to imagine that if you start today by doing something for you, something simple, it might one day lead to big changes in the way you live and be.

### **Creating life for all**

It is, of course, possible. I had proved it. So the question then became: **How do I share this experience and knowledge with other people?** How do I show others that it's possible to live, create or re-create a beautiful life, whatever your limitations?

Last year I wrote about the experience of recovering from Chronic Fatigue and a big focus of the book is the power of learning about your body: what you put in it, how you use it, and how it works. And then how **your body shows you a lot of things about you**.

## **A structure to doing this**

In 2010 I was lucky enough to study a one- year University Diploma of Yogic Education at the University of Lille in Northern France. It was there that I found a structure for using of the body as a source of knowledge. In my book, “What My Body Wants”, I shared the path that I took to creating a happy, healthy life, using the body and self-awareness to propel me forward. Through the Diplôme and my action-research project (with social housing company, Partenord Habitat) I developed a framework for this process that can be used in different contexts to help others understand themselves and what they want for their life.

Over a series of blog posts I'll share with you the results of the project and what I learnt along the way.

The course covered not just yoga and what a Yogic Education means, but components of western health, such as psychology and neuro-immunology. Bringing the language of western science and modern concepts of health allowed me to frame my definition of self-actualisation in a way that makes sense to others. I use the scientific understanding of what happens to your body when it is (say) under stress as the starting point for designing a movement-based programme and the basic Yogic philosophy as an entry point into exploring self-awareness.

Once people start yoga, they discover there is more to it than simply stretching and relaxing. They discover they are, almost magically, changing the way they experience their body, their mind and the world.

## **Yoga and critical, creative thinking**

The space created by a self-aware yoga practice is the space where we can see the world clearly, and know our own dreams and potential. When we experience the world like this we change how we think and behave. We open ourselves to the possibilities of creativity and empathy for others.

This is my passion: creating the space where people feel inspired to live to their full potential.