

From: Judith Koltai, September, 2011. Victoria, BC, Canada

Kara Svenska Vanner –

Here in Victoria, Canada, where I am writing this letter, the sky is blue, the sun is shining and the leaves are green. But there is also a cool breeze in the air, a kind of 'calm before the storm' - reminding us of the approach of Autumn and then Winter.

Autumn is a paradoxical time. With the softening of the Sun's light, the cool calm in the air, it invites rest and reflection; a kind of inward turning of the spirit, a preparation for the darker days. Yet, at least in the Western world, it is a time of returning to work, to school, to sometime feverish activity. The body's resonance with the natural order of things and the mind's desire for activity and stimulation pulls us in opposite directions.

That is why each year at this time, as I announce my offerings for the Winter, I set aside time to reflect on the reason and the place and meaning of Embodied Practices. I would like to share these reflections with you.

I think that setting aside a time when one is rooted in and attentive to the authentic messages and needs of one's sensory/physical self can smooth the conflict between the need for both movement and rest. We are better able to balance activity and reflection.

In the larger social context, I have always believed that body/mind practices are not just personal but socio-political actions. People who are clear and undistorted in their sensory and physical being are also better functioning social beings. They recognize authenticity in themselves and others. They perceive more clearly and immediately. They resonate with empathy towards others. They recognize truth in themselves and others and are not easily manipulated by slogans and demagoguery. Their boundaries are clear yet transparent, so they neither isolate themselves nor are overwhelmed by the experience of others. Thus, they are better helpers, better friends, better parents and so on.

There is abundant evidence of the effect of psycho-physical practices on health and on our emotional and spiritual well being. As Therese Bertherat so eloquently wrote: "*Our body is ourselves. It is our only perceptible reality. ...For not only is it true that the body is an indivisible unity inseparable from that of the cosmos, but awareness of this truth is indispensable to the body's equilibrium and health.*"

There are many practices and many names for them. I think this is because it is impossible to capture in a 'name' all the complex and intertwining aspects of the human 'organism'. Elsa Gindler, the originator of what now is called Sensory Awareness, refused to give it a name. She called it '*work on the human being*'. I have chosen the name 'Embodied Practice' because what we do is a kind of 'enquiry' into our whole life through attention to our physical self. We *practice* being the "*indivisible unity*" which is our birthright to be.

I am pleased to let you know that we now have a website: www.embodiedpractice-judithkoltai.com . Please visit us. You can read in more detail about the history and principles of Embodied Practices and about our activities in Canada.

November is not that far away. I eagerly look forward to meet you then - some faithfully continuing the work and some arriving to it for the first time. I wish to extend my warm welcome to You All.

Judith Koltai