

An Interview with Ossi Stein

Ossi Stein comes from Kiriyat Tivron in Israel and turned 36 years old in 2006. She earned a B.A. in Education from Barilon University in Tel Aviv. In 2000 she graduated from Ohalo with a degree in Hydrotherapy. Ossi teaches baby swimming and hydrogymnastics. She has been a Watsu Practitioner for 8 years and in 2006 qualified as a WaterDance Practitioner. Additionally, she has studied Healing Dance I and Healing Dance Shape and Space, at times assisting in Introductions to Healing Dance. Ossi works in her own pool in Tivron, the name of which translates from Hebrew as "Touching in Water." Her work with individual clients consists almost entirely of Healing Dance's underwater Shape and Space.

"Working in the water changed my entire perspective on life. I pay more attention to the inside than to the body. Underwater receivers are free; everything from inside comes outside"

Autistic people

"For 10 years I worked in a rehab program with autistic people. My main interest was this PDD condition. We originally worked with them on land, then started to take them into the water. They like water very much; most like to go under. We would just take them under, but it was better after studying Shape and Space. I gained the ability to guide them through the water, to take them down and bring them back without violence. I have been involved in a research with a medical hospital in Haifa for PDD patients, and could see changes.

Cancer patients

"I am involved in a research with Sarit Nachmias with terminally ill cancer patients. They report that the feeling underwater is like taking morphine; it is the only place they have no pain. They are in constant pain, unable to walk, weak. They always come; they never cancel. One woman used the sessions to help her to say goodbye to her child; she would write letters to her child on returning home from each session. She told me she would not come only when she was dying--and it happened so.

Eating disorders

"I am working with four bulimic/anorexic girls. They are all suicidal. All of them tend to stay down too long and run out of air, but want to stay even longer. It is clear to me from the tension in their bodies that they are suffering physically. I have to pull them up. It is as if they are drawn toward darkness and death.

"They say the session gives a moment of joy and silence that is not there in life, for they are always thinking, "I am not good enough." I can have a real conversation with them afterwards; otherwise they are usually pretending. After a session I can talk with the real girl, talking about such subjects as vomiting and hiding. With their consent, I take this information to their psychologist . They need touch, primarily, to be listened to, to be loved. They ask me, "Do you still love us? You're not disgusted, shocked?" "Yes," I tell them." "Okay." Only one 18 year old tried to commit suicide during treatment; she was put in a psychiatric hospital and is only allowed out for our sessions."

Drug addicts

I only take drug addicts underwater. They like work that is rough, dynamic. They say it feels like it's on a trip. It's great for them. When letting go of drugs, the most difficult thing is not any getting drugs. The water work eases the transition.

In addition, I have worked underwater with abused women, children with CP and manic depressive patients referred by psychologists.

