

## What does Watsu® mean to you?

Julia Paula Motta de Souza Pinto asked this question of ten people with a wide range of backgrounds after each had received their tenth weekly Watsu session in a study conducted at the State University of Campinas in Brazil 2001. In a phenomenological approach she compiled each participant's answers into synopses that are translated below.

### 1. E.K.O. - 29 year old Linguist

*Had practiced popular dance for 3 years and frequently attends body oriented workshops*

Watsu is fundamentally a work of love in which, through the sensation of being held and cared for, I feel stronger and whole and able to love myself. Feeling worthy of love, I am better able to work through problems internally and externally. I see Watsu as opening the possibility of rebirth and a return to my oneness.

### 2. N.V. - 25 year old phonologist

*Had attended courses in aerobic gymnastic, body building, volleyball and Jazz. Does not receive bodywork.*

Watsu gives me a very pleasurable feeling of flying, of floating in the air. I find water to be a fundamental element in which I can completely surrender. Watsu gives me a sensation of harmony between body and mind which I see as a sign of health. Watsu is very relaxing, but at the same time it relaxes it increases my awareness of what is happening both inside and outside. During a session I feel completely present with a total attention to each moment.

### 3. M.R.A. - 32 year old biologist

*Had little prior experience with bodywork*

Watsu gives me a sensation of lightness both during and after a session, helping me to face life with more lightness, to face problems with more ease and keep them in perspective. I also find a strong sense of security, comfort and of being nurtured and at moments, of being in the womb.

### 4. S.C.P - 37 year old Physical Therapist

*Has done gymnastics, swims and enjoys taking walks.*

Watsu provides me the opportunity to surrender, to permit myself to be touched and cared for and at the same time, to be able to feel light, relaxed and free as a child. This freedom and surrender that I experience during a session brings more balance and strength to live a better life outside the pool, more lightness and ease and a greater access to my intuitive side.

5. M.H.F. - 51 year old teacher

*Is not used to any kind of bodywork but considers it important.*

Watsu encourages me to surrender and allows me to let go of my ego and open myself to something greater, a way to let go of tensions and fears. I feel lighter and less contracted for days afterwards and sleep better.

6. L.S. - 69 year old Astrologer

*Had practiced yoga and meditation but had some difficulties in relaxing.*

Watsu has provided me a way to get in contact with my own feelings and surrender more each time without losing consciousness of what is happening. I see Watsu as a therapy in which I can feel freer and find within a peace that stays with me the rest of the week. I find pleasure in Watsu's feeling of flying and feel a unity of body and mind.

7. J.S.P. - 24 year old psychologist

*Enjoys bodywork. Practices Yoga and swims.*

The trust, tranquility and calm felt during a session strengthens my ability to face life with more lightness, trust and ease. Watsu has strengthened my belief in God and my hope for better days, assuring me that I can be happy. The pleasure I feel in its surrender, helps me to be totally present and feel my oneness.

8. E.N.N. - 53 year old food engineer

*Had no previous experience with bodywork*

Watsu is a therapy that leads me to greater relaxation and tranquility, to better sleep at night, to feeling better with myself and others, and to be more able to face life's difficulties. In its work with both the body and mind at the same time, Watsu leads me to a sense of my oneness.

9. F.R. - 26 year old occupational therapist

*Practices gymnastics and swims*

For me Watsu is a profound form of meditation in which I find equilibrium, calm, peace and tranquility. Watsu works deeply on both body and mind, providing a sense of oneness, a oneness I also feel with my watsuer because of the trust established. Feeling completely relaxed and at the same time aware of everything happening with my body, I see Watsu as a new way to expand our body consciousness. Watsu's movements give me the sensation of alternating between expansiveness and a bringing together, between feeling myself as a well cared for child and as a fully grown, and growing, being.

10. U.N. - 40 year old executive

*Realized the need to take care of himself during a recent period of stress. Weekly attends relaxation therapy and psychotherapy.*

At the same time Watsu diminishes the tension in both body and mind, it increases my body awareness, balances my energy, and leads to a calm, a tranquility that persists for days afterwards and helps me sleep. In some sessions I feel I am accessing the memory of life in the womb, something that provides comfort and a sense of being protected for a long time afterwards.

The author of this study feels the common elements in the above point to what people in the western world feel are missing in their lives. She sees this as a result of the west's materialism, consumerism and underlying philosophical duality. She sees Watsu's value in helping to integrate the oriental sense of oneness into a new, much needed, paradigm for the west.