



Looking for Quiet, Creating Whirlwinds

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Karin Gurtner

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Born in Switzerland in the good company of my identical twin sister Monika, movement has always been a natural part of my life; from running through the nearby forest to ballet, playing soccer, netball, badminton, skiing and swimming.

When I was 15 I went to an academy of art and at the same time discovered dance aerobics. I loved both and went on to become a decoration designer as well as a part time group fitness instructor and personal trainer.

In my mid-twenties and many movement certifications later, I migrated to Australia (for love, you guessed it) where I worked full time as a Pilates and Yoga teacher with a little bit of Gyrokinesis added to the blend. Soon after settling in Perth, my new home town, I met the wonderful Kimberly Garlick who changed my view of Pilates and opened the door to becoming an educator for The Pilates Room, her school at the time.



In 2004 Monika and I founded 'art of motion', a training organisation for Contemporary Pilates (and now Slings Myofascial Training) based in Switzerland and Australia – which meant my parents got themselves a second job (it's the kind of thing parents do for their beloved children, right?). It didn't take us long to adjust to our new family dynamic and although we occasionally arm wrestled about business this and business that, we never had to discuss the kind of quality we wanted to put out; nothing but the best. Today, seven dedicated people maintain the office flow behind the scenes and a team of twenty highly qualified lecturers deliver education courses for movement professionals and physiotherapists all year round.

art of motion didn't start as a business venture, rather as a means to share knowledge. It took about eight years to complete the Contemporary Pilates curriculum comprising fifteen individual yet interlinked courses, and about six years to shape the current Slings Myofascial Training education.

I believe both of them to be of equal value although creating a contemporary version of the classical Pilates method now feels like high-level practise for the development of Slings Myofascial Training. With Slings I haven't reinvented the movement wheel, but the concept is unique and developing something unique is unique in itself. Have you ever sat in front of an empty piece of paper pondering the meaning of Aristotle's quote "the whole is more than the sum of its parts", trying to describe the complexity of each part in simple words without losing its meaning for the whole? If so, you know what I am talking

about. For me, neither the creative process nor the manifestation of it has been a linear path; more like a winding, occasionally rocky maze with plenty of dead ends and potholes; but also mind-opening insights and with unexpected heights – certainly worth the climb!

After dividing my time between Australia, Switzerland and elsewhere in the world for 15 years, last year I moved my (travel) base back to Bern. I love the simplicity of my light-filled studio home and you won't find a television or a stereo – it is beautifully quiet.

Speaking of love, I have the greatest appreciation for my family who relentlessly support me and my professional vision; and my friends who treat me as if they see me more frequently than hardly ever – special people really!

Once I wrote to my good friend Don Thompson

«I am looking for quiet yet  
I am creating whirlwinds».

What keeps me grounded in the midst of my own whirlwinds is my daily practise; it is my happy place, physically and mentally.

My second happy place is education. This year's highlights were the integral anatomy courses (beyond anatomy) with the extraordinary Gil Hedley and the insightful Jaap van der Wal. The next event to look forward to is the dissection course with Tom, a visionary and ongoing source of inspiration.

My third happy place is reading. I am one of the people who read several Kindle books at the same time (choosing according to my mood). The three books currently 'open' are: Oliver Sacks: A life on the move; Pain: The science of suffering; Who am I? And if so, how many?.

With a thriving international professional schedule, here is what I am aiming for:

«Teach the best I can even  
on my worst day;  
give the person(s) I meet  
my undivided attention;  
cultivate my happy places;  
and laugh as much as possible».

