

Elaine interviews: Sonia Bruce about Qigong

Elaine: So Sonia, thank you very much for taking some time. First of all, what exactly is Qigong?

Sonia: Qigong means actually, er working the Qi, mastering the Qi. Qi is energy, vital energy, and er more than mastering, cultivating it. Gong is the fact of working, cultivating. So that er she can be as healthy as possible.

Elaine: OK, and so, how did you become involved with it? Where did you start training is it a wee while ago?

Sonia: That's long ago. More than 30 years.

Elaine: OK.

Sonia: 35.

Elaine: I don't believe that, no.

Sonia: Thirty six years ago. Yeah, no, no, no, it's true. It was a pure coincidence in a moment of my life when I was er looking out for answers to questions, of course. And er I was in a bookstore, and that book almost fell in front of me from the shelf, fell down and looked at it, and it was my first Qigong exercises book - breathing and Qigong exercises.

Elaine: Was almost like it was meant to be.

Sonia: It was.

Elaine: Just one of those moments. Serendipity moments.

Sonia: It was. So

Elaine: And where was that?

Sonia: That's how it came. That was in er San Francisco.

Elaine: OK.

Sonia: Where I was living at the time, and er I had already started to practice yoga a short while before that, and er and that's it. I just got hooked. Tried the exercises, Qi, self massage and breathing. It was about.



Elaine: Excellent, ah because the meditation is very much linked to it.

Sonia: Ah completely. Qigong actually, it's kind of er er meditation while moving right. It's um, it is meditation.

Elaine: And what are the benefits from practicing Qigong and the meditation?

Sonia: Well, for me, it's a passion. It means I practice every day with um all these years and er always curious. So it's already rich and benefiting from the mind, I think, because it opens up your curiosity, your desire for discovering and discovering essentially, or from, first of all, discovering yourself, what it is about to be you and to to what it is about to have a body and to maintain it healthy, and er what happens when, I mean, how Qigong can help you when you feel sick or despair with life or you know. So Qigong gives you this ability to navigate through events in the best possible state.

Elaine: And to shut out exterior interference.

Sonia: No, you don't shout out.

Elaine: You don't shut it out?

Sonia: No. All the contrary. Qigong is not about building up kind of a bubble or fortress where you can keep at peace. No, this is not Qigong, and this wouldn't be be peace. Qigong is about being able to let the natural Qi flow, this in life intelligence, this life force that animates every living being, er the trees, the plants, the animals, the planets going through the galaxies. It's the same, and we are like a small galaxy, right? And so Qigong is about being able to connect inside and outside world and going through life events.

Elaine: On an even keel as you were.

Sonia: Well, life goes up and down, and it's all right, but how you approach that?

Elaine: So it can help very much people who are going through maybe a very troubled time in in their life that they can just direct themselves.

Sonia: It can. It's not the best time, maybe to to learn because when you're stressed, but he has been for me, for example, it was a very difficult time when I discovered Qigong. I was already a little bit in yoga, but still it was a very difficult time. So there is no good or bad time. It it's when is the time it's good. Thoughts are thoughts. Can we be able to put them in their place, And can we build up

enough centre of our own centres so that we don't feel completely distracted, disturbed, perturbed or troubled by our thoughts? Which are not ours.

Elaine: So would you say it it's a good thing maybe every day to practice er Qigong and meditation?

Sonia: It has to be on a regular basis. It has to be. It's like a renewal, you know? And of course, it would be good if you do it once a week. You. The journey will be different than if you do it every day, but it will be good to have a regular basis. Now it's better to do shorter times often than longer time, longer sessions for two hours only once every so much

Elaine: So you get

Sonia: Regularity.

Elaine: Now there seems to me um a very much a rising interest in holistic healing and therapy, such as yoga, tai chi and Reiki. Why do you think this is?

Sonia: Ha ha. Who am I to say? Who am I to say? I mean, look at the world. Look at the world. So many things happening. It seems like there is an abundance spring of creativity at the moment. Even though the world is going so wild and with so much destructive forces at work. There is also all these practices and interests and connections between human beings and marvellous things happening. Minds are freer in a way. At the same time we're facing we are going also through times where freedom is being repressed around. So it's all it's all paradoxical. All the opposites are really visible and really active. So at the same time, there is a lack of freedom in certain ways and um medias being manipulated. But at the same time, in many people's mind, Pshhh. it opens up incredibly.

Elaine: Tell us about the um well being sessions that you're currently practicing here at AIKB.

Sonia: Er, it's an initiation, really. In the sense of giving, sharing more than giving, sharing experience with people about how to maintain or restore a good state of health and general well being. So we use principles of Qigong and energetics, Chinese medicine, energetics, in a way that anyone that wants to integrate these concepts can do it without needing to be er super fit physically, or really adjusting to people's um capacities - and their individual needs.



Elaine: Because sometimes, I know, I think, like, particularly with with yoga, there are the different aspects of it, some that are very require, maybe a level of fitness, and others that are more.

Sonia: Exactly.

Elaine: Um personal.

Sonia: It's not about that here at all.

Elaine: No

Sonia: It's not. Anyway. It's not about performance. I'm 65. I've practiced so I was saying for almost 40 years, it's obvious in my practice that this, this evolution from er a competitive way of practicing, wanting to go beyond my own limits and er know more of this and more that. And it has transformed in the 10 past years, last years, er into something much more, ah looking for intensity, yeah,

Elaine: Right.

Sonia: Like towards more. What is it to be living, a human being. And some things, I'm not trying to push myself so much. It's not about that. It has nothing to do. Just at certain points you will just exhaust yourself. It's more for the essence of things than for a perfect form. I don't know, I know many forms of Qigong I practice them still, but in a different ways.

Elaine: Absolutely. Um. So you, do you run other classes? Or do you do individual?

Sonia: I can

Elaine: One to one.

Sonia: I can I arrived in Brittany only this year. I've been very busy with moving and organising home and, you know, moving from another country to here. So

Elaine: It takes time.

Sonia: I'm just starting. It takes time, and I'm just starting really now with AIKB, I gave a lot of classes and workshop, and don't really intend to do it on a regular basis now, but I'm still very, very passionate and interested in sharing. So let's see what, where it goes.

Elaine: Absolutely.

Sonia: I don't know. I can answer a group like even three, four people, friends or whatever, who would like er to have er an initiation or a workshop on a special theme, you know, a topic that they are interested in I can answer this kind of thing very easily. I find it very interesting to go straight towards people when they have very demand, demand. Uh?

Elaine: Yes, when I need, a need, a need. So you've got one more session. Is it two more sessions.

Sonia: Two in November and December, and on second Tuesday of the month, and then hopefully, really something from there will um grow.

Elaine: Absolutely like the phoenix coming out of the flames. Yes,

Sonia: Yeah, oh, exactly, yeah. And, you know, I'm a Scorpio, so I know what you're talking about.

Elaine: Well, thank you very much Sonia for your time.

Sonia: Thank you Elaine.

Elaine: As I said, I'm very interested in this, particularly as one gets a little bit older, you feel the need.

Sonia: Yeah.

Elaine: To.

Sonia: Yeah.

Elaine: Without the pressure of work, but there are other pressures.

Sonia: Yeah.

Elaine: To deal with. So

Sonia: Yeah. Well, you'll be very welcome. Next November, 2nd Tuesday,

Elaine: Well have a good, have a good lunch.

Sonia: Yes, I will and have a good day. Thank you very much.