



We Love Dove: an Interview with Fitness Enthusiast and Founder of Studio City-Based Dove's Bodies

By Rebekah Iliff, Founder, Boxers & Ballerinas, Inc.

WHO IS DOVE?

Dove is not only a fitness enthusiast, but also a humanitarian. She has taken the position in her community as environmentalist and wellness activist. She is passionately involved in numerous organizations dedicated to global cooling; peace; carbon offsetting; organic, sustainable farming; safe, non-gmo, biodynamic products; as well as many charities that are making the change necessary for a healthy planet. Dove goes beyond the body: She cares about the world our bodies live in. By leading an organic and eco-conscious lifestyle, she has chosen to gear her energies toward the bigger picture. It is about more than working out and eating well and staying balanced. It is about giving back. As Ghandi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." Dove is doing just that.



For her one-of-a-kind workouts, Dove is sought after by celebrities from coast to coast. When fitness trainers, dancers, busy executives, moms, and well, all of Los Angeles, want to sculpt their bodies to the peak of perfection, they turn to her. With her unique, eclectic workouts that combine multiple disciplines in an ever-changing, sensational sweat-soaked session, Dove's training classes are one of the West Coast cardio cognoscenti's best finds.

You won't find Dove dropping celebrity names in fitness magazines and supermarket tabloids - though they beg to know - because she respects her clientele. She has a knack for changing your body, elevating your spirit, increasing your confidence and raising awareness, all the while catering to each and every client without missing a beat. Combining her 23 years of experience in dance, choreography and fitness training with a DJ's love of spinning the most diverse collection of beats to energize your workout, Dove provides a complete and structurally balanced class that integrates strength, tone and flexibility for the ultimate exercise experience.

With each innovative session different from the last, Dove's workouts push you mentally and physically, offering an astonishing mix of intense muscle sculpting, circuit training, yoga, challenging endurance drills, kickboxing, jump rope, cardio and step training, along with medicine-ball training, Pilates' ball core work, resist-a-band intervals, ab segments and a little free-weight pump for a total body workout. Expect the unexpected, as old-school push-ups and ab crunches rub muscular shoulders with ancient breathing exercises and the pick of the latest in fitness techniques, for an energy-charged group exercise class that reduces body fat, increases lean muscle mass, boosts flexibility and coordination, raises stamina and basically changes your body from head to toe, inside and out.

At her Los Angeles studio, Dove's five-hour fusion marathon sessions are legendary. Her 60- and 90-minute classes are out of this world and her private training and nutritional sessions give you that little something extra that you need to take you to the next level.

With Dove, you are introduced to more than just cutting-edge fitness techniques - you are introduced to a healthier way of life.

WHY WE LOVE DOVE

Over six months ago, when Boxers & Ballerinas had barely opened its doors, Dove had already reached out to us, complimented us on our concept, and invited both Ricky and I to take one of her classes. Needless to say, we couldn't walk for two days afterwards, but her support and enthusiasm for our business has often kept me moving forward through an extremely difficult and somewhat frightening Fall 2008.

I had the great pleasure of sitting down with Dove, and getting the "skinny" on some of my most burning questions from who I see as a successful entrepreneur as well as a well-balanced individual. Not easy to find!

Rebekah: How long have you lived in Studio City and what was the impetus behind Dove's Bodies?

Dove: I have lived in Studio City for 24 years and in the Valley my whole life. I was a dancer growing up and took a summer job at Nautilus Aerobics Plus in Studio City, which is now Bally's. I was 15 and a girlfriend and I would go in after school to help the counselors sell memberships. We started working out as well as studying dance. One day I was attending an aerobics class, back then that is what we called them, :-~) and the teacher didn't show up and they asked me to cover since I was a regular. I was also 16! But I did it and they loved it. Later I was hired and the small group fitness class from 10-11am turned into a few hundred people taking my class that was now 2 hours long. I then took on the position of the aerobics coordinator, secretary of the gym, as well as began my own private training business at the age of 17. It just grew into what it is today. 6 years later I moved on and opened up Dove's Bodies on Colfax and Ventura and that was 19 years ago. Time flies when you love what you do. I can honestly say I haven't done a day's work in my life.

Rebekah: Since it's the "month of love"....what do you love about teaching people the importance of a healthy lifestyle?

Dove: First I love living it myself. It comes across differently I believe if it is coming from an authentic place of personal practice. I practice what I preach every day myself. I do everything I suggest my clients do so I understand the moments of struggle as well as the times of joy in reaping the rewards of health and wellness. I love seeing the changes in people. I can sense it when someone starts really understanding what they are doing with their body and more importantly, why. Something clicks when you stop drinking alcohol and coffee and give up sugar and start meditating and hiking in nature and loving yourself every day. Your life changes profoundly. How could it not? For me it isn't about what a scale says or what your waist measurement is but it is in the eyes, someone's energy, their sense of self and if they are at peace with themselves. This is when I see it 'working' so to speak, this is what I truly love, the journey.

Rebekah: Well, I'm not going to commit to giving up my coffee quite yet, but I do agree about all the other stuff☺ Ok, so what I really want to know is: who and what inspires you?

Dove: My students inspire me. They show up every day, every week, for years and years. Their loyalty inspires me. Watching a client go through a divorce and still coming in and showing up to be present with their body inspires me. Helping a client through chemo after breast cancer inspires me. Watching them come in everyday for no other reason than because they matter and they love themselves, not to be skinny or look better but because their health depends on it. These men and women that I have had the pleasure and honor of working with for over 23 years now are what inspires me. Every morning they get me up and I do what I do for them.

Rebekah: What do you do to relax...or on your "day off"...if you have one?

Dove: I have actually mastered relaxing. :-~) I love baths and I love naps. So I have no problem taking a little time and setting it aside for myself. I find that I can be more present for others if I am coming from a rested, balanced place in my own life. I enjoy a nice hike a few times a week and yoga as well but I practice on my own or with a friend so it isn't one more class or appointment I have to show up to. I spend a lot of time with my dog and cat and partner as well, they calm me and remind me of what is truly important in this life and that is being true to own self and being still.

Rebekah: I agree 100%! As you know, at B&B we mainly work with kids, which is obviously different than training adults. With regard to "youth fitness and exercise" what is the one piece of advice you have both for parents and kids?

Dove: My one piece of advice would be is that it is your responsibility as a parent to make sure your child has an active lifestyle. We cannot depend on the school system to give our children what they need. This is why it is great that there are businesses like Boxers & Ballerinas, my studio and many others. We need choices, options, variety. We must keep our children moving. We need to make sure they have the stimulus they need physically in order to keep them balanced chemically and keep their metabolism going as well as give them an opportunity to discover if they like a certain sport, dance, fitness, etc. It is up to us as adults to take care of our youth. If we don't do it, who will?

Rebekah: I consider you both a mentor and expert...so what are your personal predictions for the fitness and health industry over the next few years? Trends?

Dove: To be honest I don't think there are anymore trends to be had. Trends now days are basically rinse, lather, repeat. Everything has been done, a long time ago. What we see in the fitness industry are spins on old school concepts. Sure, there will be new machines invented and new names of classes, etc. but it all comes down to the same thing...move your body! Sometimes I almost feel like there is too much out there now. Only because I hear from clients that they don't know what to do. Do they take pole dancing, cardio dance class, boot camp, spinning, kick boxing, go running, hire a trainer, do pilates, etc. I personally believe in all of it and happen to incorporate it all in my class. That is what I am known for, a little bit of everything. But I think the general customer can be overwhelmed and then get discouraged. They don't know what their body needs, how to get to the goals they are desiring, what is right for their injuries, etc. Trends will come and go but what truly matters is that we all find something. That something can be a nice mix of everything as long as we show up, for ourselves. I predict we will continue to see a rise in boutique studios like yours and mine as well as more private gyms. I believe we are turning into more of an entrepreneurial run industry as opposed to corporate. I also predict that after this rise we will experience a leveling off. People usually don't stick with trends, as smart as some of these new concept fitness classes/techniques are many people tend to try them all out and then go back to what was working before. I think people like it where everybody knows your name. Cheers had the best theme song. It truly does matter. People like to belong, feel welcomed, remembered, noticed. It makes them feel part of something. I know this since I know every client's name and have over the entire 23 years of my career. It is the environment I want people to come into and feel recognized in and feel important and worth the attention they are putting on themselves and worth the money they are spending on themselves. We are all worth it, always and in all ways.

Rebekah: I couldn't have said it better myself!

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