

International School of Temple Arts

INNER TOOLS FOR DAILY LIFE.

by Alison McEvoy

Elaine Young is a professional member of ASIS (Association of Somatic and Integrative Sexologists) and a lead faculty member of ISTA (International School of Temple Arts). Elaine was led into this field, away from her twenty year long career in medical science, after the death of her brother. Her grief opened up a doorway into the deepest parts of her being human, and she never looked back;

"I realised I had never really grieved anything before....I started to support myself in my grief...it led me into meditation, breath-work and alternative ways of expressing. Something led me to a tantra retreat, where I realised that sexuality is very tied up with expression, with anger, grief, passion and all our emotions...We have split spirituality and sexuality. There are all these narratives that you can be sexual but not spiritual, or spiritual but not sexual. In bringing these together, there is a lot of healing to be done in being a human-being."

A long time ago I came across the phrase "we are intellectual giants, and emotional pygmies". Its blatant truth struck me to my core. When it comes to emotions, so few of us are shown and learn how to live out our emotional being in healthy, mature and creative ways that can serve our growth. Elaine's headlong plunge into her emotional world, through the doorway of grief, led her on an enormous spiritual, sexual, emotional and physical journey which has not stopped. Now, she has dedicated herself to guiding others who wish to tread the

path to emotional, spiritual and sexuality growth and fulfilment.

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Elaine and her colleague Laurie Handlers work full-time in the field of spirituality and sexuality and will be facilitating two transformational week-long ISTA trainings in Co. Louth this Spring. On week 1, Laurie will be guiding participants in a personal discovery, an unravelling of "the secret to themselves". Laurie explained on week 1, that "people learn about who they are, their preferences, boundaries, about consent, how to make requests, follow desire and how to say no...People become more sovereign, more free in themselves, more able to stand for themselves and more able to fulfil their life's purpose and desires."

Elaine and Laurie combine on week 2, taking participants deeper into the transpersonal realm, the realm of the soul. This involves shadow work, a process of shamanic death and rebirth, and an experiential understanding of

the relationship between one's soul and human, animal body.

I found it utterly fascinating and compelling to hear Elaine talk about there being a relationship between soul and body. That there can be disharmony or even conflict between the two about the way a life is being lived. Week 2 is, in overview, an initiation into the soul's purpose, a redirection of being towards the life that each individual is meant to live for.

The methodology used in these trainings is deep work. These expert tutors are acutely aware of what it is to be human;

"We teach through somatic, body experiences. Why? Because most humans are very smart. The mind understands things but the body can have a totally different reaction. You can talk about boundaries all day, for example, but it's only through having a real life bodily experience that you can actually change things."

These trainings are suitable for everyone who feels interested in them. No previous experience or training is required to attend week 1. If you feel there is something more to life, and you want to feel more alive and empowered, these trainings are a fantastic way to experience and equip yourself with practical tools for making the change that you want happen in your life.

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