

Love is in the Details - the Story of Pilates Space

“Change Happens Through Movement” ~ Joseph Pilates

In 2002, armed with inspiration, unexpected opportunity and a passion for movement, Jacqueline Ethier opened Pilates Space in a drab basement in downtown Ottawa. Originally, teaching Pilates was meant to provide financial stability while Jacqueline pursued her dance career. However, as she began teaching, she realized that Pilates allowed her to do something she could never do as a dancer; she could teach others to move as she moved. *“There were 2 studios in Ottawa, I was working for one of them... and there was this very serendipitous moment where a friend was opening a gym and he said - ‘I’d like to have Pilates offered there, are you interested?’ - and I thought...okay, yes!”* As a dancer and a child of entrepreneurs, being motivated by inspiration was a familiar feeling for Jacqueline and as she stood in her studio for the first time, she knew three things that were true for her:

1. She always has to love what she does
2. It can’t just be about dollars and cents
3. It’s got to inspire people

One of those people inspired by Jacqueline was her partner and future husband—Charlie Ayoub.

“People Don’t Normally Do That...” ~ Anonymous Financial Advisor

By the summer of 2006, Pilates Space had already expanded *twice* and proved it was more than a hit, it was a sensation! *“The*

dollar signs were never the motivating factor; the motivating factor is helping people...we're creating a space where we want to go to impact our community and like-minded people have joined us and made it all possible." Today Canada's Pilates industry is doing well, but still has room to grow. Back in 2002 however, it felt more like a well-kept secret. So, when Pilates Space was forced to expand twice in only its first four years it was an indicator that Jacqueline was on the right track. However, as great as things were for Jacqueline, they weren't so great for Charlie...

Like Jacqueline, Charlie was the child of entrepreneurs. While Jacqueline's parents were custom home builders, operating Ethier and Son Construction in Sudbury for 40 years, Charlie's parents owned and operated "Mike's Corner Store." Talk about a love affair with your business, Charlie's parents operated Mike's Corner Store for over 30 years...7 days a week, 365 days a year. Like Jacqueline and her parents, Charlie had also followed his passion into the business world. However, Charlie's passion for the operation he'd helped start didn't last. As a long-time practitioner of Wing Chun Kung Fu, Charlie's world was meant to be fluid and filled with movement. The rigidity of his 9-5 office schedule just wasn't for him.

The summer of 2006 was a turning point for Pilates Space and for Jacqueline and Charlie. In the summer of that year Charlie was able to take time off to prepare for the couple's upcoming wedding. In doing so, he was able to slow down and observe how Pilates Space worked, why it worked and what the potential of it really was. Sitting together in their tiny little kitchen they realized two things: 1) Charlie's 9-5 job was no longer an option for him, and 2) Pilates Space had the potential to be their family business. "So, *I was making a healthy salary,*

commissions and getting dividend payments and I sort of told our financial planner that I think I'm done with this job, I'm going to go teach Pilates...and he said - 'People don't normally do that' -." Another pivotal moment in the history of Pilates Space had been reached...now it was a partnership, but what next?

Missing Pieces

When Jacqueline began studying and teaching Pilates, she was doing it to support her dance career. She knew her knowledge of Pilates contained "missing pieces" and that she still had more to learn. The desire for deeper understanding, as well as the success of Pilates Space caused Jacqueline's passions to shift. Pilates had more to offer than just stability. In 2006 when Jacqueline and Charlie joined forces, the purpose was to elevate Pilates Space to its potential. As the world shifted to laptops and cell phones, Jacqueline and Charlie could see that Pilates was more than just a fitness regimen. Pilates could assist with posture correction, mental clarity, injury prevention and rehabilitation, mobility limitations and improve overall quality of life. For Pilates Space to truly reach its potential Jacqueline needed to find those "missing pieces."

In 2003, Jacqueline had the opportunity to meet and learn from first generation teacher Ron Fletcher. Fletcher was the man to whom Clara Pilates had entrusted her husband's work when he passed away in 1967. Although it was Clara's husband Joseph Pilates who created his "Body Contrology" program (later to be known as Pilates), it was his student Ron Fletcher who Clara encouraged to continue evolving the work, telling Fletcher in a now famous letter "You have only reached the tip of the iceberg." Over the course of the next several decades, Ron

Fletcher established the Fletcher Pilates® method as an organic, movement-based approach to Pilates and a direct evolution from the core principles of Joseph Pilates. As a dancer and choreographer, Fletcher was open to inspiration, adaptation and the kind of energetic guidance he found in Kyria Sabin Waugaman. Kyria would become Fletcher's program director and together with his long-time students would inspire him as he developed his signature techniques, Fletcher Towelwork®, Fletcher Floorwork®, Fletcher Barrework™ and Percussive Breathing™.

As the 21st century approached Ron Fletcher realized for his legacy to be passed on he needed a select group of his dedicated students to pass on his work. At the time there were only two instructors in the United States teaching the Fletcher Pilates syllabus to new teachers and more were needed if Fletcher was going to pass on his work and the work of Joseph Pilates. As a result of this need the Fletcher Pilates Program of Study was born. In those early years Ron Fletcher mentored his students directly, one of those students was Jacqueline: *"I met Ron Fletcher in 2003 for the first time... after my first weekend workshop I was really inspired to learn as much from him as I could. He was in his early 80s when we first met, vibrant, spirited and moving with such freedom. I thought, I want that for as long as I can move. I had to travel to Tucson Arizona for two weeks at a time, twice a year to learn the syllabus and I attended weekend workshops all over the US as much as I could."*

And so, while operating Pilates Space and starting a family, Jacqueline immersed herself in the Fletcher Pilates Program of Study. Her growing clientele were very supportive along this

journey and excited for her to return and share her new knowledge. But there was more to come...

The Gift of Teaching

Jan 28, 2007

It's always my pleasure, Dear Jacqueline, to see you in class~~aside from working with body, mind, breath and spirit you "present" the various pieces and give the movement life~~you look better every time I see you in class~~quiet, and assured, with the intention to make each piece important~~the potential is there, as I've said, to become a Fletcher Master/Disseminator.

*GOOD HEALTH,
GOOD TIMES AND
LOTSA' LAUGHTER
AND LOVE~~
RON*

Ron Fletcher wanted to spread his work internationally. For that he needed more than just teachers, he needed leaders. "So, when he was looking at who do I want to pass on my work, I was one of the people he chose... I didn't know that I had that gift of teaching other teachers, but they strongly encouraged me... they wanted an educational institute in Canada, and they said you're the person to do it!"

In 2006 Jacqueline joined the Fletcher Faculty and began teaching the Comprehensive Teacher Training Program and Fletcher Licensing Courses. She was also selected to head Ron

Fletcher's Canadian Educational Center and become the official representative of Fletcher Pilates in Canada.

Intelligent Exercise and Adaptable Fitness

Reflecting on those years, Charlie observed that while Pilates Space kept expanding, the lifespan of other Ottawa Pilates studios was predictably short. Pilates Space had taken off where other studios had failed to catch on. What was the secret?

1. **The Why** - Jacqueline's motivation in starting Pilates Space was to be able to practice her passion for movement, while also teaching it to others. Jacqueline wanted to inspire people to use intelligent exercise so they can move better in their bodies, be adaptable to the world around them, achieve functional strength and mobility and most importantly live their life to its fullest. Her passion to learn, and share that learning took her on a decade-long odyssey across the continent where she had the opportunity to be mentored by a master in her profession. Jacqueline now shares that knowledge in her studio.
2. **The Culture** - Pilates Space was always focused on *creating a community*. Jacqueline's original idea was to develop a space where she would go to learn and teach Pilates. As a result of that inspiration, Pilates Space grew *organically*, like a family. Once Charlie became Jacqueline's partner in business, as well as life, Pilates Space had two passionate individuals whose skill sets complimented each other, but also re-emphasized the family culture and values upon which Pilates Space was built.
3. **Mentoring** - What Pilates has given to Jacqueline and Charlie has been a gift, and they treat it that way. Some

have observed that by training the next generation of Fletcher Pilates® instructors Jacqueline could actually be creating her own competition. For Jacqueline, however, it was part of the responsibility and the legacy she accepted when Ron Fletcher entrusted his work and the work of Joseph Pilates to her.

“We’re just being who we are, and I feel like teaching people how to move and get in touch with their body and be aware of how they’re living in their body and their life, then it allows them to be who they should be.”

Why Pilates Space

There are different kinds of Pilates and today millions of people are practicing it. Some people get their Pilates through internet videos, others learn from instructors who have passed a weekend course... but people who are serious about the study it takes to learn this life-changing, transformative type of movement chose Fletcher Pilates. Put simply, Fletcher Pilates is the highest level of Pilates available. It was developed directly from Joseph Pilates’ teachings and evolved further by his hand-picked successor, Ron Fletcher. You might call it *Elite Pilates* and there is only one studio in Ottawa teaching it - Pilates Space.

“We’re addressing movement in all of your joints from your toes to your fingers, all of them are important, all of them are designed to move. We move them all. We move them in a 3-dimensional way, because our life is 3-dimensional! So, we’re not just working in a linear, straight-forward way because that does not represent how we need to utilize our body in life... We describe it as intelligent exercise, a mindful practice...”

We're asking you to become aware of your body's strengths and weaknesses and to be able to work on them."

Even though Pilates Space is teaching elite level Pilates, you don't need to be an elite mover or athlete to take classes. In fact, many of the students who come to Pilates Space originally do so for injury rehabilitation, or because they simply want to be more active. This is why Pilates Space offers both introductory classes plus private sessions for those just getting started, as well as higher level classes for those who are more experienced.

In its infancy Pilates was practiced by movement professionals like dancers and professional athletes, but today Pilates is recognized as an accessible, versatile and comprehensive physical fitness regimen suitable for everyone. Unlike other fitness programs, Pilates focuses on movement for the whole body and combines physical awareness, balance, endurance, rhythm, precision and coordination. As the modern world has taken us away from farmer's fields and into cubicles, we are moving our bodies less and less the way nature intended. At its core Pilates was designed to train and develop the body for adaptable fitness, because as Jacqueline likes to say:
"Everywhere we go, we take our bodies with us... the healthier our body feels, the better our life will be."

Why we do what we do

We believe that everyone is capable and deserving of having a strong, functional body that does what it's supposed to, when it's supposed to do it. Everywhere we go we take our bodies with us...the healthier our body feels the better our life should be. Movement is the secret. Getting your body moving

ensures it learns and maintains its balance, precision and rhythm. This is why Pilates Space was created, to inspire movement. We believe that too many of us are living rigid lives inside a fluid world. As a result, our bodies are programmed for repetitive movement patterns but less prepared and less adaptable to the spontaneity of daily life. As Pilates Space founders, our motivating factor is to help people while sharing our passion for movement. Pilates Space is more than just a business, it's where we invite our friends, neighbours and strangers to learn how to move, become stronger, more mentally-focused and better equipped to excel and succeed in their daily lives with clear minds and working bodies.

What motivates us at Pilates Space

At Pilates Space we've always been passionate about using movement to help people move better in their bodies and now that you've read our story, we hope you understand where that passion comes from. We believe that focusing on why we do what we do has allowed us to prosper and build a community of like-minded individuals passionate about movement.

See you in the studio!

Jacqueline & Charlie

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Written by Corey Oliver (2019) - *Stories are how we discover to which community we belong. They help us learn about each other, share our motivations and discover the things that link us together. Stories build trust.*

Gratitude to Corey, our friend and Pilates practitioner, for the care he took to write our story.