

Because of InterPlay...

On Saturday, April 8, 2006, we held our fourth annual InterPlay fundraising lunch. This year, I wanted to tell the gathered crowd how InterPlay was changing people's lives. I wrote an email to the InterPlay Leaders Circle asking them to tell me how InterPlay had changed their lives by finishing the phrase "because of InterPlay..." I also asked them to tell me how and where they were using InterPlay. I got 35 delightful responses.

Because of InterPlay, I am more free to express a playful and vigorous energy and know that it is beneath and beyond words and that it gives words new ring and conviction. It brings together mind and heart and gut and soul into one sinewy whole.

Paul Kircher, Oakland, CA

Because of InterPlay, I am able to move ahead in all areas of my life by taking Incremental steps. Stuckness softens with a breath and a sigh. Playing with easy focus, inner and outer focus helps me to move through the world with more ease.

Judy Shook, Captain Cook, I

Because of InterPlay, I can wave at crusty old Sicilians, even when I know they'll look at me with mouth agape, "Che Dio! Who the heck is that?"

I use InterPlay in my life every day.

For myself—spiritual practices, grounding, finding more comfort in my body.

With others—mostly to create ease by helping them laugh or to break up the rigid patterns of daily life. Sometimes people get stuck and just need an excuse to get out of a routine and get happy. I can be a silly, unexpected excuse.

Joa Datillo, Santa Fe, NM

Because of InterPlay, I am a better person. I accept others for who they are and look for the good in all. I am a better teacher and a better follower. InterPlay has helped me heal a lot of emotional and spiritual wounds...

Dena Lee, Seattle, WA

because of interplay i have more ease when life throws me a curve ball and i need to get out of the way...or more to the point...get out of my way to make way for the BIGGER WAY!!!

because of interplay and the gift of bodywisdom, i have saved my dance career and am doing more of the creative work that i want the world to witness.

because of interplay, or phil porter, i really do believe that i can have it all!!! (even though my mother stills says that it is not possible)

anita bondi, Delaware Water Gap, PA

I don't take life so seriously anymore. In fact, I've overcome my family system propriety by experiencing for myself the freedom of farting. So far I only do it in private.

Liz Lang, Seattle, WA

Because of InterPlay, I can move between a big body spirit & a little body spirit. That's important for a sensitive body!

I'm building InterPlay communities in Des Moines and Iowa City. I'm using InterPlay in church settings, with Spiritual Directors, with Parish Nurses, and any other folks who walk through the door!

Mary Ellen Lewis, Des Moines, IA

Because of InterPlay, I have more joy and affirmation in my life. I have always wanted to move and dance, but without formal dance training, opportunities were very limited until I found InterPlay. There I discovered that whatever I did or said or sang was right, because I was expressing the whole of me. I even love the organizational work (play!) that goes with getting an InterPlay community going in the DC area. InterPlay has given me a way to use my organizational gifts as well as express my child-like, fun-loving spirit. It has truly transformed my life.

InterPlay has become part of the culture of Seekers Church in DC. Members who are InterPlayers have been asked to offer the gospel readings for the season of Easter (7 Sundays!) this year using InterPlay forms! I'm sure in part that's because last June Phil did a big body story for the sermon, and Cynthia called up 3 pairs to do a hand dance while she read the gospel, and then created a chant on the spot. Another Sunday this past fall, Ginny & Tom led us in a gesture choir for one of the lectionary readings. So our Celebration Circle who plans the worship liturgies, knows what they're requesting! We're excited!

Sue Johnson, Washington, D.C.

Oh boy oh boy I have a lot to say but that's for another time. I'm madly rushing to finish the grant report for the work I did w/ HOSPICE CAREGIVERS, so that's one group for your list. And just did a workshop for folks in HOLISTIC HEALTH & HEALING fields at Conference of same name at Western Michigan U.

Because of InterPlay, I am able to do what I love with others in almost any situation. It brings me joy to access the kid in me and see the kids in other adults come out to play. Because of InterPlay, I get to work and play with my musician-husband and our collaborations just keep getting better. Because of InterPlay, I see magic.

Gay Guard-Chamberlin, Kalamazoo, MI

I use some forms occasionally whenever I can to inject some fun at a party or gathering, like there's always a few willing to tell side-by-side stories, or some babbling gets people revved up, or games I've made up like Siamese Stories (two people alternate words quickly and see where the story goes). I find myself making up games for people to play everywhere, like at the market, or at city hall, or at a Hospice meeting.

I occasionally make my wide open or closed face at someone who looks like they're vacant.

Because of IP:

I'm more comfortable and confident and have more fun in groups.

I have found, mainly thru elimination, my purpose in life... to eat.. (I mean it)

I've found my urge to perform experimentally

My learning comes from listening to other's stories.

I'm learning about the exquisite power of affirmation

I'm more aware of my judgements and my 'inner asshole'

Dyck DeWid, Wake Forest, NC

Because of InterPlay, I have found my voice, my dance, my story, my song, my heart's true home.

Ginny Going, Raleigh, NC

Because of InterPlay, I have a life today. I wrote an unpublished bio that turned into a one man show..great personal growth therapy...encouraging me to take greater opportunity to move out of stagnation of ill health from HIV to a productive life...did a interim ministry gig, now lounging in Palm Springs and going to get an MSW in two years....giving back to community...may do InterPlay with retirees/elderly as I have done in Chicago adult day care and Alzheimers unit in Sturgeon Bay, WI.

Charles A. "Chuck" Selner , Palm Springs, CA

Because of InterPlay, I have a better understanding of myself and my place in the world around me.

Neva Schuelke, Oro Valley, AZ

Because of InterPlay, I am able to be the change I love. I am so grateful to know the forms and have the support of the InterPlay community so that I can bring more ease, body wisdom, and fun into our world. I used to hang back and just wish that I could make a difference but now I have the enthusiasm, knowledge, and confidence to actually feel as if I am making a difference.

Quite recently, a few of us InterPlayers were invited to do some InterPlay for the "Great Easter Vigil" at St Albans Church, an Episcopalian church located on the grounds of the Washington National Cathedral. Also, Billy (Amoss), Sue (Johnson), and I were also invited by our church, Seekers, to do InterPlay for the readings on each of the Sundays during the Easter season. Things they are a changing.

Sue (Johnson), Lacey (Gude) and I have also been invited to do an evening of InterPlay for the Capitol Creativity Network, a growing group (over a thousand people on the email list) of people who are desirous of bringing more creativity into their worklives.

I am also going to be a "guest artist" for an art camp for kids that is run out of five different schools in Montgomery County over the summer.

Yay for InterPlay!

Kate Amoss, Washington, D.C.

Because of InterPlay, I have a spiritual community that is so wide and capacious that I can bring my full self and make myself at home. InterPlay extends my sense of freedom and creativity.

See you sometime in the summer, probably June.

Courtney Goto, Atlanta, GA

Because of InterPlay, I no longer sit at a desk for a living (YEA!!!!) and I can hardly believe that I did it for more than 6 years (Can you imagine me sitting for that long?!!) I get to inhabit my own skin so much more of the time without apology for being "unconventional". Because of InterPlay I get to be a bohemian in suburbia and, much like the Pied Piper, get to bring others to this spacious fringe with me.

I am currently starting a weekly InterPlay group in New Haven (or several days per week, even better) and lead InterPlay regularly in the big house, York Women's Correctional Facility in CT, for an inmate hospice vol-

unteer initiative. I am teaming with other area leaders to offer workshops for churches and existing groups and am talking with others about leading InterPlay excursions to incorporate a retreat environment and cultural experience. I am also speaking with others in the Northeast about a performance ensemble for InterPlayers in the near future.

Lisa Laing, Ivoryton, CT

Because of InterPlay, I live life more freely and fully. I have learned to appreciate myself and others more deeply and can live and love with grace and joy. InterPlay has helped me lighten-up and choose humor and play even in difficult situations. It has helped me make major life changes, both in instigating small steps toward change, but also in negotiating changes such as international moves and cross-cultural situations. InterPlay has enhanced my creativity and taught me to take risks and be more bold.

I currently share InterPlay in my church in Bangkok, Thailand and use it as a tool in Spiritual Direction. I've also introduced InterPlay to the Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction program at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Debra Weir, Bangkok, Thailand

Because of InterPlay, I can interact with 100 people a day. I work at the front desk of a small, independent middle school. I am the first smiling (or not) face you see when you walk into the building. I see, talk to, shape, hang, thrust, and swing with 82 students, 20 faculty, and several parents that wander in for counsel and advice. InterPlay keeps me in the moment, to respond with grace, ease, lots of deep breaths - I can't tell you how many deep breaths I have advised teachers or parents to take - and I am the queen of breathing deeply and substantially in my frontline cubicle. InterPlay has saved my life (and the lives of the students in my care and their parents, particularly).

Ingrid Hurlen, Seattle, WA

Because of InterPlay, I have more compassion for myself, which leads to having much more compassion for others.

...I'm not afraid to make mistakes!

Susanne Mulcahy, San Jose, CA

Because of InterPlay I think of myself as a performance artist and claim it out loud... I actually say "I am a performance artist" to people at parties.

Because of InterPlay I think about what a wonderful story a current life crisis will make- and often get to

thinking more playfully about it after I have a laugh at picturing myself whining and ranting...

Because of InterPlay I am more self confident and am more compassionate with myself when I think I'm lacking in self confidence.

I'm using IP in creating poetry and stories with small groups, working on performance and sharing creating around "deep stuff".

I am using IP with a buddhist group - they seem to really like it.

Terry McCarthy, Carrboro, NC

Because of InterPlay I am able to continue to invest in life, look for the good and expect to find it, even after the death of two of my three children. I am able to go into stillness and trust that something will come forth just when I need it. I celebrate with song every day, and use interplay practices and forms to spark my own creativity and that of all the people to whom I teach InterPlay.

I use InterPlay to teach selfcare to professional and family caregivers, to kids and adult staff and volunteers in a boys and girls club in Pittsburgh, to women in prison in Texas, to people in a church community in North Dallas, to women in a faith community of artists, to seniors in an adult lifelong learning program at the university in Pittsburgh, to children in a summer day camp program in Nebraska (as part of a research program on early childhood development). I also teach InterPlay as part of a program on healthy lifestyles, relating InterPlay principles and practices to the research on stress and the factors that mediate its effects.

I mentor professional helpers to use InterPlay with women in a shelter to escape domestic violence, with clients who have experienced post traumatic stress disorders, and with groups of clients who have been convicted of drug and alcohol offenses.

I am in North Texas now, soon to drive to Austin and then eventually back to Pittsburgh where I will do an inservice for the Western Psychiatric Institute staff on the place of spirituality in healing. I will be using InterPlay forms for that event as well.

Sheila Collins, Pittsburgh, PA (and Texas!)

Because of InterPlay, I am awake and curious - body, mind, heart, spirit together again at last! Sometimes disturbingly so! Always amazingly so!

Also, tell me where you are using InterPlay with others...Over these many, many years since I bumped into InterPlay, I have consciously applied the philosophical concepts, practices and forms in parenting my son and coaching business clients. I notice that I have also

steeped in the “InterPlay tea” for long enough that I use it with others more than I am conscious of.

Most recently, I have used InterPlay forms as discovery tools with small groups exploring their ability to collaborate.

Nika N. Quirk, M.B.A., Oakland, CA

Because of InterPlay
I can dance out depression
and hang on hope
Swing with laughter
and shape stillness into a prayer for you
Exquisitely listen to another human
who touches me

In a spot light
and three sentences
tell a story that connects us

I can shake out the bad stuff
and take long luxurious breaths
ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh

With everyday graces InterPlay practices
keep me sane

Janet Jones (formerly Messick), Raleigh, NC

Because of InterPlay, I walk out into the world with so much more ease and trust. I don’t have to MAKE everything happen, if I’m jumpin’ in the mix, I’ll respond, react, initiate - do what’s called for or nothing at all — it will be OK (even better!), AND won’t be done alone. This sounds a bit grand, but in a smallish and easy-focused way, I feel the healer in me growing.

I’m using IntePlay with willing adults in play groups, as a leader and as a peer; I’m sneaking it into our church’s eighth grade arts curriculum; I recently led a big bunch of people in a parade and participatory blessing of a newly renovated community museum and will lead a bunch of folks in stomping and chanting together in an irreverent but heart-felt appreciation for our Earth home - (Motto with crowds: get them to do something they didn’t know they could do and then take them onward from there.). I would never have waltzed into these leader roles even a few years ago; Now I understand how easily the river can be swum, if we just jump in and trust.

There you go!

CC King, Concord, MA

Because of InterPlay, I am reminded that I can change the moment for the better just with a smile, a silly song or dance, or simply listening to someone” “We have a unique power to dance with the divine when we

access our creativity. InterPlay helps us to do that in an ease filled and accessible way!

I am blessed to be leading “Deep divers” in InterPlay classes and the leadership program. I am also finding it lifesaving in my work with persons with Alzheimers and with my work with children. The power of 30 second dances and stories cannot be underestimated. Just try it with one of those populations! It is a good lesson for us adults who muliti-task, pretend that we are concentrating, and generally are tuned out.

InterPlay helps us listen to that creative urge that flows through us—not only listen but to spread our wings and FLY!

Jane Siarny, St. Charles, IL

... I am finding joy of unexpected movement and uncovering faith beyond borders

Julia McKay, Berkeley, CA

Because of IP, I met Fred (my husband)!

Because of IP, I have discovered that I lead with my face.

Because of IP, I have had the amazing experience of playing with people, who

I otherwise probably wouldn’t have connected with.

Because of IP, I’ve discovered that my gifts for harmonizing, and my comfort with silence and stillness, add lovely texture to story forms.

I’m just beginning coursework for a K-8 Teaching certificate, and my obvious hope is to bring the fruits of IP to my colleagues in the training program as well as to older elementary age kids in the future. Yippee!!!!!!

Harriet Platts, Seattle, WA

Because of InterPlay, I have come to believe in the power of creativity and community at all levels and ages. As a professionally trained dancer and

educator, I still find the most authenticity in the InterPlay work. That is why it remains so much a part of my practice and philosophy as it has since first

being introduced to the work in 1988. I use InterPlay with teens and am proud to say that those teens have had an opportunity to touch adults in ways

neither imagined. InterPlay has blended beautifully with so many of the experiences I’ve introduced to dance/ theatre/ and fine arts students over the years, but underneath it all is the power that the teens have learned in how to treat one another with respect and create a non judgemental environment for all.

Diane Rawlinson, M.F.A., Libertyville, IL

Because of InterPlay, I have evolved from being “new” in Nashville, to having a full, vibrant, diverse, supportive community of well over a hundred fascinating people in less than four years! We’ve had over 300 gatherings of all sorts, in this time, and amazing collaborations between creative people are emerging in all directions. Our leadership program alone has had over 37 participants. This opportunity to be part of a generative web of grace-FULL community connections has totally enriched my personal and professional life.

Diane Saliba Ault, Nashville, TN

What is InterPlay to me?

This is not rocket science.

Although even that seems like it could be easy now.

This is not therapy.

It is therapeutic.

This is not your father’s Oldsmobile.

It’s a custom, tangerine Maserati with funky flower upholstery, purple tinted windows, and the exhaust has the scent of a baby.

This is not what you signed up for.

It is what God intended for you, so live it up!

This is not the Taj Mahal.

Oh! Wait! Maybe it is! My body? Yes! My body IS the Taj Mahal!

This is not the end of the story.

This is the whole friggin ball-o-wax with popcorn, streamers, ranting, giggles and big sighs.

No minors are allowed.

No. There are no minors here. We are all all MAJOR MAJOR lovers of life!

Livers with onions? If you want...

Livers with Spirit? Absolutely.

Show up. HAVE it. BE it. DO it.

Come out of the friggin’ closet!

Be who you are.

I sayyyyyed, “BE”

“WHO”

“YOU”

“ARE”

Wow. What a ride.

Living it every which way I can,

Rosemary Senjem, Minneapolis, MN

Because of InterPlay, I am more willing and ready to get out of the box and to be free of our cultures’ restrictions and expectations.

Because of InterPlay, I am not as inhibited in my body—I listen more deeply to my physical desires, and when my body wants to move, I not only allow it

to, I often encourage it! (Sometimes I am still inhibited.)

Because of InterPlay, I have more fun telling stories to friends. I allow myself to stretch the truth and exaggerate and even lie at times (as long as no harm is done)—anything to entertain myself and others!

Because of InterPlay, I am more aware of how I like to shape situations and environments, and I have more compassion for those who have no interest in shaping.

Because of InterPlay, I am able to make up songs on the spot and I trust that my voice can dance in this way.

Anna Matheson, Arden, NC

Because of InterPlay, I am a more playful and expressive person, am less self-conscious in front of large groups, am using movement more in my prayer/meditation.

Where I am using InterPlay with others:

- occasionally at Presbytery meetings: ask people to move, babble, hold hands—lots of energy, noise, smiles and laughter and conversation result.

- at my church: Victoria Allen and I did a DT3 duet sermon on 1/1; I taught a four-week Sunday morning course in January; and am winding up a six-week Sunday morning Lenten lectionary study/InterPlay course.

- thanks to Cynthia’s recommendation, I will be leading the adult study part of Epworth UMC’s (Berkeley) retreat at the end of April, using InterPlay to connect with some themes from that church’s life.

- I have been invited to teach a series of InterPlay workshops at another Presbyterian church in the area next year.

Too much fun!

Jeff Cheifetz, San Francisco, CA

Because of InterPlay I now have groups in my classroom that function well together.

Because of InterPlay (and Leo the Hunk) Zelda was born.

Because of InterPlay my teaching has a more positive tone.

Because of InterPlay I have wonderful family like friends, especially Phil and Cynthia.

Johannas Jordan, Bemidji, MN

Because of InterPlay, I can speak in front of people without being self-conscious. Not being able to do that greatly limited many life choices in the past.

Because of InterPlay, I see all people as being holders of full, wonderful stories.

Kate Nelson, Seattle, WA

InterPlay has changed my life by freeing my improvisational spirit in a risk-free environment and expanding my world of spirited playments bringing me great joy!!!

Carol Scott-Kassner, Federal Way, WA

During the night, Isabel, my daughter, came into bed with me. She was restless for a while and then she told me she was scared to close her eyes because she didn't want to dream of the alligators again. The alligators were trying to get her in a dream that had woken her. I suggested a hand dance telling the alligators to go away. I have used this form before with her to "get feelings out", so she knew what it was. She said OK, and her little hand went into the air and moved around for a minute or two. Then she sighed, closed her eyes and went to sleep.

Claudette Mouton, Santa Cruz, CA
