

The Kata: *Launching into the Extraordinary*

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“The natural man has one foot in heaven and the other foot on the ground.” (Chinese proverb)

Since its inception, Integral Transformative Practice (ITP) has embraced the possibility of discovering extraordinary capacities that emerge as a result of engaging in long-term practice. Many of us already enjoy the benefits of better health, higher functioning and exceptional well being that spring from the practice. Inspired by Michael Murphy’s book *The Future of the Body*, ITP was designed to realize the potential of our entire being - body, mind, heart and soul. Replete with examples culled from clinical studies and anecdotal reports, *The Future of the Body* reveals how people have displayed heightened abilities of various kinds throughout history. Extending across the full spectrum from the accidental emergence of the extraordinary in the pathologically disturbed to the deliberate cultivation of *siddhis* by the yogis, *The Future of the Body* calls us to explore the rich capacity that resides within.



Where does the ITP Kata fit into all of this? In our quest to move into these higher realms, the Kata serves at least two very important functions.

First, the Kata provides a strong foundation that serves to balance and center us. This practice of balancing and centering, along with the support that comes from being connected to a group of caring, conscious people (the ITP community), helps to ensure that we keep at least one foot tethered to the ground as we explore the heavens. If we engage in a practice that seeks to “boldly go where no man has gone before,” we run the risk of losing touch with reality. ITP provides a safeguard - a grounding practice and a supportive community that can offer a reality check - very important while exploring the far frontiers!

Second, the mindful practice of the Kata allows us to access a wealth of information that is provided through the millions of feedback circuits we possess. We become more sensitive to sensations, thoughts, feelings - luxuriating in the delicious stretch of our muscles and tendons, noticing our racing minds beginning to slow, feeling the joy of self-existent delight. This awareness can then extend into our daily lives through empathic interactions with others, perhaps through loving touch, or just by being present with our companions. We begin to notice with fresh eyes what’s right in front of us, providing us with new insights that can serve to enrich our lives. This heightened awareness expands into our subtle energy body, allowing us to receive information previously imperceptible to our conscious mind which in turn leads to moments of serendipity and grace.

Michael Murphy has suggested that, rather than striving to deliberately cultivate a specific capacity (say, telekinesis), we should steadily engage in our practice and when the time is right Grace may offer a glimpse of a *siddhi*, perhaps one of the hundreds of *siddhis* that have been recognized in the Yogic traditions or possibly one that is unique to us. The concept of focus/surrender, as outlined in *The Life we are Given*, comes into play here. We focus on our practice for its own sake, and surrender to the Divine to receive the gifts that may come.