

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF MARÍA ADELA PALCOS. Breathing, Self-Esteem, Plants... Balance.

By Flavia Fernandez

She is a flexible, agile woman. Her posture is straight; she breathes deeply before speaking and smiles all the time. María Adela Palcos, psychologist and creator of the Río Abierto Foundation (which since 1966 has been working with its system of body-mind techniques for a fuller life) is seventy-odd years old but appears to be sixty.

"Actually, the important thing is not how one looks but how one feels. The idea here is to free oneself of weights and barriers, relax and listen to oneself. It has been proven that our psychological blocks are located in different areas of our body and they can be seen or touched with our hands. Because of these blocked areas, an excessive charge of energy accumulates and manifests itself as stiffness tension, pain and even organic illness", affirms Mrs. Palcos, creator of a "more western" system of yoga which, in addition to its home quarters here in Argentina, has centers in Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay, Israel and the USA as well.

In many cases without charging a cent, Palcos attends people with AIDS and cancer "of course the person goes on with his medical treatment as well. What we seek to do is to enable the immune system to recover its strength. Moreover, we believe in the power of group work. With our patients, we work on increasing vitality, and letting go of negative conditionings.

We do exercises in breathing and connecting with different energies.

Mrs. Palcos lives in tights, T-shirts and, except in the street, goes barefoot all the time. She has a great number of plants, drinks tea, eats little meat, gives one class after the other and feels a commitment to the underprivileged in our society. "We are working in the shanty towns of Bajo Flores, especially in a Soup Kitchen named Sol Naciente. "Here we are doing interesting work with single mothers and children. Our goal is to increase self-esteem so that they can undertake work projects. Some have already begun setting up a bakery. The idea is that they recognize their own capacity. It's very sad, but many people feel they are good for nothing. From here to depression is a short step".

And so, Río Abierto Solidarity is working in a children's home in Cruz del Eje (Córdoba Province) and in another in Lujan, where babies receive massage and mothers, as incredible as it may seem, take classes in how to give love.

"They are learning to give massage to their little ones. Actually, the idea is to instill love. It's proven that children who have been well-loved grow up healthier. And more love equals less violence. I am totally convinced that violence is born of fear. In these places, parents with low self-esteem take refuge in alcohol. All energy that is not used engenders violence. That's why our obsession is to re-awake the person and give him tools so that he can re-build himself."

For Mrs. Palcos, plastic surgery is an aggression on the body. And so, she proposes other ways to find happiness. "Before stretching your skin, you should learn to breath, to work with your voice, to be in contact with nature, to know your body, to know how to relax and how to enjoy."

In search of perfect fitness

Mrs. Palcos gets up with the first rays of light and meditates without specifically proposing to do so. Afterwards, she works without stopping, exercises all her muscles, drinks a lot of liquid, eats healthy food, teaches and gives love. And she assures there is only one formula: be free. "After waking up I enter a meditative state without seeking it. I drink my mate, pick up a book and let myself go with the flow. And then, things begin to happen. Let's say a connection is made with other planes of reality."



Palcos Express

Cures: "While everything we do in Río Abierto helps to improve the health and functioning of the liver, bones, joints, blood pressure and even the psyche, we continually emphasize the idea of the prevention of illness. There is no need to wait to be ill in order to begin work on the body or the mind."

Sensations: "As a child I was very critical of the world. I would ask myself: of what use is it to so many people to have everything so well-organized in their heads, if inside they are so mixed-up. What I was seeing was the emotional world of these people which was totally un-worked on."

Reflexion: "I believe that our common illness is distrust. To the point that now we have AIDS, a paranoia that has arisen within the very ardor of human love, in the intimacy of the couple."

Meat: "I used to be a vegetarian, but not now. After all, in this country, beef is one of the least contaminated foods. But my diet is based mainly on vegetables, fruit and cereals."