**COVID set my feet free- and with it my mind**

Hi All,

This is a slightly odd title for a blog I think you will agree but it is something I have realised since we have settled into this new version of pandemic normal and I wanted to share it with you.

My karate friends will already know me as the person who wanders around with no shoes on. If they are not stupidly high heels or slippers I’m afraid I’m just not interested. I will usually be found in barefoot in the garden, travelling to and from the karate dojo, for a walk or to the shops with nothing on my feet. This is one of the reasons I love the summer months and also one of the reasons I often get some rather odd looks out and about, much to the despair of my family and friends.

Since the quarantine I, like many others have been working from home and guess what? This means no shoes for (I can’t remember how many) weeks now and during that time I have learnt something….. Now my feet are free, so is my mind. Often we talk about being grounded and feeling connected but we forget that we literally connect to the ground with our feet.

We pick up huge amounts of information and learning from what we feel through our feet. There are physical health benefits to this, including improved circulation, motor control and balance. Also, being barefoot encourages this stimulation of the brain keeping our brains sharp and supports the development of strong neural connections. Wearing shoes dampens this down.

I guess I’m learning that this also is making me happier. Having that connection to the ground and that sensory feedback stimulation is what is opening my mind to think more clearly, widely and creatively not to mention the feeling of cool fresh air, warm ground, damp grass is keeping me alive to how I am feeling in the moment.

So I encourage you to try this. Perhaps consider your environment though, the nearest pile of dog muck will certainly give you an interesting sensation but I’m not sure it will make you happy. But walking in your garden in the morning, or walking on your living room carpet for a bit everyday and really noticing it might support your mental health as well as your physical health.

Best wishes