



Q & A
with Liz Koch
Audio/Tele-Classes 2016

2016 PSOAS TELE-CLASS Q & A with Liz Koch

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Q: *I saw on your website that you have articles on trauma. Could you direct me to them?*

A: Articles I have written on the psoas and trauma include the following:

- 1) "Iliopsoas - The Flee/Fight Muscle for Survival" *Positive Health* 2005
<http://www.positivehealth.com/article/bodywork/iliopsoas-the-flee-fight-muscle-for-survival>
- 2) "Psoas Health & Trauma Recovery" *Massage and Bodywork Magazine* 2004
- 3) 2-part on the Iliopsoas Muscle and Trauma in *Massage Magazine* co-written with Trauma Recovery Expert David Berceci PhD. Part 1 and Part 2 order at core awareness
"The Iliopsoas Muscle: A Bio-Reverent Approach" (part 1): \$5:00
"The Iliopsoas Muscle: A Bio-Reverent Practical Approach" (part 2): \$5:00

Q: *I've been in horrible back pain for 7 to 10 day, so far I've had 3 massages and a chiropractic adjustment, plus I am doing PT stretching exercises. What info will be most important for my healing?*

A: The constructive rest position is vital because it allows down time for the psoas, releases extraneous neurological excitation, and balances the skeletal system, which calms the nervous system.

Q: *Thank you for all these resources. I just watched the Fuzz Speech video (by Gill Hedley) and wonder how does he know that fuzz is created in living bodies when we don't move?*

A: I recommend researching connective tissue. There is a video called "Strolling under the Skin" which may help you understand the movement and expression of living connective tissue. You might also wish to explore Gill's website, which helps to explain why he believes his observations translate into living tissue.

Q: *Please say more about hydrating with the ball exercises? What is being hydrated and how do these movements increase hydration? It does feel like that is happening, but I'd like to understand it more.*

A: Your personal exploration allows connective tissue the ability to regain motility and responsiveness. Much of what is "dry" is due to a lack of subtle variation in movement. Explore the following websites to find studies on connective tissue as a fluid web: Gil Hedley, Continuum, Melt Method, Anatomy Trains, and Serge Gracovetsky.

Q: *I'm a graduate student and prone to thinking that coming up with a concept is the best end result of inquiry. This week I've been trying to shift that assumption and enjoy being with sensation; feeling how intelligence is at work in me through feeling, not just thinking.*

A: How we think does shape perception and therefore experience. Shifting paradigms offers a fresh perspective and thus a new experience. This results in new information. As you state in your question, the sensory system has its own wealth of information that as a culture we do not value but, in fact, plays a vital part in our experience being alive.

Q: *I love the assignment of being in my feet. This has been so alive for me as I heal from a broken toe and plantar fasciitis.*

A: Yes, beginning with the feet offers a place to land and orient, which provides a sense of safety that is necessary if we are to stop recruiting the psoas for support.

Q: *I am excited how interconnected the bones, psoas, five elements, and the nervous system are and how you have woven them together within the first lesson.*

A: Yes, changing the paradigm from biomechanical to bio-intelligent provides a dynamic link that reveals how all aspects of our self (and life) are interconnected.

Q: *The idea of abdominal (tissue) flowing up and the psoas (tissue) flowing down makes me think of the ebb and flow of the tide. When I move in Pilates, it helps me connect to the watery image of the spine that you speak about. I also like thinking of the word "flow" rather than "lift" or "stretch/reach" downward. My work out now feels different. I can tell there is truth to a new idea when it makes me breathe deeper and I find neutrality to my spine without "placing" it.*

A: Yes, language is imperative for helping shape our experience. I recommend exploring your connection (sensing) to your bones. My article "The Psoas Is *not* A Hip Flexor" makes a few recommendations that may be helpful for softening the core while activating external muscles.

Q: *In all my anatomy studies, I don't think I've ever seen a diagram of the torso that shows the muscles and the organs in relationship to one another – they are usually shown separately. So, it's actually kind of a revelation to realize that the psoas is behind the internal organs.*

A: Yes, and knowing this relationship both intellectually and kinesthetically helps to clarify why the psoas should not be thought of as a muscle. Our organs float in the body, each with a unique vibrational field. The kidneys are literally floating on the juicy psoas.

Q: *The abdominals and psoas surround the organs. I never really thought about that before but it is making a difference in how I think of these relationships. I'm still looking for a visual that really shows me where everything is located, as I've never seen a cadaver.*

A: Looking at cadavers may or may not be relevant to sensing your own organs and actually exploring living tissue. Rather than focusing on visuals, focus on sensing. Chinese medical models did not originally rely on cadavers and yet they understood the flows of energy that are essential to functional health and human expression.

Q: *Which of the Swopper stools do you recommend? -There are several possibilities. Have you tried the one with the back?*

A: I do not recommend chairs with "backs" as a person will invariably lean/fall back and thus engage his or her psoas by losing skeletal relationships vital for balance. Now if one leans back to roll or to lounge at an angle (supported from behind), this can allow the psoas to be neutral. But if one is sitting up and falling slightly behind neutral alignment, then the psoas gets involved. As for the *Swopper*, I like the classic version: *SWOPPER CLASSIC*.

<http://www.swopper.com/swopper-classic-1/>

My reasons are:

- 1) The seat is designed to encourage a person to sit on top and slightly in front of the
- 2) The central support provides direct information from ground force reaction up through the central channel (spine).
- 3) The spiral around the main pole provides fluid movement while encouraging spine-based movement. In addition, the stool encourages moving from the hip sockets in order to reach in any direction. This maintains healthy hip socket movement while decreasing strain through the neck and

shoulders.

- 4) The up and down movement provides lymphatic stimulation and increased blood flow.
- 5) The lever provides the lift to find the exact position where the hip socket is slightly higher than the knee and the feet are grounded on the floor.
- 6) The under-side turn-knob offers the possibility for more or less movement.
- 7) The benefit of having a stool with movement is that the eyes do not lock and mimic the "freeze response" while using a computer screen. This helps a person become more aware of the length of time they have been sitting.
- 8) The combination of support and movement provides the right ingredients for a juicy psoas.

Q: I am surprised by the intense reaction I am experiencing when lying on the floor in the CRP! I have lost weight and am very thin and physically de-conditioned, with chronic shoulder pain, which is part of the discomfort. But there seems to also be vagal nerve irritation, which is something that recurs for me and sends me into a highly anxious, sick, helpless, hopeless, fearful state that can lead to a freeze state. My system is very vigilant and can quickly feel overloaded and under threat, and I am aware that this is what is termed trauma re-enactment. I am struck by your discussion of the importance of "landing on earth"...how can I engage more fully and joyfully with this living process which is me? I'm thinking that maybe I could re-define the floor as "supporting" rather than hard and "unyielding!" As you say, the floor - the earth - holds us, and it is gravity that shapes us. The invitation is to relax into this embrace, into this birthright.

A: You are accurately describing, "overwhelm" associated with an active sympathetic nervous system. I agree completely with your strategy of support! Just limit your time on the floor before rolling over into the fetal C curl. And, of course, provide enough padding so your bones can rest comfortably. When in CRP you can use not only padding underneath but also some weight on top. In other words, weigh yourself down so you can "land." Bone tapping is also very useful. Start with the femur bones and, using your hand shaped like a fist gently (but firmly), tap up and down the front of your femur bone. Then tap the lower leg back and forth (side to side) using both fists on the side of the bones. Tap your foot with an open palm. Work one leg at a time so you can sense and compare each one of your legs -- how do you sense the bone-tapped leg compared to the untapped leg? Next bone-tap your other leg. Lastly, don't force yourself to stay in CRP. When you *feel* it's enough, simply roll to your side and curl into a fetal curl. Fetal curl is effective for bringing the system into a parasympathetic state. This leads to the most important question: what brings you a feeling of support?

Q: I do want to assure you that I have professional support, sessions with a therapist (who is also a Barbara Brennan energy healer), and sessions with a cranio-sacral / chiropractic practitioner (who also has experience with Continuum movement). Both recognize that my body gets overloaded with any "frontal," direct approach.

A: I am happy to hear you have support. You are venturing into interesting territory and doing so with awareness. I know we are working on the fetal curl piece now but it sounds as though you have a strong startle response (or at least the *warding off expression* is active) and what may be called hyper-vigilance in your nervous system. From my way of looking at coherency, this indicates that there is a need for more nourishment. I am curious what the energy healer picks up? Class 3 -- with its focus on sound therapy, mineral baths, curling exploration, and long rests -- may help you to foster a sense of being neutral. My personal experience is that after years of hyper-vigilance, the nourishing piece is what really helped me make a big shift. By resting into the *backfield* of my own system, I was amazed to sense no startle response. Interestingly, I was aware of its absence. It was the familiar. I had to remind myself that this lack of reaction was my new normal. Eventually, sensing neutral was freeing and delightful.

Q: *I've been experimenting with the constructive rest position, fetal curl, and rolling on a soft ball along different areas of my spine. What I notice is that, once I introduce the gentle rocking... my body first goes into pandiculation (right use of term?). One part of my body goes into a slow and deep contraction then releases, and then the opposing body parts do the same. (a red light, green light reflex side to side). Then, some shaking, rocking, and some humming... the movement starts at the core of my body and moves down through my pelvis, legs, and out my feet. I've been just going with it. Some times there is a jerking /twitching that happens. My partner said that while sleeping, I sometimes twitch every 6 seconds.*

[Medical Definition of Pandiculation from the web: "a stretching and stiffening especially of the trunk and extremities as when fatigued and drowsy or after waking from sleep."]

A: I want to support your experience by saying that you are "waking up" your own system. This can feel at times like things have gone awry; however, if each time you feel clearer and more grounded then you know you are doing no harm. I encourage you to listen deeply and follow the movement impulses you notice. Once you set in motion the intelligence of your organism, the force of nature will take over and you simply follow.

Q: *I am 21 years old and I suffered from a neck and jaw injury two and a half years ago that I am still recovering from. The injury caused a lot of tightness in my body and has had a very large impact on my nervous system. As I am going through the stages of healing, I notice one area in my body that I tend to have recurring pain, tightness, and stiffness. My mid-back (the area directly after where the rib-cage ends) is so tight that it makes me feel like my rib-cage is tilting forwards (if that makes sense), and it also makes me unable to really isolate movements from my upper thoracic and the lower body (it moves as one large block). I am wondering if you see a correlation between these symptoms and the psoas? If you do, can you offer any specific suggestions for allowing my body to regain its fluidity?*

A: I am struck by how knowledgeable and aware you are of your healing process. I am in awe that you are making these connections at 21 years old. It is admirable! I believe the next two classes will give you some very real tools to use to recover and heal. Yes, I do correlate your symptoms with the psoas. First off, the jaw and pelvis are directly connected. They are two ends of the same mid-line (central nervous system). When one is interrupted through injury the other will also reflect that injury. The specific tightness you are referring to may be your psoas and diaphragm expressing the trauma response. I recommend reading my "Fluid Core" article and exploring fetal curl. I believe you will notice some relief in your nervous system soon. It is simple yet very profound. Also, try curling while in bed first thing in the morning. Simply rock, letting your jaw and pelvis respond (in other words consciously let go of any tension held along your mid-line). Think of the movement like holding a delicate golden chain in the palm of your hand and lightly rocking/wiggling it loose.

<http://www.positivehealth.com/article/bodywork/a-fluid-core-redefining-core-strength>

Q: *One part of my treatment for my neck injury is a type of chiropractic adjustment called atlas orthogonal (a gentle type of adjustment where there is no popping/twisting/cracking of the neck at all). The problem I have been having since my injury is that I have a great deal of difficulty holding the adjustment. Any connection I need to make?*

A: I would suggest discussing what you could do to help hold the adjustment with your health team. Sitting on top of your tuberosity (sits bones) is essential for healthy neck support. Take a look at your everyday ergonomics (i.e. the seat of your car) for example to be sure that it is flat and firm enough to support skeletal support and functional movement.

Q: *The midline came up in another way, which is most interesting. I'm doing some non-traditional therapy. The focus is my left and right sides appearing very differently. After a 15-minute visualization moving through the body and relaxing, I noticed that my mid line was about 3 inches off to my right side... it did move back to center. Then, I felt/saw the bones of my left side of my face, a frozen/stress/shock pattern that had me paralyzed. It was amazing to sense. I was feeling the emotional state of my bones! Then, on the right side I felt my "self" out of the body. Right side much more relaxed. My exploration at the moment is focused on the right and left sides communicating. I've been in a lot of physical pain, which has motivated me to take the release work seriously. I am quite sure that there is an emotional component... maybe even a trans generational component.*

A: The piece I would add is after your exploration, I recommend doing a few brain-gym exercises while standing. Go on Google and search "brain gym" under images. There you will find an array of simple cross patterning exercises. Use one or two of them as a quick finish to each side session. Cross patterning helps to integrate your fluid movement work by integrating the right and left sides of your brain, strengthening your perception of midline integrity.

Q: *How should I begin to explore fluid movement through my mid-line while in water?*

A: I recommend watching the videos of my work in the water, which can be found on my website and YouTube (Liz Koch YouTube). Using noodles while floating supports movement from tail to cranium. Remember to place the noodle behind your back rather than under the neck.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PweqtbDr4wI>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NywuYMTyw-E> (watch how the student's mid-line responds -- you should see a natural curl and arc show up.)

Q: *I am interested in getting into tai chi to help with my injuries/psoas and was trying to find an online video or DVD - any suggestions for what would be good?*

A: I like Lee Holden. He is a very knowledgeable Qi Gong teacher and an excellent teacher who took my workshop over 30 years ago while developing his own approach.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRs0nFgvcOQ>

Q: *I am fascinated by what I consider to be the mysterious psoas muscle and I am excited to dive deeper into the mystery during this tele-class series. I am 32 and have spent my entire life dancing and professionally for the last 10 years. I sustained a left SI joint sprain that caused much pain and imbalance for years, which I danced through. More recently I experienced a tearing in my right groin that I have been resting. A few months ago, I was lead through a psoas centric constructive rest-practice that someone guided who studied with you. The number of tears that came from that simple practice was astonishing. I could not stop crying for quite some time. What I feel is that I have been abusing my psoas all these years, through these 2 injuries, I never stopped to listen to what it wanted and have been treating it like any other muscle in a very detached way -just strengthening and forcing it to stretch. When I finally listened, I realized how much abuse I made it sustain, (like it is a slave). I felt it crying out. It was so intense! I'm now transitioning from being a professional dancer to working with people as a holistic movement and sexual health educator. I know the psoas plays a big part in both of these realms and I am excited to learn and embody how to best work with/treat the psoas.*

A: I am happy to work together to heal your psoas. I think you nailed it when you said that you realize there is a level of "abuse" that resulted from not listening to your core. But as you know, you are not alone. The dance profession is full of aching, abused psoas muscles. When we stress our system as athletes and dancers there has to be equal or more "active recovery" in order to

sustain balance and maintain health. You will be a great teacher as you employ your personal experience to bear witness to what the psoas needs to stay healthy.

Q: *When you spoke about allowing the psoas to flourish through nurturing rather than through manipulation, it struck a chord with me. When you described people, who feel better after having their psoas manipulated but experience that relief only lasting a short period of time, it reminds me of myself regarding my neck. I am not able to stop having adjustments right now as I still get very severe symptoms (hand tremors, sleep apnea, numbness, tingling, and double vision) when I am out of alignment. I am curious about your opinion if you feel that the same principles regarding the psoas (nurture over manipulation) could apply to the muscles around c1/c2 or even to the body as a whole?*

A: I cannot make any recommendations regarding your injury. It is out of the scope of my expertise. I do know that micro-movements can support and nourish all connective tissue. Discuss your question and options with your health providers. Ask them if there is a reason you should *not* explore micro-movements. If they say you can, begin simply with breath and a sense of weight landed on the ground -- you will not really be moving but slowly breathing into any area that feels significant while keeping as far from the injury as possible at first. Explore micro-movements in very tiny ways and very, very slowly, resting and pausing often. Remember the mid-line goes from tail to tongue. A trickle of movement is all that is needed (no large movement required) to let the jaw soften and open when making wave undulations in your pelvis. Begin moving the pelvis in a small wave-like motion either on your back or side. Start without a ball or additional stimulus. Take long pauses and sense whatever is coming up. Listen deeply and yet allow your eyes to be open and take in the light in the room. In other words, let the world come to you. Do not strain. Pause often and let the space inform you and be your guide for how long to explore. Remember, less is more and that following a sense of pleasure is your intuitive guide.

I'd like to share a story that may or may not fit your physical injury profile. A woman was scheduled for a fusion of several vertebrae in her neck when she showed up at a workshop in Dublin. I asked her to follow her doctor's orders and do very little or no explorations. She looked very fragile and was holding her neck very stiff and still. She did what I asked and left with mostly information. But a year later she emailed me and told me she had listened and went home and started hydrating her tissue using my ideas and the MELT method -- she started working with her hands and feet. She told me she was now pain free and did not need the fusion. Her neck vertebrae had healed.

Q: *I am little bit confused even overwhelmed, with the idea of resolution vs. release. I understand the difference between their end-goals, but I am confused about the differences in how each of them maybe experienced on the cognitive/emotional and physical levels. I don't feel as though I've experienced any type of resolution throughout my healing journey; it even feels like getting to a point of resolution is impossible because I don't really know how to begin, or what it might feel like emotionally/physically, or how I might progress. How exactly does one start their journey to resolving issues/patterns and what can I expect during the process?*

A: Resolution allows the "reactions" to be over, which means the cycle of reenactment simply dissolves. It does not mean that you don't remember your experience. Rather, it means that you are not triggered back to an earlier time or experience. To stay present in this moment is to have resolved the experiences of the past. As for how, I believe that when the system has a lot of sympathetic response active, nourishment provides the best pathway forward. To nourish is to heal. Only when a person has a strong parasympathetic nervous system can it repair and

restoration occur. Today I will list ways to regain and maintain a healthy psoas. My book *Core Awareness* also has a list of ways to nourish your nervous system. I recommend doing something every day to rebuild and restore health. However, the process I am describing is not a linear path. It is a *Gestalt*: when the system is nourished there is a leap and the organism is functioning in a different and more refined, coherent way. I remember the moment I felt this difference. It was like "wow!" this is how people can live...it was wonderful. Like a river flowing over its banks or a container filling with water, moments of fullness can come as a complete surprise.

Q: *My doctors have noticed that I have a lot of fascia buildup or density, especially around my ribcage, pectoral and mid-upper back. I've finally gotten the okay from my doctors to begin breaking all the density down. Do you think that working on the fascia and working on releasing the psoas simultaneously is a good idea or is it a two-step process where one comes before the other? Also, would it be better to do things to "hydrate" the fascia (possibly like MELT method) rather than try to break it down?*

A: I assume you are talking about scar tissue. If this is accurate, working to hydrate can help to break down scar tissue. A Castor oil pack is a home remedy that can also help to hydrate tissue and organs. Yes, you can work with a therapist who is knowledgeable and trained in fascial release. I don't see nourishing and releasing fascia being at odds. The more scar tissue the less healthy the psoas can become. I imagine what is most important is following your intuition. Listen carefully to your own system and when it says it is enough back off for a while and do other protocols for restoring health.

Q: *About 30 years ago I was an EMT and I hurt my SI lifting a patient. I always had a dull ache. Then in 2007 I had an Atlas Profilax treatment, where your atlas is gently pushed back into position and your head can sit on your spine correctly. That took away my SI ache totally. A few weeks ago, I moved a heavy object incorrectly and the SI pain came back. I took an Aleve pill and next day I felt better. I just moved to a new house and lifting boxes etc. has moved the pain to my piriformis (butt) muscle, which is attached to the sacrum. While in bed it hurts more than when I am moving. Can you speak about how to help this cycle on a physical, emotional, and spiritual level?*

A: When SI ligaments are torn or pulled (injured), a person will have psoas issues. The psoas is recruited to do the work of the ligaments. Why ligaments tear or are injured can be from handling excessive weight, a strain or pull in the skeletal system, and/or a lack of responsiveness in the tissue. I am not surprised that aligning the head helped heal your first injury. I see a direct connection between the mastoid and the SI joints. When the pelvis is miss-aligned, the head is affected and when the head is misaligned, it shows up in the pelvis; either end of the midline is reflected in the opposite end, as the midline is all one. As for stress and the pelvic question, the answer is, yes, there is a connection. One has to have a center to move from and when it is compromised it can feel as if one does not have a leg to stand on. And in a way one doesn't. It is difficult to experience ground force reaction or skeletal integrity when the ligaments are injured. I encourage you to go to a professional for help with healing your SI joint pull or tear.

Q: *I want to ask you again about my sister who has Harrington rods and a fused spine from scoliosis treatment. You asked what sort of bodywork I wanted to do with her. It does not have to be bodywork. Perhaps working with the balls etc. She takes very good care of herself and has recently gotten collagen injections in her spine. At this point, what can help her get back some fluidity in her spine?*

A: If your sister is interested in help (and asks you) then you could share what you are learning about the psoas. This is not really the question, however, I think you are asking. You seem to

want and need to help her. So I am going to be frank. You asked me in an earlier question about the connections between your pelvic instability and possible spiritual and emotional distress. I have a question for you: Why are you trying to help your sister when you already are in pain and need help yourself? That question may have many answers and need not tell me the answers you arrive at. I want you to ponder the question for yourself. Your pelvic injury happened because you were carrying a load that was way too heavy for you. You told me you are currently moving (which is always an upheaval in a person's life) and you also re-injured your pelvis and are now in pain. Does this add up to needing to help your sister? Here are two articles I wrote that might help in understanding the pelvic/emotional connection:

1) "Chakras in relationship to the Psoas"

<http://www.positivehealth.com/article/bodywork/the-primordial-psoas-and-the-chakra-system>

2) "The Whole Women Pelvic and Fear"

<https://wholewoman.com/blog/?p=931>

Q: *This question is about my husband. He has been feeling a lot of fear this last year and it seems to have affected his heart. He is experiencing irregular heartbeats occasionally, combined with some anxiety and shortness of breathe. He has recently noted that it seems to get worse after he eats a large meal, as if his full stomach is creating pressure on his heart. He finds that laying on his back and bringing his attention to his breath with the gentle intention to deepen and expand his breath helps his heart calm down. He tried constructive rest for 50 minutes this week and said the main thing he noticed was increased pressure in his chest. Does all this add up to something to you?*

A: My first recommendation is that your husband immediately go to his professional health care provider and rule out medical issues. I am not a physician and cannot diagnose. I also recommend that you, your husband, and everyone reading this response keep the time in constructive rest to a maximum of 20 minutes. Lastly, if there are no medical or health issues, you might want to read articles about stress and trauma. I recommend reading my two-part article titled "The Bio-reverent Psoas." You might also wish to visit the website: www.traumaprevention.com

Q: *I am recognizing that it was good to hear your observation that support may be more timely right now than release. Helps me feel less judgmental towards what seems like weakness, when you describe "support" as simply a different strategy rather than engaging "head-on" with the psoas, even in so gentle a way as the CRP, looking for a release. The bone tapping with the jacques sounds has been pretty powerful stuff. Just a couple minutes with each leg and an hour later I am still feeling ripples and reactions. Some of the sensations I notice: "Palms feeling clammy, (not a common thing for me). Immediate trigger: what's wrong???! Trying to stay curious rather than fearful. Maybe I can see this dampness as 'moisturizing' rather than a sign of something wrong? Rhythmic arching and curling of spine as I was standing, leading to more exaggerated arch of neck, with a silent forceful exhale/cry with each back bend of neck. Silent cries turned to a rhythmic keening or whining, which sounded very young, later some panting Aware of left hip elevation, (a chronic pattern), with right side torqued forward, upper body twisting to left. As I am writing this now, body twisting back to right. Sensations in my legs - mostly between ankles and thighs- moving up and then swooshing down, (a bit like a figure eight with the center of the eights at the knees). Some awareness of toes rising up from floor... Sitting down, exhaling through mouth with a slow forceful 'haaaaa' emanating from back of throat, some wrinkling of face, lips pulled back, body bends forward, stomach muscles squeeze and pull my ribs down while appearing to simultaneously pull up towards stomach, like everything is pulling and compressing towards belly button area. Sense of needing*

soothing: beginning to feel panicky as panting cry became more rapid: I placed my hands on my forehead and stomach. Did some sighing. After a bit, silent, growling exhales began, face wrinkled, lip curled up to bare teeth, head and shoulders armored, downward pull of breath, down the spine towards abdomen, but this time not curling over-it felt more like this downward movement was powering and consolidating energy, fingers were making tight claws - ready to fight. Felt like I was compressing my energy inwardly. This feels like resistance, like I could pull myself in and down, and from this place of compressed energy I could resist forever. Now a feeling of exhaustion."

A: Thanks for sharing your insights. I included your descriptive sensory tracking as I find it so delightful that we can actually articulate our sensory system. When such a physical response occurs, I use several strategies: 1) I don't do anything to stop it; just make myself physically safe while it is going on. It is a reenactment – not a response to the present moment. 2) I do nothing to stimulate or make it happen (i.e. no "release" work). 3) I focus on nourishing my nervous system. I suggest rolling into fetal curl, going into child's pose, or covering your self with a blanket. Softly rocking and/or making long "shhhhhh" exhales can be soothing without interrupting. Weight helps to ground and land into the present moment. Place some soft sandbags nearby so that you can pull them over your hips and pelvis (place them on bones) to help ground your physical body. You reenacted the warding off expression so I am wondering what may have happened to you in the past and how you might push past resistance into recovery.

Q: *When you demonstrated fetal curl (in the 12-hour psoas workshop) your eyes rolled up and your body started to twitch for a few seconds. What was happening?*

A: Twitching and shaking are biological responses -- a discharge of energetic/electrical nature. For some people, the reactions can be what are thought of as a reenactment (which is not in response to the present moment). As for the eyes disengaging, when they stop inhibiting they spontaneously move.

Q: *I'm a Pilate's teacher and I assume you've worked with many of us over the years. As I'm doing my personal workouts this week (and as someone who has always thought of myself as someone with a "tight" psoas), I'm wondering how can I tell if I'm using my psoas to stabilize my spine? It's never my intention to do so, I don't think of it that way, but I'm wondering if there is a difference in sensation that you might describe or any ideas around initiation or breath or something else entirely that has helped when working with the Pilates modality.*

A: I recommend reading my article "The Psoas is Not a Hip Flexor" it makes a few recommendations that might be helpful. Plus, notice what level of muscle you are activating when initiating and exercising. Although the abdominals might be flowing upwards, on a deeper level, the psoas is flowing downwards toward the feet. This leads to softening the core while simultaneously activating the external abdominal muscles. I also suggest sensing bones as a means of initiating movement. Let me know how it goes.

<http://www.pilatesdigest.com/the-psoas-is-not-a-hip-flexor/>

Q: *Thanks again for the great resources. Constructive rest is amazing. I am finding interesting and surprising things happening in my head and neck. Something shifts that cause my breathing to change and makes the "ocean sound" that my yoga teachers have said is part of Ujayyi breathing technique. I feel my sinuses opening and my throat slightly constricting. Do you know what I mean? What is causing this? Do you have any idea? It feels like part of a small skeletal shift.*

A: How lovely -- we are part of the ocean and our bones emerged from the ocean. Thus, who is to say the sounds that emerge are not the ancient voices singing. Nose inhalation is thought to be parasympathetic whereas mouth inhalation is associated with a sympathetic response. I am in awe that when I stop trying to breath and I am *breathed* there is a still point at the end of the long, slow exhale that is delicious.

Q: *I find the shift in awareness to be in my body sensation rather than observing them analytically to be challenging. Do you recommend any resources for developing this quality of attention?*

A: Please come to one of my *Stalking the Wild Psoas* workshops so you have a supportive environment to become comfortable to a very real way of being. This is what my process of work is all about. You might also wish to explore somatic work locally such as with Feldenkrais, Thomas Hanna, or Continuum Movement. These classes provide the time and help you need to value the opportunity to cultivate somatic sensory language. Joining a group of like-minded souls provides a stronger field of support than is possible alone.