

SpaHealer

Writer Stephanie Shiu

Anastasia Williams

Naam yoga teacher and Harmonym healer on adversity as opportunity, and putting yourself first

Anastasia Williams needn't say a word to make a lasting impression – using only the power of touch. We met in the hushed, dimly lit spa surrounds of The Landmark Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong, where she spent more than a fortnight leading Naam Yoga classes and giving Harmonym Healing treatments. I was fortunate enough to experience the latter, emerging an hour later more balanced and deeply relaxed than I had in probably too long, eager to understand more about this energy healing system beyond its mellowing effects, and her clearly apparent gift.

Even from a young age, Williams was fascinated with alternative therapies. She says, “My favourite aunt was into herbs and crystals and would make tinctures for me. Healing through nature seemed a logical process for me. Though I do still believe western medicine certainly has its place, it is about an integrated approach.”

Harmonym was developed by Dr Joseph Michael Levy, also the founder of Naam Yoga, and a huge influence for Williams. To counteract the stress of modern lifestyles, it works by using touch to trigger the ‘on’ switch to the autonomic nervous system to alleviate anxiety and worry on a physical level, but also cleanses the subconscious mind which can be beneficial for those who have experienced trauma, depression or have unhealthy habits. It’s no surprise then that some report a sense of peace akin to years of meditation, or clearer eyes and complexion after the treatment.

Williams’ advice is not to take any challenge too personally, instead to consider obstacles a blessing in disguise. “For those who feel unsure how to move beyond a



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blockage, one effective thing is to realise it is here to help you. Nothing in life is a straight line, there are many twists and turns to inform, teach, guide and heal us so we have the capacity for what we are working towards.” She believes that challenges create necessary separation, and that it’s most crucial to be gentle with yourself and avoid making comparisons.

What others may consider adversity, Williams perceives as an opportunity for personal growth. “With my experience comes patience, compassion, empathy, humility and grace. In helping others I work to impart these tools, so no matter how challenging the situation we can respond,

versus react. Look for the silver lining in every situation. One problem is always the solution for another larger problem. Remember nothing is for nothing.”

For those keen to “invest in themselves”, Williams suggests creating the habit of breathing more deeply as a way to better connect with feelings and intuition; to be more aware of our thoughts, feelings, actions and attitudes; and simply to smile, the very act of which opens up receptivity in the brain and nervous system which in turn relieves stress and encourages responsiveness.

While Williams believes programmes, including her own Nourish Your Soul Retreat which took place in December 2016, provide a chance to step away from everyday lives and enjoy new surrounds and people, she remains aware of the importance of continuing healthy habits after returning home. She says, “It is possible to make lasting positive shifts, but you have to go back to your life with conscious, active awareness that you need to create your habits in your home surroundings differently too.”

One way to achieve this is making ourselves a priority, which Williams feels is a necessity, not a luxury. She believes taking time for ourselves every day, whether through journaling, dancing, surrounding ourselves with nature, meditating, doing yoga or getting a massage are things we do for the soul. “Get off the phone and digital devices and connect. Feel what is calling you in life,” she says. “Self-care fills up our cup with goodness, so that we give more generously to our colleagues, loved ones, friends and family and even strangers on the street.” www.anastasia-williams.com 