

# HEALING THE FEMININE

An interview with energy/wellness coach + model Joyce Virani

Joyce Virani is a Female Energy and Wellness Coach + Qigong Practitioner of her own company, Joyce Virani. Joyce is also a model, and her unique variety of skills gives her tremendous insights into health, healing and energy. We're excited to share her amazing wealth of knowledge with you!

## Tell us about yourself!

I grew up in a small town in Holland in a loving, multiracial family in a humble row house where my parents still live today. My Dutch Mom instilled in me the importance of love, caring, creativity and practicality while my Indian-Indonesian father taught me how to always work hard, be the best you can be, create something out of nothing and always help out where you can.

My parents were always open to and made time to discuss and share any topic and more importantly any feelings! There were very few taboos and there was always a lot of music, singing and humor in our house. I grew up with two younger sisters so there were lots of conversations about falling in love, feelings, periods, having our hearts broken... My parents were always there to listen. Both of them! I will forever remember how my parents would celebrate our coming into womanhood.

Dad would bake a cake or his delicious apple pie and we would celebrate our first period. I will never forget that! I felt so supported and beautiful and proud - feelings I still carry with me today when I have my period and I hope to pass on to my daughter: letting her know it is a time to celebrate, a time for renewal and a time to be quiet and reflect.

Above all it is a time for self-care. Don't get me wrong, I don't always feel that way. There are times I want to yell and complain, but my experience as a child instilled in me a feeling of gratitude and appreciation for my period and for my body in general.

When I was a little girl, I was passionate, curious, spirited and happy; always moving, talking, exploring, connecting, loving, caring, singing and dancing. I had loads of energy! I was basically born ready. I literally came shooting out of my mother's womb barely being caught by the doctor.

It was with that same energy, drive and focus I took up playing the guitar, trained with the Dutch Olympic volleyball team and graduated with a Master's degree in Art History and Management while traveling the world as a fashion model.

Whatever it was I wanted to do or accomplish, my parents were right there to support me. Because of them, I grew up knowing what unconditional love looks like and I feel very fortunate for that. I saw my parents love, hug, dance, sing, fight, discuss and share with each other. I learned that communication is the most important ingredient in any relationship and that being able to share your thoughts, desires and feelings deepen love. Words still touch me deeply today. It is the primary way in which I like to give and receive love. Over the years though I have learned that the quickest way to discover what your true desires and feelings are, you need to be fully embodied; get out of your head to be able to tap into your heart and intuition. I love coaching women to learn how to do the same in my Female Energy and Wellness sessions as well as in my Sensual Qigong classes.



PHOTOGRAPHER: DENISE THOMPSON  
DENISEJEANPHOTOGRAPHY.COM  
HAIR: MARINA LANTOS  
SERENITYHAIRLOUNGE.COM

### How did you get into modeling?

I got into modeling through my father actually. When I was around 16 he found an ad in the local newspaper about a fashion modeling course. I would learn how to walk the runway, model in front of a camera and put make up on. He mentioned it more as a joke because he thought it would not hurt me to be a little bit more graceful. We had a good laugh because truth be told, I was a great athlete, but a total klutz otherwise. If there was a bucket of water in the hallway to be spilled, you could be sure I would find it.

Anyway, I love a challenge and love new experiences so I dared my dad to sign me up and pay for it. The course promised the possibility of paid runway shows so I told him I would pay him back if I started working. The deal was on!

I instantly felt a strong connection with the owner and teacher and stayed friends with her for the rest of her life till she sadly passed away too young many years ago. I loved her classes and her teachings and had a lot of fun. And wouldn't you know, I learned how

to walk gracefully and walked a lot of local fashion shows. I paid my dad back with a grin and gratitude! It was at one of these local fashion shows I was discovered by a model scout from Amsterdam. That was the start of an amazing 15 yearlong modeling career.

I feel fortunate to have modeled for magazines such as Elle, Cosmopolitan, Vogue and In Style, but what I loved most from my days in front of the camera was the opportunity to travel and live all over the world connecting with many different people - their beliefs, cultures, food, rituals, desires, passions and their stories.

### But you also went to college at the same time?

I did! I have always loved to do several different things at the same time touching upon and exploring different interests instead of fully focusing on one thing only. It keeps me in balance. It is why in the end I quit training for the Dutch Olympic volleyball team. It took me away from all the other things in life I wanted to enjoy and experience. And it is why next to modeling I went after another love of mine, learning! I was never a straight A student, not in high school and not in college, but I made up for it with passion, drive, effort, determination and focus. I wanted to model and go to college. And so I did both!

I loved being in front of the camera - wearing a lot of make-up, and loved wearing none being a student. I loved wearing beautiful clothes and getting my hair done and I loved wearing jeans and a t-shirt with my hair tight back. I enjoyed meeting new people all over the world and I loved creating close friendships in college of which many are still in my life today nearly 30 years later.

I studied while traveling the world and did so for several years till I ended up with a portfolio full of modeling pictures in one hand and a Master's degree in Art History and Management in the other. What better way to marry both by going to Milan, Italy. I was finally able to see many of the art pieces I studied in college in person and found myself in the center of the fashion industry at the same time.

I was now a full time model and even though I loved it, the fast paced, nutty lifestyle, working with different people almost every day from different parts of the world, music everywhere, great food, lots of fun, playing a different role, character, every single



PHOTOGRAPHER: DENISE THOMPSON  
DENISEJEANPHOTOGRAPHY.COM  
HAIR: MARINA LANTOS  
SERENITYHAIRLOUNGE.COM



**PHOTOGRAPHER: DENISE THOMPSON**  
**DENISEJEANPHOTOGRAPHY.COM**  
**HAIR: MARINA LANTOS**  
**SERENITYHAIRLOUNGE.COM**

shoot, I never fully embraced the world of modeling away from the camera. I was always trying to create balance by pursuing other interests and would slip into my jeans and T-shirt and wear very little makeup on my days off. I enjoyed being playful, sexy and sensual in front of the camera, but was never quite able to tap into those feelings away from the camera. I would actually try hard to not show that side of me, or was worried to give the wrong impression. I remember a dear friend in those days telling me that he thought of me as a beautiful woman behind glass; he could see me, but not touch me. He told me he wished I could fully embrace all of me and not hide my sensuality with a protective attitude. He said; "Joyce, your body is not your enemy"! I think I smacked him and laughed. I did not know what to do with his words at the time. It was not until years later I finally understood what he meant.

#### **Did modeling affect your body image?**

I don't think modeling changed or affected how I viewed the outside of my body, I grew up being confident in and grateful for my strong healthy body and always enjoyed taking care of it with the right food, grooming and exercise. But, I never really learned how to feel sensual in my body, tune into my body, listen to my body and feel free to express all of my body.

Modeling put a lot of focus on the way I looked and how people viewed me but did not teach me how to feel empowered in my body for me. The fashion and beauty industry is mostly focused on creating an image; being sexy and sensual and beautiful to make someone else feel good not to make you feel good for you, for your own pleasure!

I have met a lot of beautiful women in my modeling career, but only a few women who feel truly connected to their body, their heart and soul. Only those women truly shine their inner light of beauty that comes from loving themselves, and because of that are so incredibly attractive, sensual, feminine and empowered! They have learned how to feel!

I learned much later in life how to be that woman, how to ignite my inner spark, nurture, love and take care of me. And am now so passionate to teach other women. This is where true beauty and wellness comes from and it resides in every woman!

**Do you think the fashion industry could help with this?**

I would love for the fashion and beauty industry to feel passionate about this more as well. Some brands are doing this already, photographing women in a different way. I love the lingerie brand Naja. Owner Catalina Girald's philosophy is to inspire and empower women one panty at a time. She has created a brand that is about the relationship between you and yourself which she believes is a relationship you must first master before being able to truly connect with others. Her pieces are beautifully crafted and designed inside and out. Every bra is lined with a stunning silk print and every panty has an inspiring quote inside for you to enjoy. I love that! Her marketing is beautiful, sensual, feminine and empowering. Her lingerie is made for women by women. She teaches women in her native Colombia to sew and employs them to work for her. Many are single mothers who love to work from home while being able to continue to take care of

their children. I wish more companies would follow her lead in every way and make fashion and beauty about the women wearing the clothes and make up. Make it all about how a woman feels instead of how she makes others feel.

**At what point were you able to tap into your feminine and sensual energy?**

I had to get out of my head and into my body. I had to stop running and not shoulder through my day all the time. I had to stop and pause... And this, was not an easy thing to do for me. I grew up in a family where doing was valued over being. There was almost a pride in getting a lot done. Pair that with my boundless amount of energy and a talent for planning and organizing and you have a woman running through life getting a lot of shit done! People would literally get out of my way at the grocery store because it was clear I was on a mission. A mission to DO!

Since I was not going to stop on my own, my body gave me a warning... Many people get warnings. Sometimes it is a whisper like a cold that puts you at rest for a few days... but sometimes your body screams like mine did.....And there is no denying....no avoiding...it is time to listen and learn to BE!





PHOTOGRAPHER: DENISE THOMPSON  
DENISEJEANPHOTOGRAPHY.COM  
HAIR: MARINA LANTOS  
SERENITYHAIRLOUNGE.COM  
EARRINGS: RENEE ARNOLD  
RENEEARNOLD.NL

My body asked for my attention when I was 37. I was a mom of a newborn and a 2 year old when I was faced with a big lesson and opportunity for growth. I was diagnosed with Graves' disease; an autoimmune disease that affects the function of the thyroid and is most of the time brought on by stress.

We lived in a walk up 2 bedroom apartment building in the middle of busy Brooklyn, NY. A great place to live till construction was happening all around us. Workers were jack-hammering down the façade of our whole building making naptime impossible and breastfeeding a challenge with people looking in every window.

And that was not easy to do for me as it is for so many other women. We want to do it all. We take great pride in doing it all by ourselves. But it is in the asking and receiving where such beauty, softness, gratitude and female energy resides. And so I learned how to be, open up, receive, surrender and tap into my body's self-healing medicine that is inside all of us.

And slowly I learned how to feel and healed myself from Graves' disease. I learned to be grateful and fully embrace a time for doing and a time for being, a time for giving and a time for receiving. I learned

PHOTOGRAPHER: DENISE THOMPSON / DENISEJEANPHOTOGRAPHY.COM  
HAIR: MARINA LANTOS / SERENITYHAIRLOUNGE.COM



My thyroid had become overactive in a very bad way. My heart rate was 100 at rest and even though my appetite went through the roof I started rapidly losing weight at the same time. It felt like I was on a runaway train about to crash at any given moment. I have described this feeling to my friends and family as to imagine a person standing behind you all day clapping their hands telling you loudly to hurry up.

I had to figure a way out and figure out the lesson my body was telling me to learn. A lesson I had not yet learned on my own. I had to slow down and take care of myself. Slow down and ask for help... let others take care of me for once and be ok with that.

how to open up, be vulnerable, curious trust and be soft. A lesson I could not have fully learned without discovering the beautiful healing practice of Qigong.

**Can you tell us a little bit more about Qigong and what it has done for you?**

I fell head over heels in love with the soft and graceful, yet powerful ancient Chinese practice of Qigong, Qi (pronounced Chi) meaning energy and Gong (pronounced Kung) meaning practice. Although Qigong is gaining popularity in the west and is emerging as one of the hidden jewels of self-care and self-healing, it is still not easy to find classes.

Around the world each day, millions perform Qigong in parks along with its cousin Tai Chi. Where Tai Chi is a martial art founded on self-defense and takes a long time to learn and perfect, Qigong is the predecessor of acupuncture with its main purpose to move energy through the body. Because when energy flow gets interrupted, blocked and off balance, our bodies can be affected physically,

mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Practicing flowing movements paired with breathing exercises, meditation, self-massage, visualization and sounding out moves energy through the body, increases vitality and wellness, enhances immunity, builds stamina, develops mental acuity and revitalizes sensuality and sexuality. Qigong is very easy to learn and can be practiced any time of the day at any age, sitting, standing and even laying down. I teach children as young as 4 years old and practice with women in their 80s. We all benefit greatly.

For me personally Qigong has had a major influence on my own health and wellbeing. Through my daily practice of Qigong I have been able to open up my body, sending a huge amount of energy into my belly, hips and pelvis leaving me feeling connected and empowered from my core.

From this place I feel less in need to always be on the go, in control of my environment, overschedule, the need to be perfect, do things out of guilt or struggle to achieve my goals and give myself much-needed

rest and downtime to re-energize and tune into and respond to my deepest desires and feelings.

With this awakening to being both soft and strong, vulnerable and courageous I have learned to embrace and cultivate my feminine energy, spark my own inner healing process to restore wellness and created my Sensual Qigong class.

**Can you tell us a little bit more about your Sensual Qigong in which you help women to get in touch with their feminine power and energy?**

In my Sensual Qigong class we practice in a safe space so you can be free to move and express yourself, getting in touch with all your senses and





connecting with other women to lift each other up into a powerful exploration of our essential energy. Because when women come together it makes them feel softer and more beautiful.

Women instinctively know how to nourish each other. Just being with each other is restorative. The cultivation of sensual female energy requires a strong connection with your physical body and with your source of energy.

In our practice we move, shake, tap, massage, visualize, meditate and collectively make sounds to bring emotional release. Sensual Qigong provides the perfect medium for us to go inward and discover what we desire and how we feel. We move to sensual music and tap and massage our bodies to create a connection to self. Women tend to be givers and are devoted to serve others. When we massage our bodies, we give back our loving attention and replenish our heart. Self-massage also loosens stuck emotions and wakes up the immune system.

The smell of European sensual essential oils fills the room to further stimulate our senses. There is one such oil by Volatile called Surrender which works beautifully with the work we do in class; to fully surrender to your own deep sense of inner knowing through smell, touch, vision, sound and movement. To fall in love with who you are, recognize your inner and outer beauty with ease and experience the transformational power of self-care.

Loving all of yourself is the single most important thing you can do in your life. Taking care of yourself is the most basic and essential step to eternal beauty and wellness.

### **You are also a Female energy and Wellness Coach?**

As I went through my own journey of healing and learned how to get out of my head and into my body, connecting to my core, discovering my hearts desires, feeling softer and more open, disarm and let go, I found so many women around me longing and yearning to do the same. I knew I could help them with my Qigong teachings, but I wanted to offer more, sharing all my experiences to offer guidance. So I went back to school and studied at the Institute of Integrative Nutrition.

Through this year-long, intensive, life-changing program, I have learned about the power of food

and the importance of discovering and creating real nourishment in all areas of life. I have been trained in more than one hundred dietary theories and studied a variety of practical lifestyle coaching methods.

In addition to my life experiences, years of being in front of the camera, traveling and living all over the world, and working long and odd hours taught me a lot about what it takes to take care of myself and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Through my years of travel, I also learned to enjoy, relate to and connect with people from many different cultures in many different situations. Career changes, relationships, motherhood, Qigong practice and health challenges have all taught me life lessons that I'm inspired to use in my teachings.

In my Female Energy and Wellness coaching sessions it is my desire and intention to share my wisdom and experience to guide women into rediscovering their inner spark and heart's desires.

I want my women to feel alive, empowered, vibrant, energized, passionate and radiant from the inside out. I want to see their eyes sparkle and their hearts glitter. I want them to honor, love and celebrate their beautiful sensual body, embrace their feminine power and wisdom, open up their heart space, discover their inner most intimate desired feelings and pleasures. Because once they do, everything else will fall in place. When choices are made from a feeling of illumination it all makes sense.



Joyce Viani is a Female Energy and Wellness Coach, a Qigong practitioner at her company, Joyce Virani, and a model who has traveled the world. She is passionate about healing women and teaching them to care for themselves. To learn more about Joyce, you can visit her [website!](#)

PHOTOGRAPHER: DENISE THOMPSON  
DENISEJEANPHOTOGRAPHY.COM  
HAIR: MARINA LANTOS  
SERENITYHAIRLOUNGE.COM

