



InterPlay
unlock the wisdom of your body

Things I Know From My Own Experience: Gathering Body Data

Essay by Beandrea Davis



“But I am not wrong. Wrong is not my name. My name is my own my own my own.”
—June Jordan, *Poem About My Rights*

If I were to start a revolution I would begin with TIKFMOE. Things I Know From My Own Experience. The more I have an experience of what I know, of my own inner knowledge, the more internal authority I have, the more I trust myself, the more I am able to lighten up, the more I am able to share my fullness in the world. This is what I have learned from practicing InterPlay, the bodywise system that offers “an active and creative approach to unlocking the wisdom of the body” through stories, song, and movement.

I believe that when we as human beings start discerning and knowing our inner landscapes, cultivating and validating our own sense of internal authority, we are no longer pawns in an externally-imposed trick machine called That’s The Way It Is. We know what is true and we live our lives honoring these truths. No force from the outside can uproot the anchors of our body data, once felt, acknowledged, and witnessed by others looking for the good. The information that lives in the bodyspirit of each one of us – our individual and collective body data – this is the lifeblood of an authentic and creative Life.

This essay is a gathering of body data in four parts. A collage of words that describe some of what I have experienced, some of what I believe is true. It is written so the reader may move from section to section and not have to go “in order.” I invite you to skip around and pay attention to what resonates with you. May my body data be a spark that connects you with your own.

Let the revolution of inner authority and experience begin! TIKFMOE TIKFMOE
TIKFMOE, I can hear the crowds chanting now...!

EXPERIENCE

“The only way to know is to walk, then learn, then grow.”
—Lauryn Hill “I Get Out”

When I was growing up I used to tell my mother “sometimes people have to make their own mistakes. That’s part of life, you can’t prevent it.” Deep down I knew I needed to try things out for myself, figure things out from the inside.

Things I know from my own experience, things I’ve tested out and therefore know, things, I’ve found to be true:

Mornings are portals for magic. It is as if anything is possible in the newness of the day. A fresh gust of air through my bedroom window is like fairy dust sprinkled on my head. Possibilities, choices, renewal.

Taking a breath changes my life. Life is almost always better when I inhale and exhale. When you breathe for 6 hours a day using certain yogic techniques the breath can transport you into an altered state.

Everyone kept telling me to stay in graduate school, but when I gathered the information from my dreams during Jeremy Taylor’s Dream Work class, it was so clear to me I was climbing the wrong ladder.

I live in story. Stories about who I am, who people are, what the world is, what’s possible, what’s not possible. Story is a powerful tool for creation and manifestation. I think that is one of the reasons InterPlay is so powerful: we get to have our stories, share them with others, and notice what it’s like to tell and be witnessed. Suddenly the stories have their own life. I’m more able to see them with lightness and play around with the content.

There, I just took a breath. Something new begins in this moment.

CONTAINERS

“Pour yourself in me. Pour yourself into my heart. Oh-Oh-Oh wonderful spirit.”
—Rickie Byars Beckwith, Pour Yourself.

Something I know from my own experience is: the Universe organizes Itself through containers. It likes things it can pour itself into: bodies, notebooks, bank accounts, solar systems.

The Universe likes open containers. It likes space. It also likes structure. Out of chaos comes order. Order nourishes me. Somehow keeping my apartment tidy frees me up to be messy in my writing, to make wild collages, to dance and play with abandon.

Something I know from my own experience is: I am a sensitive body, a sponge for external information that often clouds my inner vision. When this happens my mind has a tendency to kick up dust storms of Hysteria and throw parades for False Beliefs.

My inner vision is the very thing that keeps me alive and vibrant on the Earth. My inner vision says:

“There is absolutely nothing wrong with how you are living your life. You are okay just as you are. You are in fact doing exceptionally well. Stop listening to others. Start believing in yourself.”

Something I know from my own experience is when I believe my own information is valid I feel more alive and more comfortable in my own skin. When filled up with external information that doesn't match my internal information, the most important thing is to continuously call my authentic energy back.

Something I know from my own experience is that Life is a process. If I am patient, I can have what I want. Instant results are possible, but more often they are seen after years of commitment, trust, and practice. Rome wasn't built in a day.

The purpose of life is not to produce results or generate outcomes anyway. The more I live from and for the process of living, the more I enjoy each moment, each day. The more focused I am on results, the less alive I feel, the more my body contracts and the whims of mind take precedent.

When I remember that I am the container, not the thing that does or accomplishes I feel more alive, more willing to try, and to experience the places that life leads me to. The body remembers. The heart asks. The Universe responds to asking.

FULLNESS

“I hear in my mind all these voices. I hear in my mind all these words. I hear in my mind all this music, and it breaks my heart.”

—Regina Spektor, Fidelity

I have always known that I was full inside - full of these words, images, and sounds that somehow I wanted to get out and share.

I asked Monique, a yoga friend, about the yoga teacher training she had done. “When you do that much bodywork, your stuff is gonna come up.” That sealed it for me: I knew I wanted to do the YTT. I wanted this Stuff - the heaviness, the depression, the self-hatred – out of my body. I wanted help in letting it out.

I often think it is a miracle I graduated from college – my wounds were so raw and gaping during that time. The education seemed to support self-estrangement. On paper I was a model student of success. Inside I felt dead, and most days I did not want to wake up.

Two weeks after graduation I leaped into the 9 to 5 Work World after 13 years of student life. No one prepares you for the loneliness, the confusion, the doubt, the overwhelm. I shared the difficulty I was having in adjusting to life after college with a co-worker at the indy newspaper where I was a staff writer. She said, “You’ll get used to it.” But I never did.

When I look back on those two years, what I remember most is the day I taught a woman who sat near me the cobra pose. We crouched to the floor in the lobby of the office. I applied gentle pressure to her lower back as she lifted her chest and breathed. In that moment I felt a wholeness I had never felt at my job. I discovered I had something to offer that I could give joyously, something that used all of my intelligence to give it, not just my ever-working brain.

I left my first job after college to begin yoga teacher training. That year I practiced yoga daily. Sometimes it was 10 minutes rolling around on the floor feeling my spine. Sometimes it was an hour and a half practice of asana (postures), pranayama (deep breathing), and seated meditation.

Something I know from my own experience is: the body loves doing the same thing over and over again. Repetition, when done gently and with awareness, creates strength. The difference in my body over that year was unmistakable. I was stronger from the inside out. For the first time I began to delight in the bliss of embodiment and self-acceptance.

I enjoy the sounds that come out of my mouth. I sing harmonies with the music playing all around me. Rhythms, melodies, lyrics come to me all the time.

TRUST

“I’ve learned from pain, now I want to learn from joy.”
—Morley, “Softly, Slowly”

Riding on the Metro train in Paris during the first week of a six-week stay, I heard a voice inside say “Things will be hard at first, but then they will get easier.” After a day of doing battle with inner critics, those words gave me the courage to go on with this dream of living the Writer’s Life in Paris.

Something I know is there are Guides, Angels, and Beings all around waiting to be of service. I just have to sit quietly long enough to hear them. If I am patient enough to keep showing up, listening, and acting on the instructions I receive from the guides, anything is possible.

Sometimes I can sit back and have a Corona on the beach and let all the Depth of Existence go unnamed. Learning to lighten up means trusting where before I thought it was all up to me. Trusting that something wider is holding space for me, for my deep dreams and wild longings.

At the 2008 International InterPlay Conference, InterPlay co-founder Cynthia Winton-Henry gave a speech about InterPlay’s strategic goals: “I’m not worried about any of this because none of this is supposed to be happening.” We let something else do what must be done. It’s actually quite practical to trust.

What I know is Reality makes me feel safe. Drama does not. Reality – the stuff underneath the Drama – is what I love to touch with my bare hands. Give me the raw, the unspeakable, the unholdable. This nourishes me in every way.

I know what June Jordan knew. “I am not wrong. Wrong is not my name.” There is nothing wrong with me. Period. I am a treasure. I can trust that. What a relief.

It is fun to be a bodyspirit who dreams, wishes, dances, sings, tells, asks, plays, breathes. It is fun to do things, and then notice what you did. It is fun to gather the wealth of information that lives in each one of us.

What I know is life could be this simple, this rich.