

## Movement As Medicine

The day Sommer Albertsen walked into a studio and a Nia class, she walked into her life mission. Nia is the art of movement the body's way. It's a cardio-dance workout, a movement practice, and lifestyle based on the intelligent design of the body. Nia's philosophy believes every person can discover, explore, unleash, and enhance their individual potential to live a healthy and meaningful life by engaging their senses and listening to their bodies.

Sommer reflects this philosophy and by all appearances, is an empath and natural activist. For as long as she can remember, she's felt empathy and caring for others. In college, she befriended the underdog and hung out with a best friend who, along with her, wanted to create global peace.



Accomplished in Jazz, Ballet and Modern Dance, she felt something was missing until she found Nia. She immediately felt the synergistic energy in the room. "The stars aligned," she says, she got weepy and heard her soul calling. Dance for her was competitive and structure; Nia was judgment-free, self-loving and freeing. It was *somatic*. The students found that freedom and flowing movement allowed them to discover themselves as amazing just the way they were. In that moment, Sommer knew she was home.

She finds it a joy to be with people who struggled with their limitations and her heart quickens when she works hands-on to enhance their vitality. She has worked with elders with Alzheimers and in Assisted Living.

She calls compassion "Lady Compassion" and considers herself her humble student. She met Jon Ramer, also a fan of compassion who is the founder of Compassion Games which is a co-optition, not competition and the winner is based on survival of not the "fittest" but the *kindest*. She and Jon found love not just in compassion, but in each other and are now a couple. Sommer is now on the leadership team for the Compassion Games. She hosts gatherings that celebrate movement as an alternative to medicating your feelings, as a way to create freedom and flow in the body as a remedy to the lack of love for self, for others and for the Earth.

### 3-D Compassion is a Healing Medicine

Q. What is 3-D compassion? What is the 3-D template for compassion?

A. Learning to be compassionate with:

Self

Others

The Planet

Q. How can we be compassionate to self in a way that helps others and ultimately helps the planet?

A. Many are consciously or unconsciously processing grief about the state of Planet Earth. "A world in trouble" was introduced into the collective consciousness decades ago. It is a contemporary issue: Earth is on a trajectory of danger caused by the activities of humans.

We can't dismiss this suspicion, avoid any news reports, or turn away from the projected consequences of Earth changes; we can only defend against the feelings that come with that knowledge or suspicion or process them. We can "digest" our feelings much the same way that we digest the food we take in.

Defense mechanisms are things like minimizing, denial, distraction, defensiveness, anger, withdrawal, overwhelm, collapse, and using substances to cope with the anxiety of the sense of looming danger, to name a few.

The human mind can deny or distract all it cares to, but the body knows. It always knows. The body is far more reliable a barometer of reality than the mind which can play tricks to alter a distasteful reality. Humans don't like pain and will go to great lengths to avoid it or avoid witnessing or acknowledging it.

Stressors invade the body and are held inside unless and until they are processed and let go. The symptoms of accumulated stress manifest in things like tightness; set jaw or grinding teeth; rigidity; confusion or brain fog; aching; tension; rapid speech; interrupting bad news or discussions about problems or deflecting the conversation either deliberately or unknowingly; insomnia; overeating; excess alcohol; nervous laughter; unrealized habitual body movements or speech patterns; agitating (unconscious movement like foot swinging or shaking); unexpressed anger in musculature such as a clenched fist or clenched jaw; unexplained pain; melancholy or depression; shallow breathing, rapid breathing or breathing from high in the chest instead of the abdomen...

Q. How can we identify unresolved feelings held in the body?

A. Mindfulness and Movement. Pay attention to the body and its messages and mobilize the feelings to move them through and out of the body.

Q. How?

A. Employ movements of Self grace.

Q. What is Self grace?

A. Self grace is taking action to nurture the mind, body and spirit of your being.

Q. How do I engage Self grace?

A. Ease the Nervous System through:

### **Mindful Embrace**

Noticing where a feeling is in your body and moving with it while breathing consciously with whatever the feeling is. Sense how it feels while suspending judgment. Just witness it. Then rock back and forth right foot to left foot or get a ball and toss it from right hand to left back and forth while embracing and sensing into the movement of the back and forth motion. Ease into the moment and invite more peace with whatever is. This movement can be accompanied by music of your choice. You will notice at the completion of this movement that your nervous system has quieted down and you feel relaxed and better.

## Shaking it Out

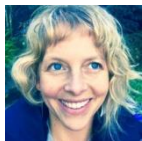
If you feel a block somewhere in the body or notice a pattern of irritating thoughts in your mind, this movement will help. Often we do not really listen to our bodies in the hustle and bustle of the day. A simple exercise of standing up and shaking can release blocks, help empty limiting thoughts, and make you more energized for what is next. Maybe there is a particular part of the body you want to loosen up and bring more flow to. You can start by bouncing your heels up and down and focusing on a particular place in your body; then begin to wiggle that spot for five minutes. You can make a wave of it starting with your feet, then up to your knees, hips, fingers, arms, spine, shoulders, and head. Your favorite music accompaniment can help you shift your mood.

After about five minutes, check in with yourself and see if you feel differently. This is a wonderful way to get your body's energy, Chi, and Prana feeling lighter. (There are differing names for the subtle energy that courses through the human body: called "Energy" in the West, "Chi" in Asia and "Prana" in East Indian cultures; the Old Testament referred to it as "Ruah.")

## Relaxing Into the Moment

If you find yourself feeling fear, sadness, contraction, or anxiety of any sort, this exercise can really help you relax and be more present with love again. It can be a movement meditation that lasts 2 to 10 minutes. You can set a timer if you like, or play background music in a place where you can feel comfortable enough to talk out loud. Start with standing or sitting. Focus on the inhale and exhale of your breath and let your spine be like a tree trunk swaying in the wind. Actually say out loud to body parts where you feel fear: "relax legs" or "relax spine" as many times as you need until you feel a release. Then move on to another body part and kindly invite it to "relax." There is great power in voicing something out loud rather than saying it silently. This practice helps us be more in relationship with our bodies and helps reveal more love and relaxation with whatever is present.

You can also use self massage where there is tension, which can really help move energies that are stuck in places in the body and make more space for joy and positive energy to move in. These are all brief and powerful examples of movement as medicine for the challenges of life: grief, overwhelm, sadness, numb, low energy and other feelings that can become toxic if held in the body.



*Sommer Joy Albertsen is a member of the Leadership Team as Compassion Games International Relations Coach & Artistic Outreach Director. She is passionate about bringing together complementary partnerships, creating connections between people and organizations who are committed to a kinder, more just and sustainable world. She has a Bachelors Degree from Western Washington University in Therapeutic Recreation which she continues to amplify with new programming skills and working with individuals' plans for quality of life and well being. She is a natural leader in advocating for women and girl's empowerment, people with various disabilities, elders, social justice and environmental issues. Her business, Island Joy Wellness, includes her work with Compassion Games, as an Energy Brilliance Healer, and Brown Belt Nia Teacher, where she employs her knowledge and experience to support both individuals, and communities around the world in aligning with their highest calling.*

[www.compassiongames.org](http://www.compassiongames.org)

[www.islandjoywellness.com](http://www.islandjoywellness.com)

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