

KATE SHELA

**The Movement Architect**

*Kate:* My name is Kate Shela, a Londoner living in LA. I come from an Eastern European immigrant working class lineage, straight from hip and hilarious survivors. I am a movement architect and shamanic practitioner. I guide people through workshops designed to pass on the knowledge I've gathered, to help people become more comfortable in their human suits.

Every class I teach, I'm scared in anticipation. Over 20 years of this shit and it's still the same! That fear is lightning, not something you wield, but something you receive. The more terrified I am, the more powerful the bolt I conduct. Once the first song starts, the first step of the first dance, the fear is gone. I become present. All my attention is on the dancers. I enter my passion, my purpose. There's no room for fear.

Fear is my signpost, my signal - we are heading towards depth.

Fear is the Great Awakener. Fear is a companion. It keeps knocking at our door to keep us on our toes, to remind us to pay attention, to take action, to breathe deeper, to get the fuck out of a shady situation, to sniff out what needs to be revealed.

For much of my life I didn't pay attention to the fear. I judged it, without even noticing. I held my breath waiting for the axe to fall. I tried to ignore it, because it felt like my native territory. I was too close to see it. I was numb to it. I thought it was part of my identity. I could only move through it when I realized the fear was separate from me - what I feel is not who I am. My fearful self was the person I judged the most. Now it's become an ally. It flags up a disowned part of myself. If I can integrate it, the blindfold slips off. Yes, fear is a part of my identity, but I get to choose how big a part.

Scary lives inches from exciting, frightening a hair's breadth from delicious, their edges lined with healthy boundaries. Fear is a chance to leap into a new perspective. We get to update ourselves. With the right support systems, fear can be a catalyst into sustainable change. Most of our self-talk is negative and it's rooted in fear. Owning that fear can transform it. I try to treat myself how I would treat my best friends. And I adore my best friends. It's obvious stuff, which has taken a while to learn. The way I love others is really the way I love myself and that has been a gorgeous realization. This concept that we cannot love others if we don't love ourselves can be looked at the other way round: the way we love others is the deep underlying way we can love ourselves.

Depending on my day, fear can both hinder and motivate me. I might luxuriate in the terror space to honor my vulnerable victim, then feel the upswing of moving through it, knowing this is just one aspect of me, not the orchestra of my story.

What I fear the most is having too much meat on the bone. I have fears of being too bright, too big. I am a wild stallion with a deer heart. It's the dance of polarities and the fear of not being accepted for my unique ingredients of power and vulnerability.

My fear wants to be brave. It wants to grow and be challenged so strength can emerge. It wants to have a good time! Fear is a journey of comforting discomfort. It's the sand that works its way under our shell to create the lustrous pearl.

Taking LA as an example: it took me a long time to take root in this place. I'd lived here in the 1990's - my twenties - but that was a different time. I was a wardrobe stylist, younger, single. Moving here again in 2007 with my family was way out of my comfort zone, even though it was my choice. I had no friends, no work or extended family. LA felt like a new secret city. Unlike London or Paris or New York, I needed a personal introduction to all its wonders. The people were the keys. The city's architecture won't allow you to just stumble into its magic. You can't push here. This city is an elusive creature. Being a stranger within it is a strange feeling. It uproots the transplants, shakes us up and shapes us in new ways. It's not a comfortable experience. It takes time to forge meaningful relationships. Ten years later, I have a basket of friendship and a container of work that supports me. Now, I can feel my place within the whole.

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CAT CHEN - SKYLAR

**Obsensed**

Cat Chen is a mother, a wife, a friend and the founder and CEO of Skylar, a self-care lifestyle brand centered around clean fragrance.

*Cat:* I am obsessed with scents (and always have been) and brought Skylar to life after I found out my daughter was allergic to my traditional perfumes. Empowering women with a healthier option of clean, consciously crafted fragrances is what I'm passionate about.

Fear means being out of my comfort zone, taking a chance on something. I am a big believer that life begins at the end of your comfort zone. If you aren't at least a little bit scared of doing something, then you may not be challenging yourself enough.

Before I started Skylar and in the beginning of starting the business, I was scared - very scared. Internally, of course you doubt yourself - wondering if your idea will work, if people will like the product, if you will be able to make an impact. But I knew that if I didn't take the risk I would always look back and wonder "what if." At the end of the day, conquering my fears comes down to having confidence in myself. And when you believe in yourself, I really think anything is possible.

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Kate Shela - Photography by Beau Grealy

