

The forming of my Dance Movement Therapy model.

8th Nov 2009

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In this paper I am writing from the point of view of myself as a dancer, dance educator and therapist in training. I will refer to my budding awareness of the terms "Newtonian" and "Quantum", and their meaning in terms of my personal experience, and the theoretical presented to me in the reading material and in the tutorials that took place during Module 7 of my training.

In answer to the question and the topic presented I have chosen to talk about:

- a) The personal experience of my journey into Middle Eastern Dance, and then towards facilitating dance movement therapy sessions for intellectually and physically impaired populations.
- b) The development of my work with the Sussex Neighbourhood House group.
- c) How I have begun to develop my own Dance Movement Therapy style through my work with the Sussex Neighbourhood House group and through beginning to train as a Dance Movement Therapist with International Dance Therapy Institute of Australia.
- d) The "creation" and "vision" that is emerging of my own Dance Therapy model, that has "formed" from the acronym D.I.V.A., after having completed Module 7 coursework and reading in Reader 1:Leventhal, M. (2008) Transformation and Healing Through Dance Therapy: The Challenge and Imperative of Holding the Vision, in American Journal of Dance Therapy, Vol 30, pp. 4-23.

For the purpose of this essay I am using abbreviation to indicate

- Middle Eastern Dance - MED
- Dance Movement Therapy - DMT
- International Dance Therapy Institute of Australia - IDTIA

I will also refer to Dr Marcia Leventhal by first name only when I am writing directly about the Module.

I have always been drawn to dance and to the arts in general. I sing, draw, paint, sew, crochet, write poetry and songs. I also love to be creative with food and also in my garden. But it has been dance that has formed most of my working life for the past twenty-one years. Twenty-six years ago a psychic told me that I had previously lived in Egypt and possessed the love of dance and the desert. I thought that she was describing the way that when I danced, I would completely let go and abandon myself and become immersed in the music; in fact I would become the music. It was not until five years after the reading, when I attended my first belly dance class that what she had told me really hit home. This was the beginning of my journey into MED. My training in Egyptian dance, which is my chosen style in the field of MED, leads me to feel and understand it as an "Energy" dance. During the Module, Marcia read from a number of different pages the definitions of energy and commented on energy generally. Some of the definitions given included:

- Flowing
- Feeling
- Organic/inorganic
- Unseen by felt
- Changes depending on environment
- Felt as vibration / wave
- Source unlimited

She also talked about the flow needing to be unimpeded for healing to take place. This is my experience of Egyptian dance. When I am immersed in the dance, I feel my body change and I become, free flowing organic movement and when the dance is over something has changed.

Later as part of a group of Middle Eastern dancers I began working with Jane Refshauge. We explored the Alexander Technique, Ideokinesis, Anatomy, and Body Mind Centring. Along with Jane and my MED colleagues we formed a Movement Research group and invited other dancers to join us. They brought with them, Laban, Authentic Movement, Shamanic dance practices and Feldenkrais to name a few.

From this work I began to draw a connection between the fundamental aspects of Egyptian dance and the essence and integrity of the human body. The deeper I went into this dance the more I felt a deep connection to what I believe to be the primary source of movement. It is intrinsic to all indigenous dance styles across the globe - the basis being,

curves, spirals, waved, circles, shaking, centred, organic and animal like. I also began to explore the Chakric system. I felt that the movement of this dance was the physical manifestation of the path of the Kundalini and a play between each of the 7 main Chakras. It also follows the same patterns as what Body Mind Centring calls, "Navel Radiation" and is supported by what the Alexander Technique calls "Primary Control". It mirrors the spiralling pattern of DNA supporting a flow of energy that creates a healing dance. I now call my work "Embodied Bellydance".

In the past seven years I have been facilitating sessions for intellectually and physically impaired disability groups. This began before I did my Certificate in DMT. My entry into working with this population was via Belly dance, which this population loves. I watched myself grow and change as I learnt more about DMT and I developed my own way of working with these groups. Whilst I have moved away from Egyptian dance as my focus in this work and embraced the DMT approach, I come back to the essence of Egyptian dance time and time again.

One of the groups that I work with on a weekly basis is the Sussex Neighbourhood House Dance Movement Therapy/ Creative dance group. This group is managed by Sue Harris of the Sussex Neighbourhood house in Sussex St Coburg belonging to the City of Moreland. The sessions are held at the Pascovale Swimming Pool Hall every Monday evening and run for one and half hours. The group is made up of fifteen adults ranging in ages from late twenties to mid fifties. They are mostly high functioning individuals who are quite coherent and responsive and able to participate freely in all activities. I began working with them at the beginning of the year. This job came to me because I would occasionally be asked to facilitate a belly dance session at a weekly event that the Sussex Neighbourhood house holds called Friday Friends. When the previous dance facilitator left, the manger asked if I would like the position and I accepted. I made sure that she understood that my work would be in the context of DMT and she agreed. This group has been running for over ten years.

Another part of my dance life is what I call "Dance Journeys for the Awakening Heart". The two main dances include "The Dance of the Sensual Soul" a women only dance that I began in 1999. The other is called "SensingFeelingDancing the Chakras", which began in 2003. I do not call myself a Dance Therapist when I hold for these dances or any others that I do, but I do say that I have a Certificate in Dance Movement Therapy. What I have

learnt thus far in DMT has definitely given me a greater, clearer, holding capacity and intention. I am looking forward to when I can call myself a Dance Movement Therapist in relation to the work that I have created.

The immersion and abandonment that I previously spoke about refers to when I was in my teens in the seventies. My personal Healing Dance was to rock music. Not a Conscious Healing Dance, (Leventhal) because I did not have the knowledge of intention, holding and containing, nor was there someone holding for me. Never the less, it was most definitely a spontaneous healing dance and very much in the Quantum realm. It was "a timeless place, where I unfolded, went into the unknown. It was an energy dance that took me into a transformative, altered state of being. I dance my Soul/Self essence and communed with my higher self", as out lined in Leventhal's Chart 1 "Healing = a balance and mix of elements from each paradigm; a journey into the mysterious unknown (lev, 2008 p. 6)

In this course with the IDTIA, we are taught to embrace what is called the Conscious Healing Dance or the Quantum Healing Dance. The healing takes place in the Quantum, whilst being held in a Newtonian framework. Newtonian is referred to as "Core" Dance Movement Therapy, bound by time and space. We work with the known, the concrete, through cause and effect. We use theory to support what we do. We hold using the 5-part session and we are governed by the populations that we are working with. The Body processes we work with are body image/boundaries and sensory and perceptual motor skills. We name the range we are working with, force, time, space and flow. We are in the here and now, for example, standing in a circle feeling our feet on the ground. (See chart Leventhal, 2008, p. 6)

I have spent weeks wondering and pondering how to get my head around writing about my Dance Movement Therapy experience and what it means to me and how to give it form through a theoretical frameworks and what is my model. I saw that I had written the acronym, D.I.V.A in very large letters with the word "study" next to it in my journal. This acronym came from the same speech given by Dr Marcia Leventhal, to represent " that which dance therapist totally embody" (Leventhal 2008, p.16)

The words are:

1. Daring

2. Dedication
3. Involved
4. Inventive
5. Vital
6. Alive

This is what the acronym means to me and essentially represent the making of my DMT model.

1. Daring

I dare to be myself and embrace all the knowledge and skills that I bring with me to this course and to DMT. I honour that even though the Newtonian way does not come easily to me in my day-to-day living, I do have the ability to combine Newtonian line elements of DMT. I provide a concrete place, space and time to hold and contain a session. I am able to facilitate in a very practical way for example, bringing people into their bodies and to the here and now. I dare to embrace my intuitive, creative and improvisational skills that allow me to access the Quantum Healing Dance. I often feel that I experience life in a quantum way, especially my creative life. It is like a "fractal." I am at home in a constantly metamorphosing, changing, molecular structure that is infinite. My limitations are the constraints that are placed upon me by the mechanistic Newtonian world. I have the gift of connectedness to something deep inside of me that is the essence of all my dance experience. It is a part of the flow of the Implicate order, that I am a part of what Bohm calls "life-energy" (Dossey, 1982, p. 182) and that is where the healing takes place. "Belonging to the Implicate order – the unseen totality" that, says Bohm, "underlies the external world of things and events . . . in which all things are grounded . . . health is the result of the harmonious integration of all the analysable parts which comprise the explicate order-the cells, tissues, organ system and the entire physical body . . . health and harmony, a quality ultimately grounded, as all living things in the totality of the implicate order and not in the particulars themselves." My perception it that the flow of the Implicate order is the infinite the Quantum; and the particulars of the Explicate order is the structure of the Newtonian.

When I am facilitating a session with my disability group I can respond to them on both levels. We stand in a Circle and engage in structured activities that involve physical

movement. I dare to take my cues from them or what the moment presents, the Quantum. At a recent session with the Sussex Neighbourhood House group there were a number of participants running late. As we waited for them I asked those present to sit in a circle with me and I pulled out the shakers and rattles that I had brought to be played for our performance piece. I gave them all one instrument each and we sang the song that we would be moving to after the warm up. When all had arrived we stood in a circle and I asked them to keep shaking. I had no tangible idea where this was going. I asked Sandra, one of the participants to walk around Jen, another participant and to keep shaking. One of my reasons for using the shakers and rattles is that I feel that on a deep cellular level, the sound that they make touches something very primordial and shamanic; this simple instrument can shift energy. I asked the others to do the same as Sandra and Jen had done. I then noticed Mark, who is often away from the circle and on this day in the corner. I decided we were all going to go where Mark was and do what he was doing, still shaking the instruments. We all stood against the wall like he was. Mark responded well to this; he smiled. I stood very close to him and asked him gently if he wanted to move. After a few moments without any verbal communication, which is the way Mark is, he suddenly moved into the room and I asked the whole group to follow. From there I chose another person to lead and to move how they wanted and encouraged them follow. It was like a crazy samba parade. I would call out someone's name and we would all turn to follow them. Each person got to lead the group. This spontaneous molecular experience got the whole group moving, engaged, connected and happy. This "warm up" had moved into the "release" of a 5-part session before the "theme", which is the dance piece.

During the module I arrived with a personal theme and that was to be in the NOW. I was greatly inspired by the recording of the book by Eckard Tolle the "Power of Now" that I was listening to daily. It was my personal unfolding, watching my internal dance of focus and distraction. This was the beginning of the exploration of my "Enlightened Discomfort", which Marcia defined in the Module as "to go beyond the comfort zone to a place of unfoldment"; to develop the capacity to 'hold' the anxiety until an answer or an image comes to mind. She also discussed that in Shamanic training – you have to be 'dismembered' in order to be put back together again ... Anxiety can cause a shattering, or things "falling to pieces" that can indicate a changing of patterns: the body's pattern can soften and drop into new things". Daring to go deeper into myself into my "Dynesphere", which Marcia describes as, "what is particular to me, to be still and listening to myself". I

wrote in my journal "I am looking for the NOW, I danced it, found it, I got lead astray and came back".

2. Dedication

I am dedicated to following my own healing journey and to facilitate, share and teach others what I know in myself to be true and good. For the past 21 years I have been dedicated, devoted and self-motivated to researching and exploring the connection, between the somatic modalities that I wrote about previously, Egyptian dance, the Chakras, Esoteric Healing, Energy dance and DMT.

In the module during the experiential I found myself going into Egyptian dance. This greatly interested me because it does not always happen. I often avoid it so as to not go into technique. When I facilitate dance journeys I try to steer trained dancers away from technique. This is because they often hide in their technique and don't allow themselves to go deeper into that place of "enlightened discomfort". What I experienced in the module came from a place deep inside me. I heard a voice say "this is your healing dance, your home." This was very important to me.

I fully embrace the dedication of the IDTIA to ensure that the course and its content are relevant and progressive; that we learn and achieve high standards that will take us into the psychotherapeutic realm. I am inspired by the dedication of those involved in DMT to take it and present it as a therapy that stands on its own with its unique qualities that set it apart from other modalities such as Occupational Therapy or Physiotherapy.

3. Involved

I need to be involved in the process of my own dance evolution. I need to partake in my professional development, so I can be consciously and clearly involved and present as a skilled dance therapist. I aim to be totally involved with my groups and appreciate and use whatever they bring with them when they enter my space. They are at times, involved in decision-making. Earlier this year I was feeling somewhat dissatisfied with the interventions that I was facilitating with my Sussex group; there was something missing. I asked them to tell me what music they liked. They gave me a varied assortment of old and new rock n roll and pop songs. I diligently found as many of the requested songs and artists as I could, downloaded them and arrived the next week with a good selection of their requests. We met in the circle as usual but instead of a warm up without music, I put

the music on, they were so happy and I improvised from there. Some of the tunes are now in our end of the year concert repertoire.

My involvement with the other members of the Advanced Diploma is essential for me to be able to experience the work. This ongoing involvement and interaction with the group will enrich my experience and support my learning during the course. I spent the first movement process of the module very much in my own space, noticing how I did not want to venture out to connect with others. When I engaged with my personal theme of being in the NOW that I mentioned earlier, I saw myself feeling a mixture of emotions: relief, satisfaction, fear, joy and sadness. Before I could meet my fellow dancers I needed to be involved in my own healing dance, to feel and explore those emotions, whilst I was being held and witnessed by Marcia. I was also holding and witnessing myself. Toward the end of the experiential I organically began to unfold and to connect to the group and to any individual in the group that came my way.

I am thrilled to be involved in the revolution of Dance Movement Therapy, this preverbal ancient healing dance, that through my experience thus far I feel intrinsically connected to. Leventhal in her article expresses, "Dance in it healing capacities is one of the oldest forms of healing interventions and experiences know to humankind . . . the power of ritualistic movement, trance excitation and community exultation and release were forms generated and integrated into a culture's social organization" (Leventhal, 1993, p. 257)

4. Inventive

Inventiveness is what I need to keep my work fresh and alive. I need to be able to pull the rabbit out the hat, to go into a session with a plan and to be able to throw it away and reinvent it on the spot. Usually, this is when the magic happens when suddenly a theme evolves into something rich and satisfying for all. It sometimes feels like God has stepped in and arranged the molecules to create this moment of perfection and it is never to be repeated again. By God I mean the "universal source of all'. Along with inventive I would like to add another I, Inspiration. I feel that the two are close relatives. Breathing in the possibilities and breathing out the inventions.

I enjoyed Marcia's inventiveness and inspiration during the module. I loved her reminding us that she was working in a Quantum way, allowing each part of the module to unfold whilst being able to deliver what we needed to explore.

5. Vital

Dance Movement Therapy is a vital Primary Therapy. It works with the body and through the experiencing of movement and dance, tapping directly into the deep held emotions that create disease. Therefore psychoanalysis alone does not work, because it is all in the head. Candace Pert states in an interview with Lyn Grodzki that; " The raw emotion is working to be expressed in the body. It's always moving up the neural access. Up the chakras, if you will, but really up the spinal chord. The need to resist it is coming from the Cortex. All the brain; rationalizing and pushing the energy down . . . The cortex resistance is an attempt to prevent over load . . . The real true emotions that needs to be expressed are in the body, trying to move up and be expressed and thereby integrated. That is why I believe that Psychoanalysis is in a vacuum and doesn't work. You are spending all your time in to cortex, rather than in your body. You are adding to the resistance (Grodzki, p. 4).

It is Vital that we breathe, when we stop breathing we stop moving. Therefore it is very important to have an awareness of how we breathe and to develop techniques and strategies that help client groups to access a deeper flow of breath in an easy way.

Another vital part of DMT is Authentic Movement. I am excited by my own journey in this over the years, as I watch myself unfold both as the Witness and the Mover. I am becoming much more attuned to the Witness in me. It is extremely important and necessary that I be able to hold and to witness with very clear intention, focus, empathy, neutrality and presence as I can. I enjoy the science as the witness when the mover speaks at the end. This act makes me feel that I am with the mover on a deep vibrational level that is preverbal and in the Quantum.

Movement is a vital part of our lives, required for the continuation of life. As the slogan says, "move it or loose it". The vitality I feel when I have moved something deep inside me after a dance.

6. Alive.

Dance Movement Therapy is alive. Dance has been a part of mankind forever and when people have been in the depths of despair; dancing has often been the answer. My mother told me that when there was no food during the Second World War and they were hungry and afraid they would dance. The aliveness of my breath that supports my beating heart, which moves billions of blood cells through my body and no matter how still I am there, is

always movement. The awareness of this can become a dance of aliveness. My body knows it all. My body holds the key to all of me and all that I am. We are alive until we stop breathing. While we dance we live and thrive.

To conclude this essay I would like to say that from the process of writing this essay that I have begun to develop my DMT model with much more clarity, conviction and intention than I had before. I have also realized that I am much more Newtonian than I thought I was. I can now consciously and fully embrace the importance of the integration of the Newtonian and Quantum paradigms of which I previously innately and intuitively followed. I look forward to putting all that I have used into practice. I aim to use my knowledge, wide experience and adventurous approach to assist inspire and allow all those who participate in my DMT sessions to realized their own special potential and quality of life.

References:

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2. Dossey, L (1982) 'Health and the Implicate Order', Space, Time and Medicine, Shambhala Publication, Chapter 2 pp. 181-189
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