

Interview with Joan Dwyer, Founder of All That Matters Holistic Center

by Leigh Vincola on May 23, 2013



You've had a long career in the healing arts. Can you tell us a little about your background and what led you to create All That Matters?

I was brought up by a very ethnic Syrian family. My dad was in the restaurant business and my mom was a great Syrian cook. I had wanted to go to cooking school, but my dad did not want me to. When I went off to college in North Carolina, my sister dropped off a 25 bag of brown rice. She knew I had no money and was into health food. I started to hang out at the natural food store to learn more and a number of my ailments started to disappear. I quit college and headed to Boston to live in the Ann Wigmore Raw Food Center. While there, my sister came to Boston to study with Micho Kushi who was the head of the Macrobiotic Movement. I started to study with him too. Later I opened a Macrobiotic center in MO and taught classes for many years while my husband David was in school. I was pretty much a fanatic—5 home births, cooking everything from scratch. I loved that the field of holistic health made some much sense.

At its core, what would you say is the philosophy behind All That Matters?

At ATM we believe that health is possible for all and that it is not that complicated. If you eat well, move your body and find time to be quiet— life works. We often use the byline— “inner peace leads to world peace, and that is all that matters.”

Has this philosophy remained steady over the years or has it evolved as the world, the industry, you, have evolved as well?

It has been steady. The beauty in holistic health is that it is rooted in ancient wisdom that does not change. Most of this stuff is thousands of years old. Yoga, eating close to the earth, mediation etc.

You offer a large range of wellness modalities: everything from yoga, massage, meditation, nutrition, reflexology, Ayurvedic treatments, naturpathic medicine, wellness counseling and more. How do you maintain a consistency of quality and integrity among all your practitioners?

I am not sure there is one answer to this. The folks who apply here know and value ATM. This is a good start. We get recommendations, we meet with folks over and over again before we hire them, and there is a team of us who hire collaboratively. So by time we are all on board, it feels right all around.

What do you feel is your greatest leadership skill that you bring to All That Matters?

I am creative, good at strategy and work with smart people. I also know this field well. I have been a student of the healing arts for 36 years!

What does your business still give to you regularly?

1000 folks a week come through our doors here at ATM. Each are healing, growing, transforming—that is my work. I work with talented folks who inspire me and I am constantly learning new things. I teach throughout the country and am writing a book now too!

What's the book about?

We have been teaching a 40 day program for 5 years and 1000 people have taken it with grand results. In October we will have the first draft of “*The All That Matters 40 day Program: eat well, move well, be well*” (working title).

Where do you see the future of All that Matters and the “wellness” industry in general as it has become talked about than ever before?

Like I said before, this stuff is thousands of years old- it is not going anywhere. It brings me great joy that it is becoming mainstream. When everyone is doing yoga, eating well, meditating and feeling great I will be happy to take a long winters nap.