

## Nia and My Cancer Journey by Sandra Fontana

After being diagnosed with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma in 2004, Sandra Fontana's career/life path took a dramatic turn- for the better. Seeking to restore balance from her overly stressed, work-focused lifestyle –Sandra came to know peace through a unique dance from called Nia and at the same time became a licensed esthetician.

“Healing fully from cancer means taking care of the whole person--mind, body and spirit. When our internal "needs" are met with awareness, understanding, and acceptance, we create space for healing within ourselves. When our needs are not met, we create “dis-ease” within, says Sandra.

Following Chemotherapy treatments and before the start of Radiation, Sandra tried the Nia technique at the suggestion of a therapist. She immediately knew it was the kind of healing she could embrace and actually enjoy. Nia which stands for *Neuromuscular Integrative Action* originated from the West coast. This dance form focuses on 13 joints in the body, moving energy, systemically, for thousands of nerve endings. Nia training includes movement dynamics, mind body physiology, kinesiology, choreography, music appreciation and anatomy.

Nia also blends elements of martial arts, dance, and yoga into a complete fitness program that works with the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual realms to provide participants with a greater connection to their inner selves through movement. The choreography is simple, fun and requires no experience whatsoever. As a Nia White-Belt instructor who has personally trained with creators Debbie & Carlos Rosas at Kripalu, Sandra concentrates on increasing self-awareness and promoting healing by encouraging self-expression and self-discovery through the integration of body-mind-spirit. Sandra's philosophy is that "fitness should be pleasurable and never feel like punishment. “

Sandra has been in remission from her Cancer for 14 years now and is convinced that Nia helped her get where she is today. In 2005, she received her license to teach and offers classes, workshops and intensive trainings. "Nia changed my life. I love what I do, and the best part is sharing it with others. The only limitations within the boundaries of our possibilities, are the ones we create”, says Fontana.

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