

OWNING PINK

LISSA'S BLOG

WHAT'S UP DOWN THERE? BLOG

MEG'S MAGICAL EYES

POSSE BLOG

OWNING PINK BLOGGERS

FUN 'N' GAMES

CATEGORIES

- Owning Creativity
- Owning the Planet
- Owning Sexuality
- Owning Spirituality
- Owning Relationships
- Owning Success
- Owning Health
- Owning You

Owning Pink Bloggers



MEET THEM ALL...

Nia: Embody The Skin You're In

Lissa Rankin, October 31, 2010



Follow Us



When I heard that Debbie Rosas, founder of the Nia movement classes was going to be teaching a dance class at Mama Gena's School of Womanly Arts, I thought "Sign me up." I grew up taking dance classes and was in a ballet company in my younger years. Someone told me Nia was part dance, part martial arts, part healing arts, and as a dancer/doctor, I thought, "Perfect!"

Where have I been?

Somehow, I had never heard of Nia prior to this day. Now -- a few months later -- I can't believe I missed it for all these years. Seems like every person I'm meeting lately is a Nia teacher and every dance studio and gym hosts Nia classes all over the world. Talking to my friends, I realize that I have been missing out. Nia is taught in 45 countries and is well known for empowering others to live joyful lives by moving, owning, and fully inhabiting their beautiful bodies. My colleagues in the healing professions recommend Nia to their clients with body image issues (such as eating disorders), not just because the movement can be tailored to the sickest body or the buffest one, but because Nia celebrates the body, just as it is, in all its richness, and can be part of the therapeutic equation.

I know all this now, but at the time, I was a Nia virgin, open for anything, ready to dance. So there I was, in a conference room with 250 Sister Goddesses, when someone invited us to get comfy, find a spot in the room that resonated with us, and get ready to have our bodies blown away (in a really good way).

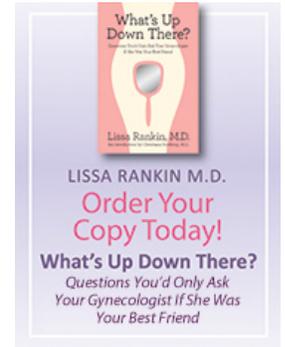
My girl crush

But before I tell you about my Nia cherry-popping, I have to tell you about Debbie Rosas. From the outside, she's stylish, classy, and sexy as hell. This woman radiates confidence, oozes sensuality, and holds herself with remarkable grace, poise, and an attractive sense of grounding I admired right away. Then she opens her mouth, and your jaw drops because she is so wise, calm, intelligent, and mindful while still fully embodying the skin she's in. It didn't take me long to realize that Debbie Rosas is the bomb.

So I already had a serious girl crush on Debbie when she stood up on stage and began to lead us in a series of movements I can only describe as the sort of natural dance the body already knows but may have forgotten. Ballet is all about forcing the body into unnatural positions -- first position, fifth position, or a pirouette. Nia is the exact opposite. While my ballet teacher used to rap on my belly with a pointer if it stuck out too much after lunch, Debbie watched our bodies move and said, "Beautiful." While ballet felt like a way to punish the body into doing something lovely, Nia feels like coming home.

Structure and expression

Debbie's class was a perfect mix of gentle structure and an invitation to experience free form expression while allowing enough room to have an emotionally rich movement



THE PINK EFFECT

OWNING PINK CENTER

WHAT'S UP DOWN THERE?



COACHING

THE WOMAN INSIDE

JOIN THE PINK POSSE

Enter your Email JOIN

See Sample

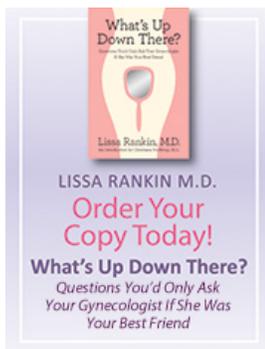
[See a Sample...](#)

Get all the latest posts in your email or RSS reader



You are enough just the way you are. Don't let anyone ever tell you you're not.

Grendel
the Mojo Pup



experience. We moved from embryonic positions on the floor through other positions of gestation into crawling, walking, and flourishing movements. Debbie encouraged us to dance through our experiences, then we leaped, karate chopped, galloped and swirled around the dance floor as the music swelled.

As the class progressed, the music grew progressively more expansive until I found myself, head thrown back, eyes closed, opening my heart to the energy within the room and the love within my heart. The energy grew more palpable with each dance until we were all one throbbing, beating, pulsing breathe, connecting to the Oneness of the tribe we became.

At one point, Debbie lined us up at the back the room and we were invited to dance what our hearts wanted to say. I watched as a few women at a time -- some of them topless, with their breasts bouncing beautifully -- cascaded across the room, arms outstretched, hearts wide open. And then it was my turn. And I felt my body moving from a place of so much joy that it brought tears to my eyes. I felt like a ballerina unleashed.

Join us!

This experience might have been just a happy memory, but I just found out that I am blessed to be doing an event with Debbie Rosas as part of her "Awakening The New Feminine Spirit," an inspiring, avant-garde workshop series dedicated to empowering the feminine energy and strength in each of us. The knowledge that I will be taking another Nia class with Debbie and then co-leading an event in Portland for the Nia community as part of my book tour for *What's Up Down There? Questions You'd Only Ask Your Gynecologist If She Was Your Best Friend* delights me beyond words. [RSVP here](#) if you want to join us!

It all makes sense, really. Debbie Rosas and I share a similar mission -- to help others love their bodies as part of being whole, vital beings rocking with mojo. Or as Debbie says, "Love your body, love your life." Amen, sister. That pretty much sums it up.

They say you teach what you need to learn -- and I'm still working on loving my body and being IN my body. Last weekend I was at Sheila Kelley's S Factor retreat, where I spoke and participated in the kind of feminine movement and pole dancing that Sheila loves (read about my [incredible experience here](#)). I may be a gynecologist, but I'm also a woman and I live in a body and have a vagina. In spite of how I was trained, I'm not some disembodied cerebrum floating around in my thoughts. Which is why Debbie Rosas and Sheila Kelley have so much to teach me, so I can then spread the word to others. How brilliant am I for having conjured such amazing women in my life to help me walk this path?

Oh yeah, baby. I am blessed.

What about you? How do you live in your skin, celebrate your body, and love your life? Have you ever taken a Nia class? What did you think? What experiences have you had in movement classes, or beyond, that have enriched your life?

Learning to live in my skin,

Lissa

Lissa Rankin, MD

Founder of OwningPink.com and the Owning Pink Center and author of *What's Up Down There? Questions You'd Only Ask Your Gynecologist If She Was Your Best Friend*

Owning Pink Owning Health body dance dance class Debbie Rosas empowering Lissa Rankin movement Nia Nia class Owning Your Body s factor sheila kelley what's up down there

[Lissa Rankin's blog](#) 3 comments

[More...](#)

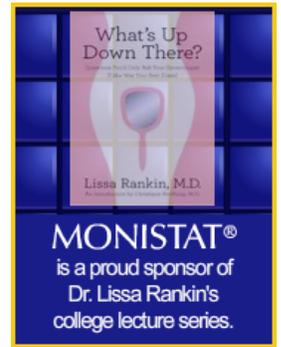
Comments



Go Lissa!

By Jill Pagano (not verified) on Wednesday, 11/03/2010 at 5:28 PM

Yeah Lissa! I'm thrilled you've found Nia. You've shared your experience so beautifully. Thank you for spreading the word. I've been loving and teaching Nia for 14 years now and feel it is one of the most



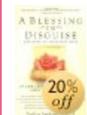
What Season Do You Love Most?

- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter

Owning Pink Book Store



[NurtureShock](#)
Po Bronson, Ashley...
New \$16.49
Best \$13.50



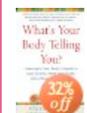
[A Blessing in Disguise](#)
M.D., Andrea Joy C...
New \$11.20
Best \$0.73



[This Time I Dancel](#)
Tama J. Kieves
New \$10.17
Best \$4.96



[The Empowered Patient](#)
Elizabeth S. Cohen...
New \$10.20
Best \$6.98



[What's Your Body Telling You? Listen...](#)
Steve Sigold
New \$14.93
Best \$9.95

[Privacy Information](#)



complete movement, conditioning, healing arts practices in the world.
And what a JOY!
May we all be free to dance.
Love,
Jill, a NiaDiva



[Reply](#)



Mind Body Spirit Blowing

By [Kim Lampe](#) (not verified) on Monday, 11/01/2010 at 9:17 AM

I recently had the fortune to be in my first Nia Dance class at a retreat in North Carolina. Mind you my body has be deprived of a good exercise routine for a few years. I love to dance, so I didn't let my unfit body to stop me.

I sweat. I cried. I laughed. I rejoiced. My funky hive connected in the most amazing way.

My mind, heart, soul, and body all were saying OH YES the whole time. One should not ignore this feeling.

I want to do this. I want to teach this.

[Reply](#)



Want to try

By [Ashley @ Nourishing the Soul](#) (not verified) on Monday, 11/01/2010 at 5:10 AM

I only recently learned about Nia from friend and fellow blogger, Joy Tanksley. While I still haven't tried it, I'm majorly jonesing to do so. Thanks for sharing your experience!

[Reply](#)

Add comment

Your name:

E-mail:

The content of this field is kept private and will not be shown publicly.

Homepage:

Subject:

Comment: *

Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.

Allowed HTML tags: <p>
<a>

Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

[More information about formatting options](#)

 Notify me when new comments are posted

All comments Replies to my comment

When you comment on an Owing Pink blog post, we invite you to be authentic and loving, to say what you feel, to hold sacred space so others feel heard, and to refrain from using hurtful or offensive language. Differing opinions are welcomed, but if you cannot express yourself in a respectful, caring manner, your comments will be deleted by the Owing Pink staff.

