

The Conscious Body

"The body too is a great and necessary principle, and without it the task fails and the purpose is not attained."

Rumi

"Cosmic metaphors enhance awareness of the forms and processes of nature that are coded in our bodies. We can invoke these patterns for expression, thereby becoming conscious participants in evolution."

Marion Woodman

Dancing in the Flames: the Dark Goddess in the Transformation of Consciousness, 1996

"Could it be that the body is the unconscious, and that in repressing and, more important, disregarding the spontaneous life of the sympathetic nervous system, we are enthroning the rational, the orderly, the manageable, and cutting ourselves off from all experience of the unconscious, and therefore of the instincts?"

"[Many fitness regimes] work with the body as object, not as subject; and while a general release takes place, there is no corresponding experience of the personal identity, its quality and its movement. This seems to mean that something more is needed than simply body mechanics, that the feelings hidden in the body, the source of all its movement, must be involved."

Mary Starks Whitehouse
The Tao of the Body, essay, 1958



"When you begin to pay attention to the lived experience of the body, constantly monitoring the entire experiential range of sensation that you find to exist on every part of the body, you begin a process of *somatic excavation* that takes you as deeply into your soul as it does into your body...Moving the awareness through the entire body, over and over again, you are eventually able to light up the body with its own life force."

Will Johnson

Yoga of the Mahamudra: the Mystical Way of Balance, 2005

"The silence that I perceive within my body came upon me abruptly through a spinal cord injury. For most people however, the process is slower. It develops through aging. Over time, the body becomes slower to respond, more likely to sit at rest, more content to observe rather than act. But in each case the fundamental healing question remains the same: What aspect of consciousness will traverse the increasing gap between mind and body?"

"The environmental movement, however misconstrued, is an attempt to integrate mind and body, to balance our wealth generation and consumption habits with the body that is Earth. ... Mind-body integration is not just a personal health strategy, it is a potentially evolutionary movement of consciousness."

Matthew Sanford

Waking: A Memoir of Trauma and Transcendence, 2006

*"Gravity is the root of lightness;
and stillness is the ruler of movement."*
from The Tao of the Body