

Martyn Rudin

DANCE THERAPY
in relation to
the Principles of Dancing Bodymind

Essentially we spend most of our lives in a kind of bodymind split, we are rarely truly present in the body in a clear attentive and mindful way. The way society is set up it is constantly throwing us out of the present into the past or headlong into the future. Clocks drive us against and conflict with our natural rhythms. The body wants and needs to be wound down from hyperactivity or on the other hand wound up from flaccid laxity and collapse.

How to get out of this condition -
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How to get out of this condition -
this chronic state of disconnection
from our psycho-physical reality?
How can we achieve, at least
briefly, a glimpse of bodymind
unity wherein a natural harmoni-
ous relationship occurs and
the being discovers a fresh
awareness of itself?



Dance to me is a means of discovering an integration of all the parts of myself, it is a way to express my energy and awaken the connection along the TRIAD of HEAD, HEART and GUTS. Through dance a balance can be found in thinking, feeling and sensation.

For a number of years I have been exploring dance and movement forms of various kinds. From running and karate to Alexander Technique and Tai Chi. I studied Ballet as well as Release Dance and Contact Improvisation. You might say I'm a movement/dance junkie.

I created *Dancing Bodymind* out of the need to give myself a vehicle to express what I teach, because it contains a mixture of all of what I have learnt. I attempt to put over, transmit something that is not about any form or technique. In developing certain principles within *Dancing Bodymind* I've come to the conclusion that what is vital is that people rediscover and awaken the child within themselves and get in touch with that spontaneous gleeful spirit, that being of joy. Unfortunately it is not always that easy; there is much in the way, a whole net of interferences, a web of conditionings the skill within a workshop is to gently and gradually remove the blocks, so that people are left with their own selves and the security to know that it's OK to celebrate through dance.

Dance as a form of Healing has been around for thousands of years. Everyone knows that when you dance and have a good bop or skip about to some more exotic music, you feel better; you are more in contact with yourself, others and your environment. So why don't we do it more often? What prevents the world from dancing? Basically, it's not considered as an important part of our educational curriculum; it's something we just do at parties.

Dance can be a very good means of opening up communication between people and creating new insights into developing harmonious relationships. Let us not limit the meaning of dance to mean dance techniques or a series of steps, but open up the word to mean bringing into play all aspects of ourselves, spiritual, mental, emotional and physical into the one expression. To me dance can give a new perspective on how a person views the universe. It can create a shift in attitude where the person can discover new resources within themselves. Many psychological problems get frozen within a mind pattern, a whirling mental-emotional mass that never gets grounded through the body. Dance can help to discharge those fixed patterns, dislodge a person from being stuck and create a new perspective.

To begin to explain how this transformation can happen would not work as in the end it could not be understood. Dance is an experience, a dialogue verbal and non-verbal with the bodymind. What I do within a workshop is to create the situation where a person can fully explore the simplest of movements, for example, general stretching, rolling, crawling, standing, walking and running and with the assistance of

visualisation we can awaken the imagination. The effect is that as a person becomes absorbed and involved in themselves in a highly creative and introspective way their inner life becomes enriched as the sensitivity is enhanced. I encourage this exploration through healing music and a verbal monologue of simple direction which includes using key words and phrases which relate to and heighten the kinesthetic appreciation that is a person's awareness of movement. It obviously takes a fair degree of trust and even surrender to the process. However, I have found that invariably people do want to let go of the blocks and tensions and start to get in touch with a soft core that helps to melt away the resistance to experiencing the *Dancing Bodymind*.

At present I give a Healing Dance Workshop that is a one-day course covering various ways of bringing a person to discover their innate ability to move and dance because it is structured in such a way that the group uses the shared experience to expand their own awareness. By contact, verbal dialogue, meditation, imagery and simple movements, the relationship opens between bodymind time and space, people start to become conscious of a world of movement experience which is new and exciting. I emphasise the need to take care of oneself and not to overstretch or strain: however, there are parts of the day where I do encourage full physical participation that is a dynamic expressive quality. It is important to strike a balance between inner and outer orientated movement; for example, a participant will at one moment in the workshop be in a very dreamlike movement space and then in another be very outward going, direct and expressive. In terms of integrating bodymind use, it is necessary to have both qualities as this creates good tone in the muscular skeletal system as well as flexibility in the joints. On an emotional level it moves the person along a spectrum of feeling states. I often start with an individual connecting into the central axis an imaginary line of energy going up and through the centre of the body and instruct people to think, feel and sense this connection in other words bringing their whole selves into the creation of the image or idea.

Focussing of the attention is essential as this allows the defining of the physical boundaries by enhancing a person's sensory appreciation. Also, by working in this way a person can create a comfortable foundation from which to move out into the world. By comfort I mean what the word indicates, discovering an inner strength and a quality of self esteem.

Many people have a false notion of their own body image. Invariably they have forgotten that they created the image in the first place

and also that they have the power to change it. However, there is often a set of already preprogrammed responses going on in the body itself. At times it is difficult to break this old pattern; so the challenge of *Dancing Bodymind* is stepping out of the old pattern of moving and being ready to experience a new one.

The power of dance is in sharing it with others. Although it is wonderful to dance alone - I have spent many hours doing this - it is always more satisfying to bring yourself to another; then the body communicates and the vocabulary of movement can say so much more than words. Dancing in a group can take on so many models and permutations. What I am always amazed and awed by is that a group can create their own rhythm and harmony without any effort. This happens when there is attention, focus and listening to each other through the movement. Although I build a certain amount of structure and form within a workshop, the magic moments occur when there is a release of any thought of what might happen next. However, I am aware that this spontaneous happening takes place because of the development throughout the workshop. I always create the workshop out of who is there. It begins when the people walk into the room.

The greatest joy I get out of my work is the difference in people's bodies and faces at the end of the day. What I then do is encourage people to take what they discover and use it in their lives, find a way of incorporating dance in their every day situation.

So let's get down to it, let your body dance, let your mind listen, and let your heart play!

Martyn Rudin started Dancing Bodymind four years ago. He is a graduate in dance from Dartington College of Arts where he studied Release Dance and Contact Improvisation. He has just completed a three-year training at Alexander Teaching Associates and he is interested now in integrating principles of the Alexander Technique into movement and dance as well as creating a transpersonal dance experience.

THE ASSOCIATION OF DANCE THERAPISTS exists to encourage understanding of the art of dance movement as therapy both within the medical profession and the community as a whole. 7 Ashlake Road, Streatham, London SW16 2BB