



InterPlay
unlock the wisdom of your body



Embodying Study through InterPlay

Reflections by Anne Bailey

Anne Bailey began practicing InterPlay in Australia over 13 years ago and was among the first group of leaders to be trained in Australia. She moved to the Bay Area in 2005 and became a member of the Board of Directors for Body Wisdom, Inc, was hired by First Congregational Church of Berkeley to work in the office, and enrolled in the San Francisco Theological Seminary to earn a Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction. Anne wrote the following essay about how InterPlay helps her with her studies.

When I began the Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction (DASD) program at San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) in January 2006, I was working 32 hours a week over five days as a very busy Church Secretary. Through some discussion with my supervisor, however, I changed that routine earlier this year and now I work Monday through Thursday at the church and have Fridays for playing, praying and studying.

I usually go to an InterPlay drop-in class on Friday mornings, led by Cynthia Winton-Henry. She says she “loosely” leads the sessions, called “InterPlay as Life Practice,” because most of the people who come have been doing InterPlay for quite a while and see it as a way of life, rather than a part of life.

Some people use yoga, some use meditation, but I use the forms and the community that is InterPlay. It not only helps me become centered, but also helps me notice what is going on and what could be explored — in connection with my physical body/health, with my

relationships at work and in community, with issues my directees are bringing to spiritual direction and with topics for writing papers for our DASD teachers and Contemplative Reflection Forms (CRF's and Dialog forms) for my supervisor.

Our pre-assignment for the January 2007 class on the "Art of Prayer" was to do the exercises from some of the chapters in "Space for God" by Don Postema. While I was reflecting on Chapter 7: Wrestling with God, I was struggling with my own doubts about the existence of God because of all the suffering I knew many loved ones were undergoing both close by and far away at home in Australia. To have a place to go and be with people who understand that what you are going through is just too much to articulate, so they just take deep sighs with you, is such a blessing.

As we studied the Social Discernment Cycle (SDC) in January 2007, we were helped by two of our group facilitators to remember and to embody a sense of freedom before we began each phase. I found myself trying to continue this practice as I worked with a short term directee and wrote my paper about the SDC. It was fun to drop-in to InterPlay classes and explore the connectedness or disconnection I felt with systems and structures, just by playing with others in community. Fortunately, my short term directee was also familiar with InterPlay and it was a delight to continually play with words as we worked together through the SDC process.

Several months ago, I was experiencing a lot of resistance from one of my siblings about the situation of our aging parents and the care they require. I took the Friday morning time to explore this issue through physical interaction with the wall of the InterPlay dance studio. I had some very deep noticings from that situation and was astounded when one of my directees who came to see me that same afternoon, shared that she was encountering resistance in a work relationship. I was able then to incorporate something of both the morning and afternoon sessions on my CRF for later discussion with my supervisor.

In the past few weeks, I have been a little freaked out about what my ministry of spiritual direction will look like when I graduate from the DASD program. Will I return to Australia? If so, for how long? Have I learned all that I need to learn here in the US or do I need to come back and live here some more? And what implications does that have for my current work, study and weekly routine? All very big questions and I do not have many clear answers just yet. What I do have though, is the ability to live with the tension of discernment by taking it with me to the Friday drop-in InterPlay class and playing or dancing with it, held in a safe and sacred place by a fellow InterPlayer, who acts as my witness.

I count InterPlay as one of my spiritual practices. Randy, one of my fellow Body Wisdom Board members, gives a money back guarantee: "If you show up at InterPlay, something will happen." So, I've been showing up ... often with aching body, tired emotions and broken spirit and what happens for me over and over again is that by the time I leave, my body feels lighter, my emotions feel balanced and my broken spirit has been at least partly, if not mostly, healed. I do not know why or how it happens and I am not going to

try and figure it out. It is a gift of the practice and community of InterPlay and for that I simply say: “thank you!”