

## INTERVIEW with Frank Butterfield



Frank Butterfield has been making an impact within the fitness field for over 25 years as a trainer, speaker and consultant. He is ACE certified in personal training, group exercise, lifestyle and weight management, and was formerly the Fitness Event Manager for Nike Inc, and the director of the US launch for Body Pump.

Frank will be included in our ECA/NYC 2008 lineup. His presentations will offer a new way of looking at old ideas and concepts. Communication, personal growth, ethics, the definition of true happiness and self correction, are running themes in Frank's workshops. According to many, he is a true visionary, and I think the following interview will give you a glimpse of that vision and an example of his work ethic.

**ECA:** How do you develop your ideas and programs?

**Frank:** My ideas are generated by peoples' needs or requests. They are all situational I have always looked for the void and addressed that. In the Tao to Ching there is a wonderful thought that although we appreciate the vase it is the empty space created by the vase that we use. So, I look for the empty space. I listen, and I watch. What is not being fulfilled is what I choose to study. Aristotle said that we should all make our actions in service of the everyday man. I let people tell me what they need in actions or words.

**ECA:** How do you continually feed yourself information?

**Frank:** Read. Read. Read. There are so many great seeds in the glancing thoughts of others. Open your mind to the impossible. A full vessel cannot accept anything more, so accept ignorance as a life pattern. Admit you do not know, then you have room to receive.

**ECA:** Has your perspective of the fitness industry changed?

**Frank:** Absolutely. There are pros and cons. We have so many new formats. Instructors can choose to be master of few or average at many. Seek your passion. I do not believe that you can attend a weekend workshop on yoga and teach a program. It is an insult to those people who have made yoga a lifestyle. I choose to defer to the experts. There has also been a large turnover of the "ins." A whole new group of instructors, young and enthusiastic are coming. Everything that became stale years ago is necessary again. The basics are crucial. A new instructor cannot jump in with the skill of the 25 year veteran. And, that veteran is teaching less and coaching more. Probably he has also crossed over to personal training and lifestyle management. I considered myself done with the presenting industry. But new trainers and instructors need to hear the message of the importance of how they change peoples' lives, emotionally and spiritually through movement.

**ECA:** Where have you found resistance?

**Frank:** I haven't. If you approach a class, client, employer or peer openly then there is nothing to resist. Each of us is an expert only on himself. On everything else we are students. Like swimming, the harder you push against the water, the harder the water resists you. Glide and the water accepts you. With people, it is the same. Glide, don't push.

**ECA:** What do you still need to do to get ideas across?

**Frank:** I need to meet more people. Since we do not live in a bubble, our contacts with other people allow for an exchange of ideas. Every person you meet unknowingly gives you something and takes something from you. Who can say they have enough friends or have met enough people. The more people you effect, the more the world changes. This is real immortality: to have a thought that lives through others.

**ECA:** What accomplishments are you most proud of?

**Frank:** I suppose that I am most settled in making contact with my history again. After college, I simply moved forward. I forgot the importance of worshiping the past. I am a product of where I came from and what I went through. I have never received a reward or have been given credit, but I know that what I do best is bring like minds or necessary resources together. To see the result of those chance connections is overwhelming. I am most proud that the world will be different forever because perhaps just one person listened when I spoke and made a different decision or action.

**ECA:** What have you learned through your own process?

**Frank:** The more I learn, the more I learn I don't know. Knowledge creates hunger for knowledge.

**ECA:** How does one achieve longevity in this field?

**Frank:** Be ever changing. Challenge the system. Look for the un-thought-of idea. That is, seek the questions, the answers are easy. Stamina helps. There will always be adversity and disappointment. These are tools for learning, not endings. Give selflessly. We are never done making small change with giant impacts.

**ECA:** Have there been times when the information out there did not match your beliefs?

**Frank:** Every day. What a dull day it would be if we all agreed. Seek conflict and accept discussion. The worst-case scenario is that at the end of the day, we all agree to disagree. However, perspectives change and so do I. I learn to accept that the differences are what make each of us unique. It is really an exciting thought when you step back from your own ego. I am in charge of my feelings, no one else. So I choose to let them get hurt or make them expand. We all come from past personal experiences so how can we all believe the same. Conflict is education.



### BOOKS FRANK LOVES:

"Tao Te Ching," trans. Stephen Mitchell  
This is just a great reference for keeping your mind in balance.

"The Connoisseur's Guide to the Mind," Roger C. Schank  
A great book on the cognitive process, how we think and how thoughts are tied together.



"Whack on the Side of the Head," Roger von Oech  
If you want to be more creative, this is the perfect guide!

"Evolution of Consciousness," Robert Ornstein  
This really helped me understand why I think and act the way I do, to realize that my thoughts are organic.

"The Tales of the City Series," Armistead Maupin  
It starts as such light-hearted fun, but it parallels society as the writing moves forward in time.

The Adrian Mole Series, Sue Townsend  
This is pure indulgence. It is just fun to read.



"Einstein's Dreams," Alan Lightman  
How many different ways can time progress, or regress. It helps to have an open mind.

All 13 books in the Lemony Snicket series of Unfortunate events, Lemony Snicket  
If ever you were tempted to "ask much worse can it get?" these books will break the habit.

"Anything" by May Sarton  
She was completely overlooked during her lifetime, and she had so much to say.

"Having Our Say," The Delaney Sisters  
You can have, be, say, do anything you want in life. You have to want it.

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Interview was conducted by Susan Kasper

**SUSAN KASPER** is the public relations liaison for ECA World Premier and Associate Editor of ECA News. She has lectured to different Long Island based non-profit organizations on marketing and public relations topics and currently sits on the board of directors with one of Long Island's fastest growing non-profit children's associations. In addition, she is a member of the Women's Sports Foundation and the Long Island Coalition for Fair Broadcasting.