

## My Journal Speaks and I Listen!

*Creative steps in forming ITP Chicago*

by Jill Robinson, ITP Chicago group leader

I realized that Integral Transformative Practice (ITP) was a necessary part of my life after attending a workshop with Pam and Barry in Chicago two years ago and then having the amazing opportunity to spend a weekend at Mastery learning about the kata last year. The final nudge to start a group in Chicago came after a magical weekend at Esalen last October when I participated in an ITP workshop. I realized that this was a special community that I wanted to be a part of, and to share with my friends back home. On the flight back to Chicago, I wrote in my journal, "I will start a group in November."



Our fledgling group of 8 members met in my apartment for the first cycle. Squeezing into any open space we could find, we shared in the kata every Saturday morning and the two or three pots of extra strong coffee that made for some enthusiastic sharing circles. Our mornings together were more than formal discussions on the ITP practice and commitments. They were two hours of deep conversation, lots of laughter and a safe space for each member to reflect and explore their personal potential.

We focused an extended amount of time on our vision, affirmations, the kata and learning how to stay current through sharing. Most of us had previously spent a lot of time in our heads, asking internal questions, but we now had a community with which to bounce our ideas and share resources. At the end of the cycle, we signed our affirmation contracts. In August, we will check in on how our affirmations have been helping us along the path.

We are a very young group. I'm the oldest at 33 years. Most of us are still searching for our personal paths. ITP has given us a practice that has deepened our conversations around our goals, aspirations and intentions. In an age when most of us meet at a bar to converse, this is a welcomed space to share at a very intimate level. I know I have been extremely grateful and blessed to be able to host such a wonderful group of people in my apartment.

It has been an amazing experience to watch every member of our group grow and develop in incredible ways. We started as a collective of co-workers and acquaintances and grew to be a very supportive, open and enthusiastic group of friends. ITP Chicago has celebrated members starting new, successful careers, taking on various leadership roles, and pursuing creative projects that before had been daydreams. Two weeks ago, we welcome our newest member, Claire Esther Labat, born to member Anna Labat. The first ITP Chicago baby!

I have changed and grown as a leader in ways I never could have foreseen since that weekend at Esalen. I am excited to grow the group and find a new and larger official space. The ITP Chicago group looks forward to opening up our next cycle in mid-September with a new location and a few more members to share in the practice.