



The Deliberate Creative Podcast with Amy Climer Transcript for Episode #068: The Connection Between Yoga and Creativity with Letitia Walker April 27, 2017

Amy Climer: Welcome to The Deliberate Creative Podcast Episode 68. Today's guest is Letitia Walker who is a former philosophy professor and now yoga instructor. Letitia is going to teach us how yoga can help us be more creative. She is going to talk about three elements of ourselves that we need to have balanced if we are to be creative. She will explain when we get out of balance, what we should do, and how to get back on that path of being creative. In the episode, Letitia shares a number of resources and I have put links to everything in the shownotes. You can find the shownotes at www.climerconsulting.com/068.

Before Letitia joins me, I want to share with you a new [iTunes](#) review. This is a five star review from Intentionally Creative and it is also titled Intentionally Creative. They say,

"Dr. Amy Climer offers leaders practical tips, tools and insights to enhance one's experiential process with others. I've enjoyed hearing and learning from experts in the field of experiential work that's become a podcast about topics such as positivity, creativity, innovation, etc. And one of the most helpful insights I've gained from Dr. Climer is that feeling, at times, that I have like being an imposter and that that is actually normal. It is a feeling that I'm not alone in having and with every episode I listen to I feel more knowledgeable and equipped to lead groups with intention and purpose and less like an imposter. I felt supported in my work from a far by this podcast and encouraged to engage participants and clients of my work in a newly energized and fun way. The Deliberate Creative is intentionally creative and provides listeners with techniques, tips and tools to apply to one's live work that same day. Thank you, Dr. Climer, for sharing your knowledge and wisdom."

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Thank you so much for that review! That is so cool to hear that you are feeling supported from a far. That is the whole point of the show so that is awesome. Keep creating, keep dreaming, keep doing your thing. I love it! If you are listening, please take a moment to leave a review on [iTunes](#), [Google Play](#), or [Stitcher](#). You can also help spread the word by sharing the show with friends and posting on social media. On the shownotes page on my website, there are social media links to make that really easy for you. Again, the shownotes for this episode are at www.climerconsulting.com/068.

All right, let's talk about creativity in yoga. Here is Letitia Walker. Letitia, welcome to The Deliberate Creative podcast. Thanks for being on the show.

Letitia Walker: Thanks for asking me!

Amy Climer: Can you start by sharing a bit of your background and who you are and what you do?

Letitia Walker: Sure. I am Letitia Walker: that is my number one label. I am a Purna Yoga instructor. I have been teaching since 2004, but I have been practicing since 1998. But I have only been teaching, specifically in the Purna Yoga style, since 2013 when I went through my 500-hour certification then. I am currently in the 2,000-hour certification program at the Purna Yoga College.

Amy Climer: You told me before that that is sort of like the equivalent of getting a PhD?

Letitia Walker: Exactly. There actually is not another training in the world that has a 2,000-hour level of certification. The only other thing that comes close is in the Iyengar System where you have to study for seven years to be certified and then jump through a bunch of different assessment hoops. But it is not a strict 2,000-hour, two-year program training the way the College of Purna Yoga is.

Amy Climer: Very cool.

Letitia Walker: Yeah.



How Purna Yoga is Different from Other Yogas [04:29]

Amy Climer: Tell us a little bit about Purna Yoga. How is this different from other yogas? Eventually, we are going to get into the creativity of it, but I want to start with that, Purna Yoga.

Letitia Walker: Purna Yoga, its founders are Aadil Palkhivala and his wife Savitri and they run the college. It is a relatively new style of yoga. When I say that, I mean that in two senses; first of all, it is relatively recent. Aadil used to be part of the Iyengar System. In fact, he started studying with B. K. S. Iyengar when he was seven years old. He split off from the Iyengars in about 2006/2007 and started the College of Purna Yoga then. It is relatively new, but it is also part of the new wave of yoga. Some yoga that is happening right now in the world is part of the new wave and some part of it is not.

Let's say that we can actually categorize yoga into two components; ancient yoga and new yoga. This break happens about 1940/1950 in India with the work of Sri Aurobindo. Before then, the idea of yoga was one of transcendence. You do enough physical work, enough meditative work that you leave your mind, your body, your emotions behind and find bliss or samadhi. But Sri Aurobindo had a completely different tack that nobody else had done for the thousands and thousands of years of yoga since then. Which is that no, it is not about transcendence, it is about integration and integrating all of the parts of yourself in order to reach a next level of being. For him, his big catch phrase is All Life is Yoga.

Sri Aurobindo is the forefather or the grandfather of Purna Yoga. Purna means whole or complete. Purna Yoga is part of this new style of yoga because it really serves the whole person because it is more than just your body. For us, it is more than just poses. You have to address the physical, and we do that with nutrition and lifestyle, as well as, asana and pranyama, but it is also mental and emotional and spiritual and that is usually covered by our meditation techniques called Heartful Meditation. And then we also address most of the ancient texts of yoga from the Vedas and the Upanishads to the Bhagavad Gita to the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali and figure out what of those texts are applicable for the modern yogi in 2017.



Three Elements Within You That Need to Work Together to Get Those Creative Moments [07:17]

Amy Climer: Nice. All of this, I know you and I have talked before how all this relates to creativity and I want to get into that. Can you talk a bit, how do you feel like this idea of all life is yoga and the Purna Yoga philosophies, how does this relate to creativity?

Letitia Walker: I am a creative person myself. When I first started practicing with my teacher, I was drawn to how creative, in itself, the practice was. He always would tell stories, he would recite poetry in class. There was always a creative element. And then I realized when I am being creative, it is when all of these parts of me are working together. Not just the body, not just the mind and the emotions, but that essential part -- which I like to call the Spark, or you could call it your soul or your spirit or your essential nature or Samantha, whatever name you want to give it. When all of these parts are working together with the spark as the team leader, then those are when the really juicy creative moments happen.

The soul, anahata, is described as the charioteer. It is the driver of the twin horses of the mind and the body. So often, everything else in this world wants either our mind or our emotions to be in charge or our body to be in charge and forget about the spark. I mean, I do not want to talk about soul, I do not want to talk about spirit. I do not even believe in God so that does not make sense to me. But for yoga, there is always this belief that there is this underlying part of ourselves that is unborn, undying, unchanging that has always been present. And that is what should be in charge, not just this physical body or these transient thoughts and feelings that we have.

Amy Climer: There are these three pieces; the spark, the mind, and the body. I am kind of trying to think of it like a model. Would you think of this as like a Venn diagram or maybe I am getting too technical?

Letitia Walker: No. Actually, I love that idea of the Venn diagram. I think that actually it is just two circles; mind and emotions and body, and then that Venn space in between them, that is where the spark is. Or it is two circles that are mind and body and they are intertwined and there is that space. But then above that space, on a completely different plane, is the spark.



Amy Climer: Or almost like the spark is encircling it like a big sphere.

Letitia Walker: Yeah, like a big sphere. And that is one of the things that Purna Yoga looks at too. Different parts of yourself can be in charge of you at different times. Let's talk about the physical. Like the physical part of you is in charge of making sure you stay breathing, that your heart keeps beating, that all of the autonomic systems of the body are doing what they are supposed to do. If you find yourself in a place where you are, maybe, always in a life of repetition: sort of doing the same thing over and over again, or you are, maybe, stymied by stressful situations that are going on in your life and so, "Fine, I am just going to sit here on the couch and watch this movie and I'll think about it tomorrow," then you know that the physical part of you is in charge.

Or if we decide to split the mind and the emotions into two things, you know your emotional part is mostly in charge when you are super competitive and you are really attuned to who has what over you, who has more stuff, who is getting more credit, who is getting more recognition, how much stuff can I get? Life is going to be great when I have that better job, that better car, that better house. That is a completely different point of view than, "I am just going to sit on the couch and eat ice cream." That mindset of being in the emotional body, of always pursuing -- basically, emotions comes down to money, sex, and power. Very different than just I am going to sit here and not think about it.

And then when the mind is in charge, it usually is pursuing those higher ideals of truth and beauty and justice, but it also really needs to be right. While it might be pursuing those higher ideals, it is really easy in that mindset to think that other people are not really doing that as well as you are or that their mindset is not correct. So just that need to be right and to become very rigid because of that.

Amy Climer: I feel like everything you just described, the word that comes to my mind is ego.

Letitia Walker: Totally. And all of those parts of you, that is why when we were talking about the Venn diagrams, I was thinking the spark almost has to be above that or you brought out that idea of it as bigger circle because all of us - physical body, mental body, emotional body - these are all ego. Spark is separate from ego. It is beyond ego.



Amy Climer: What does it look like when the spark is in charge?

Letitia Walker: Sri Aurobindo has this wonderful way that he describes the spark and that is an eternal child playing an eternal game in an eternal garden. For me, that is a completely creative picture. Because really creative moments have child-like qualities of, “Oh my gosh, look at this new thing I made, look at this new thing I thought about, look at this new thing I’m feeling.” And that it is a game, that it is play. Even if it is serious work, even in my days of being a graphic designer, the serious work, you had deadlines, you had clients that had to be handled, shall we say, and clients that were absolute joys to work with, but there still was a game quality. And then garden, that is ultimate creativity for me because nature is creativity, nature is life.

When all of these are working together and the spark is in charge, there is that playful quality. But you still need the body and you still need the mind because it is not like the eternal child can just think up some stuff and without a body make anything happen, or they can play around but then the mind needs to help direct as well. When all of these things are working together, then the spark is in charge. It is that charioteer that the mind and the body are helping to make these ideas and these dreams come into fruition.

Amy Climer: I love it. It feels like a beautiful image.

Letitia Walker: Yeah.

What to Do When One or More Elements is Out of Balance [14:45]

Amy Climer: We have talked a little bit about whether it is a Venn diagram, whatever it looks like: mind, body, spark. What do you do when one part is more in charge than the other and you are trying to create a better sense of balance? What advice do you have?

Letitia Walker: Great. You always know that the spark is not in charge when you have some kind of blockage. The most obvious instance of that is going to be a physical blockage, some kind of pain or discomfort in your body. But it also could be a mental or an emotional blockage. If you are stuck in that “I need to be right and it needs to be this way”, or you are so stuck that you develop writer’s block or creative block, or you are so stuck in your emotions of “I need my stuff to be better than anybody else’s and I need to really be recognized for what I am doing.” These are all very clear indications of when the spark is not in charge. You can kind of look at that like

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am I stuck in a place where I am kind of just doing the same thing over and over again? Then you know the physical body is ruling you. When I need to be right, you know the mind is ruling you. Or if your emotions are really getting triggered and you are feeling that one-upmanship and you are feeling sort of like your inner two-year-old is always pushing all the buttons, then you know your emotions are ruling the roost.

Obviously, if you have got a physical issue, whether it is pain or just stuck in a rat, start moving. And that is another way in which Purna Yoga really addresses creativity because we believe that the neck, the shoulders, the arms, the hands, the wrists are the expression of creativity of the body, they are the expression of the spark. And we have a lot of different series designed for people who use their hands, their wrists, their arms, their neck and shoulders in creative pursuits. We have the Carpal Tunnel series, we have neck and shoulder openers. Get moving if you feel like you are physically stuck, whether that is get off the couch or do exercises to make your wrists feel better.

Amy Climer: That makes sense.

Letitia Walker: If it is a mental or emotional blockage, that is where Heartful Meditation comes in. Those meditation techniques help you not just quiet the mind and not just soothe the emotions, but train your mind to have humility. Because if your mind is always right, it is not going to be well versed in humility. Centering the mind is a specific technique that Heartful Meditation uses to help draw the mind and the senses down towards the heart chakra, which is the master chakra and where the spark lives, and then centering the pelvic energy or the vital energy which is lifting emotional stories of disappointment, betrayal, ways in which you are attached to people, places, and things, all of those ways in which you feel like you need more credit, to lift those stories up and let them be transformed. And then, of course, always look at your diet.

Amy Climer: Yes.

Letitia Walker: What are you eating? How are you feeding yourself? Because how you are feeding your body is also how you are feeding your spark.

Amy Climer: And there is so much more research now about how food impacts our brain and



our ability to think.

Letitia Walker: Yes. We could go on and on about that.

Amy Climer: I know.

Letitia Walker: You can Google your way down any kind of rabbit hole.

Amy Climer: Exactly. That will be another episode, perhaps.

Letitia Walker: Yeah, exactly.

Amy Climer: If we are trying to get unblocked, do some movement, look at diet...

Letitia Walker: Do the meditation technique. Here is the thing: ultimately, I do not think it is one thing for everybody. For me, it is Purna Yoga. But all of us have these components. All of us have the mind, the emotions, the physical body, and the spark, regardless of what you do, how you think or who or what you believe in. Ultimately, keep pursuing whatever practices get the spark involved in your life.

Amy Climer: I am so glad you said that because, I think, people could be listening to this thinking, "Oh, I have to go find a Purna Yoga instructor," which may or may not exist in their town and may be difficult and that is not the point. It is more about taking these philosophies and making them work for you in a way that will be best for you.

Letitia Walker: Yes, because all life is yoga. It all has to be integrated. Nothing can be rejected. That would be my mind needing to be right if I said everybody has to practice Purna Yoga and that is the only way to figure this out. Ultimately, if you just took time every day to be quiet and reflective and to practice listening to those deep voices, deeper than the voice of your thoughts and your emotions.

Amy Climer: Like maybe the voice that does not even have words.

Letitia Walker: Yes. And even if it does have words, talks so quietly that you have to struggle to listen to it. That is going to get you wherever you need to go. Because your spark knows where it wants to go. Your spark is Krishna driving the chariot. And sometimes your team leader has



some bad apples and you have to learn to train those bad apples to get with the team program.

Amy Climer: Yeah, that is great. One thing I like to do at the end of every episode is offer a weekly challenge to listeners so they can take what they heard and just implement it right away. What would you recommend for folks listening?

The Weekly Challenge [20:55]

Letitia Walker: In some ways, I sort of just gave the challenge of take some time each day. I really like to do it first thing in the morning and last thing at night. Purna Yoga encapsulates this in three questions: who am I, why am I here, where am I going. And the thing that is interesting about those three questions is you do not even have to worry about the answers. If you just sat down every morning: who am I, why am I here, where am I going, and just would sit with those questions, eventually, the answers will come. If you know the answer immediately, you know you already have shut yourself off.

Amy Climer: That is the mind getting in the way.

Letitia Walker: Exactly. But then beyond that, I would say what I like to call The Pause. Before you react to something, especially if you are in a conflict situation, can you pause and take a deep breath.

Amy Climer: Yes, that is very good advice.

Letitia Walker: If you take that deep breath, you have the opportunity for the spark to be in charge, rather than just the mind, the emotions, or the body doing its habitual thing.

Amy Climer: Oh yeah, I can think of examples from a couple of weeks ago like, “Oh yeah, if I had just paused before I asked that question or made that comment, things might have gone a little smoother.”

Letitia Walker: I can think of examples just from this morning myself.

Amy Climer: Exactly! It is such good advice.

Letitia Walker: The thing is that when you are practicing the pause to remember that this is not



about having another opportunity to judge yourself for how well or how poorly you do something. Because most of the time you are going to just be practicing recognizing when you could have paused, not actually pausing.

Amy Climer: It is all retrospective.

Letitia Walker: Exactly. And then enough times of you recognizing, “Oh crap, I was supposed to pause,” you will start to learn to take that breath. And then ultimately it is every aspect of your life, right?

Amy Climer: Yeah. This is great. Thank you so much, Letitia.

Letitia Walker: Oh my goodness! Thank you so much for having me. This was so much fun. I feel like we really got some rich topics.

Amy Climer: Absolutely. If people want to learn more about you and what you do, where can they go?

Letitia Walker: They can go to www.liveyoganow.com. I have some of the Carpal Tunnel series that I talked about on there, and there is also just general poses series, you can find out workshops that I am doing in the area as well as my regular classes. And then I also have a resource page where you can see where other Purna Yoga teachers in the world are. There are not a ton of us right now because, like I said, it is a relatively new style, but there is a list of other Purna Yoga teachers, even in Finland.

Amy Climer: Nice. I love it, worldwide. And there are people listening around the world, which is really cool.

Letitia Walker: Oh yeah.

Amy Climer: Awesome. Thank you so much.

Letitia Walker: Thank you.

Amy Climer: Thank you, Letitia, for sharing your amazing insights. It is so helpful to think about the mind, the body, the spark and the connection between those three. We really do not talk



about the physical body and how our body might impact our creativity and the way Letitia described it, it was like, “Oh yes, that makes so much sense!” If you would like to share some insights or comments or ask Letitia questions, you can do that on the shownotes pages at www.climerconsulting.com/068. If you leave a comment there, Letitia will respond or I will or other people will. If you do the weekly challenge, feel free to go there and share your reactions and your experience and we can engage in dialog on the shownotes page.

You all, thank you so much for listening to The Deliberate Creative podcast. If you have any questions you want covered on the show about creativity, innovation, and teams, you can email me. You can do that from my website at www.climerconsulting.com and let me know. A lot of the previous episodes have come from listeners’ questions. If you have questions, I would love to hear from you. Thank you so much for listening. Go have a wonderful creative week. Bye.