

The
Healing Power
of
Dance
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1. Introduction

Movement and dance are inherent qualities, not only to humans, but to all of nature and the cosmos. From the creation of the universe, to the first heartbeat of the fetus in the womb, rhythm and dance have always existed. For tens of thousands of years, humans have used dance as an integral part of ritual, prayer, and reaching other states of consciousness, for the purpose of healing, and to facilitate contact with the Divine. It is believed that the soul of a people is woven into the steps of their dances.

Sadly, the incredible power of dance as a sacred ritual has often been interpreted as a threat throughout history. The male-dominated Christian church put an end to women dancing and drumming in the church, as it represented power and worship of the Goddess. The United States government outlawed Native Americans from gathering and performing their sacred and traditional dancing and drumming up until 1978 when that freedom was restored by the Religious Freedom Act.

Fortunately, dance as ritual and healing is becoming popular once again, as people from many cultures and walks of life have been exposed to some of the many healing properties of dance.

Throughout history, most cultures have used dance as a method of accessing the Divine. Dance is often performed as a spiritual experience, either for the self, for others, for community, or for the planet. Dancing is a popular method of socializing and creating and enhancing relationships. Movement and dance have been used for thousands of centuries around the world specifically for their many healing qualities. The western world is just recently waking up to the understanding of the healing power of dance.

More recently dance is acknowledged for its physical exercise aspect, where the healing comes from the healthy body experience of increasing the heart rate and enhancing cardiovascular endurance, body strength, and flexibility. This is exemplified in the form of Dancercise, also known as Jazzercise, made popular in the 1980s.

I have been dancing and playing music for most of my life, from grade school through high school rituals of cheerleader and pom pom girl, to adult endeavors of Middle Eastern dancing, flamenco dancing, Greek dancing and playing a variety of percussion instruments. I have had the good fortune of experiencing many cultures through music and dance. The healing and joy I have felt, and at times been able to share with others, is something I was able to access by using music and dance as a universal communication conduit for participating in and learning of other cultures' wisdom.

Let us dance together through time, from the origins and history of dance, to its many healing modalities of the current day. We will explore the inherent healing aspects of dance, along with various dances throughout the world, that are meant specifically for the purpose of healing. We will also take a brief glimpse at the relationship of music and costume to healing dance.

Let us first take a look at the specific difference between curing and healing as it relates to dance. In *Dance as a Healing Art*, Anna Halprin so eloquently states "There is a distinction between "curing" and "healing", which is useful when we approach dance, or any of the arts, as a healing modality. To "cure" is to physically eliminate a disease....To "heal" is to operate on many dimensions simultaneously, by aiming at attaining a state of emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical health....Dance engages our whole being. It is, in my opinion, the most powerful of the arts because it is holistic in its very nature. Our body is our instrument. It is immediate and accessible, holding our wisdom and truth."

Dance is so powerful because it is accessible to nearly everyone. Dance is a very holistic and integrative healing modality. The very nature of movement and dance demand that we be fully present.

As Iris Stewart relates in her insightful book *Sacred Woman, Sacred Dance*, "Since we are working at very subtle levels of energy, our level of consciousness or attitude can greatly

affect the outcome of our dances.” As well, our dances can greatly affect our level of consciousness.

With only 25% of communication being verbal, movement is an important component of the remaining 75% of our communications.

2. History of dance

In the beginning...

“Nothing happens until something moves.” Albert Einstein

Movement and dance are an integral part of many creation myths, each as unique as its culture and period in time. Many creation myths are also associated with sound, rhythm and the drum. Just as some believe the world was spoken or sung into being, some believe the world was danced or drummed into being.

The Nataraj, one of the forms of Lord Shiva also known as Lord of the Dance, is known in Hinduism as the dancer of creation. Nataraj symbolizes the movement of the universe; the cycles of life, death, and rebirth; the balance between form and void. The cosmic and sacred Dance of Creation is a combination of art, science and spirituality.

Stewart relates a goddess creation myth based on dance”...Eurynome, the most ancient goddesses of the Pelasgians, indigenous people of Greece, rose naked from primordial chaos and instantly began to dance. Eurynome danced a dance that separated light from dark, the sea from the sky. She danced to the south and set the wind in motion behind her, to begin her work of creation.”

The Hindu warrior goddess Durga (goddess beyond reach) is believed to have drummed the world into being, riding a lion. As Layne Redmond indicates in *When the Drummers Were Women*, “All of these lion goddesses are associated with the drum that leads the initiate deep into the labyrinth of the mind in search of expanded states of awareness.” In her discussion of animal powers, she tells us “This emulation of other creatures is what researchers believe is the origin of human dance and music.”

Redmond relates the roots of the word dance “The word *history* itself came from dance. *Histor*, from ancient Rome, meaning dancer, was also the root for many derivatives: from *history* to *minister* (Min-Istria), and later *minstrel*.” Dancers were often the keepers of the history of a people, adding dances throughout time to relate the events of their history. Most cultures throughout history have had dances and related costumes that represent their people and region.

Dance is used to tell a story and enact myths, often danced by women to worship the Goddess and represent the power of women.

Throughout history, animals have also had their dances for different purposes. In ancient times, as in Turkey around 6,000 BC, the bee was one of the power animals that symbolized birth, death and resurrection. A bee dances and drums its wings to communicate the location of food to those within the hive.

Dance is but one way of expressing the Divine. Throughout the Bible and many religious texts is expressed the praising of the Divine with music and dance. As described by Iris Stewart in *Sacred Women, Sacred Dance*, “In Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus, *rejoice* and *dance* are the same words.” Early Christianity included dance as part of the ritual of worship until the male dominated clergy determined that drumming and dancing were too closely associated with worship of the Goddess, and banned dancing, and in some instances women, from worship. Stewart further elaborates “The word *choros*, the Greek term for choir that sang, spoke, and danced with the purpose of intensifying a mood, reveals the important role of dance in early Christian rituals.” In other languages, the word for dance also means joy or celebration.

“*We come spinning out of nothingness, scattering stars....the stars form a circle, and in the center we dance.*” – Rumi, as found quoted in *Sacred Women, Sacred Dance*.

Origins of Movement

Movement is one of the very first forms of human expression. Even before birth, the fetus moves in the womb. Fetuses are known to respond to music. Movement and dance take the ability to communicate to another level – a sensory level that is experienced not only by the dancer, but by the audience. It is a form of non-verbal communication that creates a bond, between the body and the spirit or with an audience.

Dance has been used throughout history to tell a story, recreate myths, and connect with spirits or the Divine, as ritual or prayer and specifically for healing.

Interestingly we have many expressions that suggest that in much of nature and even the physical body, movement is a type of dance:

The dance of the seasons
The dance of the planets
The dance of the peptides (Candice Pert)
Moon dance
Sun dance
The dance of time
Dance across the threshold to a new age
Dancing into ecstasy
Mating dance (humans or animals)
The boat danced across the lake
Danced her way to stardom
Dance on air (to be hanged)
Dances to another tune
Names of creatures in nature (Spanish dancer mollusk)
Dance of the chakras (Carol Ritberger)
Dance for joy

3. Dance and the Goddess

There are many Goddesses and Gods that are associated with dance performed as creation myths, or for celebration, worship, healing, reaching other states of consciousness and many other purposes.

Artemis of Greece both performed and was worshipped with the sacred circle dance as described by Stewart “Artemis, goddess of untamed nature, assisted females of all species in childbirth...” Isis introduced dancing to the Egyptian people. Stewart also relates the nature of the Hindu goddess Tara “It is said that those who express the enlightened qualities and activities of Tara through dance clarify the obstacles and hindrances in their lives.”

Bastet (Bast), one of the Goddesses of ancient Egypt, was the cat goddess of music, dancing, pleasure, and joy. Dancing in her honor was believed to bring physical and mental good health. She was believed to protect people from evil spirits and contagious diseases.

Hathor of Egypt, Goddess of the moon and mistress of the dance, played a sistrum (ancient percussion instrument) and was goddess of music and dancing, leading the priestesses in temple rituals of music and dance. Some of these dances were rituals as a prayer for fruitfulness. Hathor was the protector of pregnant women and childbirth. The sistrum frequencies were thought to be a focusing tool for transcendence.

Below is a list of goddesses and gods and their origins, associated specifically with dance, selected from the web list *Gods/Goddesses of the Arts*, created by P J Criss.

GODDESS / GOD	ORIGIN
Bastet (Bast)	Egyptian goddess
Caryatids	Greek goddess
Chac-Xib-Chac	Mayan god
Hathor	Egyptian goddess
Hi-iaka	Hawaiian goddess
Huldra	Germanic goddess
Kachina	Hopi goddess
Kinnari	Thailand goddess
Ko	African goddess
Laka	Hawaiian goddess
Leanan Sidhe	Irish goddess
Macuilxochitl	Aztec god
Mera	Asian goddess
Muso Koroni	Mali goddess
Norwan	Wintun goddess
Nunnehi	Cherokee goddess
Rangda	Bali goddess
Rusalki	Russian goddess
Saule	Baltic goddess
Sibilaneuman	Columbian goddess
Terpshchore	Greek/roman goddess
Themis	Greek goddess
Urvasi	Hindu goddess
Uzeme	Japanese goddess
Weisse Frauen	Germanic goddess
Yhi	Australian goddess

Although this is just a sampling of some of the goddesses and gods of dance throughout history, most cultures have had their goddesses and gods associated with dance.

4. Dance as Ritual

As just discussed, dance as ritual was often used in Goddess worship or as ritual or celebration performed to honor religious deities. Repetitive motion is sometimes accompanied by drumming, both of which assist in obtaining an altered state.

Ritual dance has its roots in core shamanism and often incorporates the four directions (North, South, East, and West) or the elements (Earth, Water, Air, and Fire). Dance as ritual is also used to honor the seasonal equinoxes. As well, it is used as dancing prayer, moving meditation, and as a tool for divining the future.

Dance has been used throughout the ages to represent and facilitate rites of passage; from birth rituals to the entry into menarche, manhood, or menopause, or the release of death for the purpose of rebirth.

As Redmond explains "In menstruation and birthing rites, certain drum rhythms caused the womb to contract, aiding in the flow of menstrual blood or facilitating labor in childbirth."

Many cultures have had their moon dances, performed at night, and sometimes at the full moon. Delphi was a place that honored the moon with dance ritual. Some honor the moon for its connection to the female cycles of menstruation or the Triple Goddess: maiden, matron and crone. Other dance rituals honored the cycles of the moon associated with pregnancy and birthing. Some cultures believe that the time of menstruation is a time to withdraw and perform rites to look inward and pay attention to heightened intuitive powers.

Eye movements can be an important part of the symbolism of dance. Gazing upward indicates connection with the sun, moon, or upper world. Gazing downward implies communicating with Mother Earth or the netherworld.

Another application of ritual dance is The Demon Dance, performed by the Doguwa of North Africa. They use dances specific to particular spirits as enticement to come listen to worshipers, so their prayers might be heard and fulfilled. Dance has also been used in many cultures to exorcise demons. In *Women Who Run With the Wolves* Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Ph.D. describes another aspect of the ritual dance of death "...much of our overcivilized culture has a difficult time tolerating the transformative. But there are better attitudes with which to embrace the Life/Death/Life nature. Throughout the world, though it is called by different names, many see this nature as un baile con La Muerte, a dance with death; Death as a dancer, with Life as its dance partner."

More recently dance as ritual to heal the planet and society has once again become popular. It can be used to facilitate personal transformation and social evolution.

Steward describes a moon dance ritual to invoke global healing "High in the Andes Mountains of Peru, dancers of the Quillacingas tribe, wearing golden crescents as nose ornaments, danced for Mama Quilla, the Inca name for the moon. They danced to restore a caring attitude to a hardened world estranged from feminine values."

5. The Soul of Dance

There are several lines of thought on the soul of dance. Some believe that the passion of the dance evokes the soul, others feel that the soul of nature uses the dancer for expression.

Just as each dance has its accompanying music and costume, each dance approaches the soul of the dance from a different perspective. The Mevlevi Whirling Dervishes call the mystical state of ecstasy evoked by turning "hadrah" or "hal", a state of consciousness, put in the heart by God. The Flamenco dance of Spain and its *duende*, or fire in the soul, has been written about extensively.

In *The Language of Spanish Dance*, Matteo embellishes "Duende: The "soul" of true flamenco dance and music, without which an audience is entertained but not involved. Such involvement is not limited to a virtuosic display of steps and physical energy. Fundamentally speaking, duende is a state of mind or emotion emanating from the subconscious, an imperceptible psychic communication or hypnotic energy which a performer shares with his or her audience. It is an intimate happening almost like communicating through prayer or as one "possessed" and may be likened to a ritual manifesting itself through dance."

Duende has also been described as spirit, soul, elf, goblin, demon, magic, charm, spell or spirit of the earth. It is also described as not something the artist consciously produces, but comes from the struggle between feelings and expression.

6. The Elements

Interestingly, both dance and music have been associated with the elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether. Dance is sometimes used as an invocation to the elements. In Layne Redmond's book, *When the Drummers Were Women*, she relates that the frame drum is linked to the control of the elemental powers. She learned the relationship of the frame drum strokes to the elements from the eminent Nubian musician Hamsa El Din.

In Gabrielle Roth's *The Wave*, the five universal rhythms are associated with the elements, as are some of the movements of Pan-Eu-Rhythmy described later. The four movements of the Whirling Dervish are also associated to the four elements. Some of those relationships are shown below.

ELEMENT	DRUM HIT	CHAKRA	NOTE	RHYTHM
Earth (physical)	Kah - slap that stops the vibration of the skin head	First – base of spine	La	Flowing
Water (emotion)	Dum - low open resonant sound	Second – lower abdomen	Va	Chaos
Fire (spirit)	Tak – high pitched rim sound	Third – solar plexus	Ra	Staccato
Air (mental)	Cha – brushing sound or sound of tambourine's jungles	Fourth – heart	Ya	Lyrical
Ether	The pause between the hits	Fifth - throat		Stillness

7. The Spiral Dance

Round, circular, spiral and turning dances have their beginnings in fertility rites and worship of the Goddess. Many modes of dance also incorporate the circle or spiral as a powerful symbolic expression of power and of the womb, the cosmos, unity, the cycle of the seasons, rites of passage, spiritual progression, the God within, and the stars circling in the sky. Often a person being healed is placed in the center of a circle of dancers.

In some Goddess religions women turned in a ritual to invoke rain. Shamans turned to achieve altered states of consciousness to access spirits and knowledge. In the New Year God Dance of the Tibetan religion, participants whirl. In Islam turning was used as a form of sacred prayer.

Peter Deunov's PanEuRhythmy, described later, is also referred to as the Sacred Circle Dance. In this form of healing dance, the musicians, or cassette player, are placed in the center of the circle of dancers to symbolize the source of creation, since their belief is that all of creation emanated from a sound, the Word of God. This form of dancing in a circle emulates the planets circling the sun.

The circle dance has also been used by many cultures throughout history in funeral rites, to symbolize the cycle of life, death and rebirth.

Often the direction of the circle or turning is significant. Most of the movements of Pan-Eu-Rhythmy are done in a counter-clockwise direction to emulate the ascension of spiritual evolution, although the final movements, stepping forward to the center of the circle and back, represent bringing back the light from the Divine to help manifest Heaven on earth. In the whirling of the Sufi Dervish, one turns to the left, always toward their own heart.

Many circle dances have their roots in the Hora, such as the grapevine. The Findhorn community in Scotland also dances and teaches many circle dances. Another form of circle dance, that is expressly used for healing, is the Zar. As Stewart supplies "The word zar ("circle") is thought to have been derived from the Arabic verb Zara, or Zahar, which means "becoming visible" or "perceptible."...While it is most widely known today as a woman's healing dance in Egypt the zar has been practiced in Morocco, Yemen, Turkey, Tunisia, the Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and southern Iran...". The zar ritual sometimes lasts several days and can include prayers and incense to contact the Old Woman. Stewart further describes "the purpose of the ritual is to reconcile the one who is not well with the visiting or "possessing" spirit through supplication and placation." In this form of healing dance, the person requesting the healing participates in the dance, along with those helping facilitate the healing. The dance, encouraged by the music and spectators, increases in intensity, until the dancer enters a trance and collapses, to be revived later.

In the book *Ancient Secret of the Fountain of Youth*, Peter Kelder describes five exercises, known as rites that arrest and even reverse aging. These rites were learned from Tibetan lamas in a monastery in the Himalayas and passed on to Kelder. The first of these rites is

spinning. The concept is one of balancing the spinning vortexes in the human body known as chakras. These chakras regulate the endocrine system, and in turn all the body's functions. The slowing of the spin of the chakras creates aging, physical deterioration and ill health. Rite Number One is spinning, in a clockwise direction, to speed up the chakras and increase the flow of vital life energy, improving health and slowing aging.

Medical Intuitive Carol Ritberger, also explains in her latest book that dancing is one of a variety of methods to enhance the health of the chakras and the therefore the human energy system "As we look at what we can do to accelerate the development process and minimize the deterioration, there are methods that we can practice that will facilitate the awakening and rebuilding of all of the chakras. They include meditation, the practice of Yoga (there are many forms), visualization, breathing techniques, affirmations, prayers, dancing, and singing. All encourage introspection, releasing toxins from the body, the elimination of the waste by-products of conditioning, and support getting in touch with the part of us which never takes life too seriously, and sees life as an exciting opportunity to learn, grow and develop – the soul."

8. Music as Healing

Throughout history, music has been known to heal the body, mind and soul. Priestesses and shamans alike have used drumming to enter altered states of consciousness. The earliest frame drums are depicted in cave drawings from the Paleolithic era. At times the purpose of drumming to achieve altered states was to divine the future. Drumming has also been used to access the upper or lower world or to contact spirits, and bring back healing for someone that is ill, or bring back souls from the dead.

In *Atlas of the New Age* Gerry Maguire Thompson describes a creation myth associated with music and drumming: "Hopi Mythology: A Hopi creation myth tells how the first people on Turtle Island cut out a disk of buckskin, tied it to a wooden frame, and flung it into the sky. They sang to it until it settled on the horizon. It shone, but its light was cold. This was how the moon was created. Then they tried again. They cut out another disk, painted it with egg yokes and yellow pollen, gave it a face, and tied corn silk around it. Then they sent this spinning into the sky, where it began to shine brightly and cast warmth over the earth. This was how the sun was born. This was how the Hopi peoples were able to begin their migrations, with the sun, moon, and stars as their guides."

The drum represents the beating of the pulse of the universe and the pulse of the human heart. The two-sided drum symbolizes the male and female, the polarities, and is the shape of the sign of infinity.

Layne Redmond points out in *When the Drummers Were Women* "That is why, in many traditions, the moon is represented as a goddess playing on her moon-shaped frame drum, spinning and weaving the rhythms of human lives."

Many early cultures had drumming priestesses. Drumming was used for transition rites, to summon the Goddess and for transmitting her energy to others. More recently drumming, particularly by women, has been making a comeback as a spiritual tool.

Apollo, son of Zeus, a master musician playing on his golden lyre, was known as the healer and one of the first who taught man the healing art of music.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a Freemason musician, and composed, among other ceremonial music of initiation, a funeral lament, which represented the death to the world (of unawareness) and transmutation to rebirth – resurrection. Don Campbell, author of *The Mozart Effect*, has compiled and sequenced Mozart music into tapes and CDs that each has a specific purpose and benefit, from healing to enhancing learning. The jacket of one of his CDs explains "In the early 1990's, as part of a research by Drs. Gordon Shaw and Frances Rauscher at the University of California at Irvine, a series of tests were given to students who listened to Mozart's music. This work revealed that spatial intelligence, a critical component of IQ, as measured on the famed Stanform-Binet scale, was greatly enhanced by listening to Mozart for ten minutes before testing. Subsequent study revealed that young children given basic music instruction out-

perform peers given computer or other forms of training.” Campbell has compiled music with specific benefits for both children and adults. Here are some examples.

The Mozart Effect: Volume 1 Strengthen the Mind – Music for Intelligence and Learning

The Mozart Effect: Volume 2 Heal the Body – Music for Rest and Relaxation

The Mozart Effect: Volume 3 Unlock the Creative Spirit – Music for Creativity and Imagination

Lasos is a contemporary music creator and originator of New Age music, whose soundscapes have a number of healing qualities. He specializes in heavenly, celestial, and inter-dimensional music. Lasos creates music from a variety of musical instruments, some of which he has created himself, that make the heart glow and facilitates consciousness travel to celestial higher-dimensional realms,

Musicians have discovered a variety of interesting healing aspects of music. Some find that music expresses what the musician is working on within themselves, and that those that are drawn to their music are working on similar issues. Others have discovered that music can enhance learning, creativity or relaxation.

Music therapy

Music is an effective means of expressing and dealing with feelings and emotions that can be difficult to express through verbal communication. Music has been used throughout history for a variety of healing purposes.

In *Light Emerging*, Barbara Brennan explains some of the effects of music on the human energy field “Music plays a very important role in health and healing. Many healers use music to help calm the auric field or bring it to high vibrational heights to help the client go into a healing state. The wide variety of music offers us a wide variety of effects. Some music is very soothing; some charges the field. Some music directly enhances altered states, and other music awakens the rational mind. There is a lot of New Age music out now that charges and opens each chakra in sequence as it is played. Some is wonderful for meditation. In the trainings given by the Barbara Brennan School of Healing, we use music all the time to bring students to different states of consciousness for healing. For example, drum music is very good for grounding down to connect with earth energies and to open the first and second chakras.....we regularly use harp music to take us into the experience of the essence of the core. A regular diet of music helps us remain healthy. The types of music you choose will be directly related to the types of energies that compose your energy field and what type of personal learning you are doing at any particular moment.”

As stated in *The Complete Guide to Family Medicine*, “Sound therapy is a very ancient method of healing. Tibetan monks, for example, have used a method of “overtone chanting” for thousands of years for treating illness. The theory is that since everything in the universe is in a constant state of vibration, including the human body, even the smallest change in frequency can affect the internal organs. Modern sound therapists consider there is a natural resonance or “note” that is “right” for each part of the human body, and for each individual, so by directing specific sounds waves to specific areas they can affect the frequency at which that part is vibrating and thereby restore it to balance and therefore health.”

As with Dance Movement Therapy, Music Therapy also became a formalized mode of healing after World War II, in response to a variety of distresses of those returning from war, and began to be used in hospitals. In 1950 the National Association of Music Therapy was launched in the US. The medical community has been expanding its approval of the concepts of Music Therapy for use in clinical settings since then. As Redmond denotes ““Dry Oliver Sacks, author of a number of popular books on neurological disorders, has helped to set up drumming circles in nursing homes. Testifying before the Senate Special Committee on Aging, he hypothesized that Alzheimer’s disease can be ameliorated by the healing effects of rhythm. In Topeka, therapists are experimenting with drumming in the treatment of dementia.” In *The Encyclopedia of Healing Therapies* Woodham and Peters explain “The rhythm of music is also said to affect physiological processes, such as heart rate or breathing, and prompt the release of endorphins, the body’s own painkillers.”

Similar to Dance Movement Therapy, Music Therapy has been used successfully with those less able to communicate in traditional forms, such as emotionally disturbed children, and those with autism and learning difficulties as well as those with physical, emotional or mental disabilities. Music Therapy is also used to treat stress, anxiety, chronic pain, speed healing and recovery, and is purported to affect breathing, heart rate, and help release endorphins, and to assist the body with fighting pain naturally.

Music is being used more widely in hospitals and operating rooms, either to relax and soothe the patient, and / or surgical staff performing the procedure. It is also used to ease anxiety and pain, promote recovery, and enhance the immune system.

9. Healing Power of the Costume

Dancer's costumes are often seen to have healing properties as well. As Stewart indicates "Snakes twine around the arms, body, or hair or are borne on staffs, symbolic of healing, initiation and rebirth, and transformation." Shapes found on costumes that are symbolic of creative and healing powers are the spiral, zigzag and triangle. They often represent special powers and energy. The use of henna or tattooing are other methods for a dancer to portray history or sacred information.

The veil is popular in dance throughout history, used as an instrument of divination, knowledge and safety. The veil also represents the barrier between worlds, levels of consciousness, or gates of initiation. The Dance of the Seven Veils is associated with the advance toward wisdom. The number seven is thought to represent the Great Mother and the seven planets, and Egyptians are said to have seven souls. The veil represents fluidity and the ever-changing world and when 'the veil is lifted' the world of illusion falls away and we can see our true divine nature.

Jewelry is often incorporated into healing dances to enhance their healing powers. Jewelry and stones are thought to possess healing, magical and protective properties. The gems most often used in the costumes of dancers are representative of particular Goddesses and healing qualities, as compiled here from *Sacred Woman, Sacred Dance and Love is in the Earth, A Kaleidoscope of Crystals, Updated*.

GEM	PROPERTY	GODDESS / CULTURES
Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes healing & purification Aligns physical, mental and emotional bodies Transmutes negative energy to positive energy 	Native Americans Eastern Indians Electra
Amethysts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calm and tranquility Spirituality and contentment Connection between earth plane and other worlds 	Venus
Aquamarine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection Courage Alignment of the chakras 	Venus
Beryl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purity Guidance 	Venus
Carnelian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symbol of resurrection 	Isis
Crystal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Object of concentration Divination of the future Stimulate purification process 	Diana-Artemis, Hecate, Ishtar, Persephone and Hathor
Diamond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rules all other stones Strength and endurance 	World Goddess (literal meaning of the word)

Emerald	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instills sensitivity, loyalty and harmony • Assists in childbirth • Enhance memory and mental capacity 	Venus
Moonstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alleviates emotional tension • Brings galactic evolved energies • Calmness and awareness 	Diana-Artemis, Hecate, Ishtar, Persephone and Hathor
Pearl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conjunction of fire and water • Represents the human soul 	Diana-Artemis, Hecate, Ishtar, Persephone and Hathor
Turquoise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns chakras, meridians and subtle bodies • Spiritual attunement • Healing, cleansing and protection 	Venus American Indian

As Stewart also indicates “The Roman historian Pliny wrote that the emerald was believed to assist women in childbirth...Lapis was used by Armenian women in preventing miscarriage.”

The necklace was often used as a symbol of power and unity, and the crown represents higher consciousness and immortality. Floral wreaths adorning the head signify the ability to heal with herbs. Jewels worn in the navel suggest the original source of nourishment while still in the womb. In some belief systems they also denote the navel chakra, or *manipura*, considered by some to be the power center of the human energy system.

Gems, jewelry and amulets are also used for protection against outside forces and to garner power, knowledge and help from spirits or nature. Stewart makes the distinction “While amulets have protective properties, talismans project the wearer’s power and bring good luck. Two thousand years ago, they were dispensed by the priestess and later ceremonially used by those who practiced medicine, alchemy, and astrology.”

10. Healing Dances from Around the World

Three examples of dances from around the world, each with their own particular healing purposes are the Whirling Dervish, Pan-Eu-Rhythmy and Native American dances.

Whirling Dervish

The Whirling Dervish are orders of Sufis; ecstatic mystics of Islam. The turning of the dervishes help them reach spiritual unity with God. In *Atlas of the New Age* Gerry Maguire Thompson describes “Sufism was organized into dervish orders, where members lived a life devoted to God and ritual. Rituals involved powerful verbal recitations proclaiming the devotees’ belief in God, and vigorous dancing and breathing exercises, leading to personal hypnosis and transcendence expressing union with God.”

The turning of the Dervish is used to reach quiet, a state of prayer, of offering the self to God. They do not turn for themselves. They turn as a conduit, so the Light of God can descend upon the earth. They turn clockwise with the right hand turned upward, to receive the Light of God, and with the left hand turned downward to bring the light into the world. They do not turn to purposely reach a trance state, although sometimes they do reach an ecstatic state where they know and experience God.

The Dervish use turning as the vehicle because everything moves in circles: the earth is round, the planets circle, the circle of life, the musical notes of the octave move in a circle, the circling of the seasons, movement is a circle.

In the book *Women Called to the Path of Rumi, the Way of the Whirling Dervish*, Shakina Reinhertz relates “This ritual was initially created by Sultan Valed as a way of honoring the passing of his father, Muhammad Jelajuddin Rumi, the great Sufi mystic and poet. Through the

spiritual friendship of Shams-I Tabriz, Rumi was transformed from a scholar trained in Sufi tradition to a mystic who longed for the state of union, immersed himself in the practice of turning, and created a legacy of spiritual teachings through poetry.” Rumi also taught some of the women in his family to turn, and his family and followers created the Mevlevi Order of the Dervish.

In the beginning of the Mevlevi Order, men and women spun together in *sema*. Reinhertz explains “Sema is the ancient practice of moving to sacred music in an ecstatic state of remembrance....I came to know that the word “dervish” contained a mystery regarding a doorway, the threshold between two worlds!...a Dervish is one who sits at this doorway...Whirling is as an expression of Divine Love forever present on the angelic planes”. These two worlds are the world of form and the world of spirit. For several centuries, the whirling ritual of the Mevlevi was performed in public only by men. At the beginning of the 20th century, Sufism and *sema* were brought to North America and more recently, men and women are again turning together in *sema*. The scales of the music to which the Dervish turn represent the levels of spiritual evolution

*We came whirling
out of nothingness
scattering stars
like dust
the stars made a circle
and in the middle
we dance....*

-Rumi (translated by D. Liebert)

Pan-Eu-Rhythmy

Pan-Eu-Rhythmy created by Peter Deunov, is a moving meditation to activate balance and spiritual awareness. It is meant to be done at the start of the day, as the sun comes up, as a daily prayer and exercise. Ardella Nathanael tells the origin of the name in *Dance of the Soul* “PAN means “all over”, as in Pan-African, Pan-American, and so on – therefore nature, Universe, and the whole of creation; EU means good or harmony; and RHYTHMY means rhythm or movement. So PAN-EU-RYTHMY, if you like is the music and movement of the Universe. PanEuRhythmy is a danced-exercise-meditation intended to put us in tune with the rhythm and harmony of the universe....PanEuRhythmy was created by Peter Deunov, a great Teacher from Eastern Europe, to help us make this great evolutionary leap into the next millennium....PanEuRhythmy is a transmitter of Divine energy, healing, creativity, and joy. It softens and awakens the heart, and makes possible in our lives whatever is the next step in our evolution.”

Deunov originally introduced PanEuRhythmy near the Seven Sacred Lakes in the Rila mountains of Bulgaria in the 1920's, during the era of Communist oppression. He studied both theology and medicine in the United States, and subsequently wrote *Testament of the Color Rays of Light*, a book that Nathanael explains “...coordinates the color rays of Light with the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, with key texts from the Bible for use in healing – physical and spiritual.” Deunov was an initiate and taught others in his esoteric mystery school.

PanEuRhythmy combines special music, also developed by Deunov, with 28 different movement techniques that activate the chakras and expand consciousness. Each of the movements and their accompanying musical pieces, are associated with a different chakra or part of the body and each works on different levels. The music creates the movement. The music of PanEuRhythmy is also purported to balance the two hemispheres of the brain. The music is a critical part of the effect and “...transmits Divine energy and connection with the angelic worlds and the world of nature...” says Nathanael.

The movements are usually done in a group, outside in nature and create a strong bond among the participants. The movements are very symbolic and most are danced in a counter-clockwise circle to emulate spiritual evolution; matter expanding into Spirit. PanEuRhythmy is also used to bring the Love and Light accessed through the music and dance out into the world. The archetypal qualities that the movements develop are similar to the qualities of the ten Sefirot of the Kabbalah.

The first ten movements and accompanying music symbolize awakening. The next set of 18 movements are broken up into three sets. The first of these sets represents awakening the energy centers, the second set helps one tune in to the five elements (Earth, Air, Water, Fire, and Ether) to raise consciousness, and the third set are dances of partnership, working with others to bring Heaven to earth. The first of the final two movements uses singing to express joy and enable the heart to sing, and the final movement centers the energies that have been activated with the other movements into the body, so they can be taken out into the world. This is completed with a prayer "May Love, Peace and Joy live in our hearts forever".

Not only does PanEuRhythmy have spiritual benefits, such as a greater feeling of one's Divine purpose and a feeling of oneness, some of the health benefits noted are changing depression to joy, relieving arthritis, relaxation, added flexibility, enhanced body image, creating a cleansing and energizing effect, induce a Kundalini type energy to move up the spine, free energetic blockages, stimulate the higher chakras, and heightened creativity and awareness,

Interestingly, Nathanael also states that different clairvoyants have seen the same colors for the same dances.

Native American Healing Dances

Many forms of Native American ceremonial dances represent forms of prayer and are performed with the guidance of the tribe's Medicine Man to ensure plenty of crops, game, fish, fruit, etc. for the coming year. Other dances are for a variety of particular purposes; among them to honor members of the tribe, for protection, to honor elders, to honor animal spirits, as naming ceremonies, as healing ceremonies, and to access knowledge, spirit helpers or power animals.

The use of power animals in dances of worship by Native Americans is described by Stewart "Snake dances were performed by the Hopi, the Navaho, and the Pawnee in worship of Mother Earth, a religion of the Great Spirit whose dance attributes great potency on the serpent. Snake dances often reenact cosmic processes. To the ancient Hopi Indians, the snake symbolized closeness to earth, endurance, and influence on the clouds."

The Sun Dance of the Native American Kiowa people of the Southern plains is usually danced at the Summer solstice after the priest of the tribe has had an inspiration in a dream. The Sun Dance is an example of a people's preservation of culture and history. It is a purification ritual of protection, healing, and self-renewal. It is a religious ceremony that is also a reunion and sharing of the news among the different tribes of the Kiowa people. Also referred to as the Medicine Dance, it is danced with painted bodies, from sunrise to sundown, or around the clock, honoring the guardian spirit of animals and seeking protection and abundance for the coming year. The participants in the Sun Dance believe that if Indian people come together again in this sacred circle, civilization will endure. If they fulfill this commitment made by their ancestors to Wakan Tanka, the Great Spirit, then the earth will survive.

The Indian Corn Dance of South Dakota represents planting corn: making the furrow, blessing the seed while sowing the corn, covering the seeds with earth and putting a magic circle around the corn for protection and to bless the harvest. The Grass Dance expresses the harmony of the universe and the movements are symbolic of the long prairie grasses blowing in the wind.

What became known in the 1950s as the "pow wow" were gatherings significant to many tribes, including the Sioux, Crow, and Blackfeet tribes, and were celebrations of song, dance, and ritual. Unfortunately, Native American gatherings and rituals were banned by the United States government, in fear of the power these rituals represented. Not until the Religious Freedom Act of 1978 when the rights to have these public gatherings was legally restored.

Carl Hammerschlag, M.D. describes beautifully in his book *The Dancing Healers, A Doctor's Journey of Healing with Native Americans*, the relationship of dancing and healing "Santiago, also from Sano Domingo, had been admitted to the Santa Fe Indian Hospital with congestive heart failure. I didn't know that he was a Pueblo priest and clan chief. I only saw an old man in his seventies lying in a hospital bed with oxygen tubes in his nostrils. Suddenly there was this beautiful smile, and he asked me, "Where did you learn to heal?" Although I assumed my academic credentials would mean little to the old man, I responded almost by rote, rattling off my medical education, internship, and certification. Again the beatific smile and another question: "Do you know how to *dance*?" Somehow touched by whimsy at the old man's query, I answered

that, sure I liked to dance; and I shuffled a little at his bedside. Santiago chuckled, got out of bed, and short of breath, began to show me his dance. "You must be able to dance if you are to heal people," he said. "And will you teach me your steps?" I asked, indulging the aging priest. Santiago nodded. "Yes, I can teach you my steps, but you will have to hear your own music...Santiago knew that to heal you must be able to dance, to hear the music from deep within...All the great dancing healers I have met have enabled their people to build bridges over the unknowable gaps, the mysteries, of our existence...We are here to help each other discover our individual uniqueness. This selfhood, once understood, will of itself sustain us and will, in turn, connect us to the larger reality of humans and spiritual experience. In that way, we may all become dancing healers."

11. Dance Therapy

Dance Therapy, also known as Dance Movement Therapy or Expressive Movement was developed in the United States in the 1940s as a means of expressing feelings and emotions through movement. It is used to tell a story, gain insight that might be difficult to access verbally and to release rigid or repetitive behaviors. Some of the pioneers of the concepts of Dance Therapy are Carl Jung, Wilhelm Reich and Rudolf Laban. Dance Therapy is used widely in the United States, UK and Australia.

As indicated in *The Complete Family Guide to Alternative Medicine* "Dance, music, art and other imaginative expression can circumvent the blocks between conscious and unconscious in the rational mind. Not only can the meaning and cause of erratic behavior be made explicit, but the clues to its resolution can appear through creative expression.....Dance movement therapy can enable individuals to integrate their physical, emotional, and cognitive selves."

Anne Woodham and Dr. David Peters discuss the origins of Dance Therapy in *Encyclopedia of Healing Therapies*, "In the 1940s, partly in response to the large number of people physically and emotionally damaged after World War II, a small group of professional dancers in the US began to develop a form of therapeutic dance movement. Prominent among them was Marian Chance, who used the therapy in her work with schizophrenics."

Dance Therapy uses unchoreographed and spontaneous movement to bypass the conscious mind and increase body awareness. It can be danced alone with a facilitator or therapist to assist in the interpretation of the source of the movement, or the therapist can mirror the movements or discuss what 'came up' for the client during the process. It can be used to tell a story, act out a dream, or used for non-verbal expression of issues, emotions and feelings that can then be integrated by the conscious mind.

Dance Therapy works especially well for those with limited verbal communication skills. It is used effectively with children, including those with autism and learning difficulties. As Peters and Woodham explain "Dance movement therapy works equally well for highly articulate people and for those less able to express themselves in words, including people with learning disabilities, mental problems, or psychotic illnesses. Even severely physically disabled people can experience the liberating effects of dance."

Differing forms of Dance Therapy have been developed around the world, including Eutony and Eurythmy. Eutony was developed by German Gerda Alexander in the 1930s to facilitate a patient discovering self-knowledge by exploring their own movements, and is sometimes incorporated into psychotherapy. Some of the healing benefits of Eutony address musculo-skeletal disorders and conditions resulting from psychological issues. In *The Encyclopedia of Healing Therapies*, Peters and Woodham describe Eurythmy as part of Anthroposophical Medicine "...a movement therapy developed by Austrian Rudolf Steiner in the early 1900s to enhance the relationship between the ego and the physical body. Unlike dance steps and mime, eurythmic movements are choreographed to symbolize sounds, making speech and music "visible" in shapes, gestures and color."

One of the common goals of the various dance therapy modalities is to stimulate the healing process from within. Although Dance Movement Therapy as a specific form of psychotherapy was developed in the 1940s in the United States as a way of expressing feelings

and thoughts, movement and dance have been used for expression, ritual and healing for thousands of years.

12. Dance to Heal Specific Dis-eases

One of the modern-day pioneers of healing dance movement is Anna Halprin. She often uses her dance movement methods to help those with cancer or AIDS. When she had cancer herself, she turned to dance, that came from an intuitive source, to help heal herself.

Halprin has been leading groups as a facilitator of expressive movement in the San Francisco Bay Area since the 1980s. Her techniques are used to help others discover their knowledge of their own personal rhythm and movement, and access their body wisdom, strength and desires. Her practice is not about teaching any particular dance steps, but helping people unlock their own healing dances. She has worked with people with cancer for years. Halprin has termed this method the Halprin Life/Art Process. As she describes it "This method of working with dance seeks to access the life story of each person, and then use this story for the ground for creating art. This is based on the principal that *as life experience deepens, personal art expression expands, and as personal art expression expands, life experience deepens*....movement can change your feelings. I always incorporate the body. Even if I start with an image, I move it through the body. If nothing changes in the body, your feelings will not change."

Anna and Daria Halprin founded the Tamalpa Institute in 1978, teaching a variety of training, community and healing arts programs. Halprin further describes the Life/Art Process as "an integrative approach to the expressive and therapeutic arts for personal, interpersonal, and social change. The vision of this work is based on the belief that dance and the expressive arts, when connected with the life concerns and issues of the individual, the community, and the environment, have a creative and healing role to play in the lives of all people."

She has found that dance can help those with illness in a number of ways: to heighten their life force energy, improve self confidence, provide a general sense of well-being and strengthen the will to live. The dynamic of healing and strengthening the will to live is not exclusive to dance, but is associated with being an active participant in one's own healing, instead of sitting back and passively following doctor's advice.

As Halprin further explains "As I continued teaching, it became apparent that the experience of movement connected to feelings generates long buried and unknown emotions and images. When these emotions and images are expressed through movement, we dance. And when these dances are connected to our lives, they bring about dramatic release and change in our will to live."

In children's dance classes, Halprin combines drawing images, writing about the images, and then dancing them. Then she began using the same process with adults. She calls this Psychokinetic Visualization. She relates her own personal experience "In 1972 I did a drawing of myself in one of my classes and drew a round gray mass in my pelvic region. Partly because I resisted dancing this image, it struck me that there might be something wrong. It turned out that I had drawn my own malignant tumor. I had an operation and three years later a recurrence. This time I drew a self-portrait to heal myself and danced the drawing. Afterwards, I went into a spontaneous remission."

Her method begins with helping people be present in their bodies, notice the feedback process between movement and feelings, and release stuck feelings to facilitate the healing process. As she describes "Repressed or incongruent emotions shut down the immune system, causing pain and illness. We are working toward expression and congruency, and understanding movement and feelings in a constantly circulation feedback loop facilitates this process." Her theory includes the belief that the body, and movement, can be used to express emotions and feelings that would be difficult or impossible to express with words. Unrestricted and unchoreographed movement can help bring to the surface and express feelings or emotions that were unknown or deeply buried.

As Halprin believes “Words label what we already know; expressive movement reveals the unknown. Sensations, feelings, emotions, and images that have long been buried in our bodies are revealed through movement. This is also useful in shifting old patterns, habits, and destructive belief systems....dance and renew your life force”.

Since, as Halprin explains “Many people who are seriously ill view their bodies with shame and distrust and harbor a feeling of being betrayed by their bodies.” her goal is to help people access the inherent and accumulated wisdom in their bodies.

She so eloquently closes her thoughtful book with the following words:

“Movement has the capacity to take us to the home of the soul, the world within for which we have no names. Movement reaches our deepest nature, and dance creatively expresses it. Through dance, we can gain new insights into the mystery of our inner lives. When brought forth from inside and forged by the desire to create personal change, dance has the profound power to heal the body, psyche and soul. Our journey through illness and health, and the power of the dance to illuminate the way, is a passionate aspect of my life’s work.”

13. Life Experiences as a Dancing Healer

Having been a dancer for most of my life, I thought it would be interesting to further investigate my life experiences as a dancing healer. For this journey I enlisted intuitives Lauren Buchanan and Delia Chilgren for an intuitive reading. The following is what they described.

In several life experiences as a woman, in cultures where only the men were allowed to be the dancing healers, women sometimes masqueraded as men to be able to participate in the various forms of ecstatic, healing, or spiritual dance.

Some experiences included forms of drugs and alcohol to assist in inducing altered states of consciousness to reach ecstasy. This was a way to release the bonds of the earth, leave the day to day life behind and reach transcendence. One of these lives was around 2000 BC at the Peloponnesian Peninsula and was part of the rites of Dionysis. Other rituals were about dancing the dance of the soul.

In other life experiences, the dance was about getting the spirit to the light. The quickest way to do that, through many life experiences, was through the dance. Although many times in joy, the instrument of dance was also used in times of turmoil.

Here are some specific life experiences as a dancing healer they saw.

Native American

The first life experience they looked at was as a Native American where the dancing was performed to match the energy of a particular animal, so that animal would show up for the hunters, to provide food for the tribe. This was performed primarily for the last hunt before the winter, when animals for food grew scarce and the tribe needed to stock food supplies for the winter months. In this dance an offering and honoring was made to the animal to thank them for helping sustain the tribe.

Another Native American life experience involved Hoop dancing. It occurred at a time before white Americans had moved to the Southwest, in the late 1700s in the area of Northern Arizona and New Mexico. The Hoop Dance was a ritual dance where male dancers have hoops made out of vines and other items of nature. A lot of artistry is involved in jumping in between the hoops while wearing quite elaborate costumes. The dance is part of the expression of the seasons, associated with various times of the year (like the Green Corn Ceremony). The Hoop Dancer is an important role within the community. Hoop dancers were the most agile of all the dancers in the tribe, with very quick feet, requiring a lot of practice to be so agile and step in between all the hoops. It is also a show of artistry. The Hoop Dance brings incredible joy to the people who watch it. It is a dance that represents freedom and is an important part of the tribe’s ongoing spiritual tradition.

Sufi Dancing – the Whirling Dervish

In a life experience as a Sufi dancer, during the whirling, the body remained on earth but the spirit ascended to touch God. Sufis often whirl until they go unconscious and drop to the floor in ecstatic trance, although in this life the spirit ascended from the body long before unconsciousness and went to touch the Divine Light. Just before going unconscious, this Dervish would land on or near someone who needed to be healed. Having been to the light, the power that came through the Dervish, wherever landed, would provide that person with a healing or a blessing, or whatever need they had in their life would be met by using the body to bring the light back and transferring the light to them.

Interestingly, I shared with Lauren and Delia, in present time I love to spin when I dance. They told me that one of the reasons I like to spin is that when I spin I go to the Light.

The Dance of Death

Dancing was sometimes about destruction. During the Inquisition (the 1600s) they saw a woman being burned at the stake. The twitching she is doing is the Dance of Death. The dance is about the giving up of the Spirit. There is an enormous amount of pain, twisting and arms tied behind, going into a frenzy of a dance even though tied to the point of being almost immobilized. This Dance of Death was about facilitating the Spirit's release from the physical body and going to the Light. This way one could circumvent a lot of the pain of death through the ability to move the body, to transition to the Light more quickly and easily.

Dance as Self Healing

Dance has been a powerful tool for self healing through many life experiences and facilitates going to places that could not have been reached otherwise. Whenever I have gotten stuck, some part of me will begin to move, dance, tap, even if only intellectually, I do it because it takes me back into the Light.

Modes of Healing

Some forms of dancing for healing didn't necessarily mean that someone had to be physically healed. There were very difficult times, when life was very arduous. A lot of the healing was brought about from the joy and pleasure of watching the dance. That in itself was a healing for the people because they could set aside the turmoil and strife for that moment in time and come together in laughter and happiness. That created for them an alternative state and created a healing for them in that there was reason to rejoice, there is more than just hard work and toil. The ceremony connected to joyous dancing was a form of comfort and acknowledgement that they were a solid people and that what they were doing was right and they took comfort in that. It provided them with a healing, not from an illness, but from the arduousness of their life.

There are many ways in which dance has been used to create healing for people, whether it be on the physical level due to illness or on the more esoteric level, because of the ritual of it and being able to forget about troubles for that period of time.

As a temple dancer (woman) in Southeast Asia, it was a very formalized type of dance that was very restrictive and patterned and ritualistic. The dancer becomes impassive and loses their own individualism as a person and actually become just an object, as an extension of the spirit. The face becomes a mask. It is about channeling the Divine. It has happened a couple of times in China, Bali and India.

The dance has usually been very layered. It has not been just a simple dance that heals, but heals on many levels. Each time it has healed another level in you. And it has brought you to the place in this lifetime, where when you dance you immediately go to the Light, and you bring the Light into you. You don't leave your body anymore, the Light comes into you and through you, and emanates from you as you dance, and that is how people are touched by your dance.

Sometimes you find yourself in an altered state as you dance. It's not just a part of self expression, but it can also become a part of suppressing your own personality and connecting with the greater / higher power, the Godhead.

Healing With Dance Today

Lauren and Delia then related some interesting information about how they see me utilizing my dance as healing currently. They saw some fairly intensive lifetimes in the lands of Iberia, Spain and Latin America. They indicated that it's actually what draws me to Flamenco and Middle Eastern dance. I experienced lives in those places, but not necessarily as a dancer. The Mediterranean is a place I experienced a lot. The Spanish feeling is also very strong, from living in that culture.

I was told that when I dance I open up all of the chakras in my body to be able to more accurately sense the mood of the environment I am in. I may set out to dance a particular way but then the dancing will be altered in order to fit the mood of the group. My intention is to dance one way, and yet when I begin to dance I take on the energy of the group and my intention changes. Whether I am aware of it or not, the energy goes to meet the needs of the group. I lose me in it, and homogenize with the energy and take on what is necessary to sustain the group and the group need.

They elaborated further: When you danced through many life experiences it has always been about your ascension to the Light. As you have evolved, it is now about you bringing the Light into you. The significance of your dance is that the Light comes into you, radiates through you and that in itself allows a broad healing for your audience. When you ascended to the light, and you brought the light back with you, it may have touched one or two people. But as you are able to bring the Light into you, it has the greatest opportunity to touch the greatest number of people, although sometimes it will still be one. Many times in your dance it's like a blanket of light that goes over the audience and provides them with a healing on whatever level it is that they need, whether it is mental, physical, spiritual or emotional. As you allow yourself to be the Light, that is where the true healing power is in your dance.

When you play your finger cymbals, there is a sound that the cymbals create that brings in healing from another dimension. It's a dimensional healing, from another galaxy. How you bring that in creates a different kind of healing. You are bringing in a different frequency, an extremely high vibration. When you play your finger cymbals, you get information that way. There is a guide that wants to work with you through the finger cymbals.

The sound of the castanets goes back 20,000 years BC and emulates the sound of the heart. That is what the drumming is about as well. Drumming is more about connecting with the earth. It is very anchored in the heartbeat, more focused on us as material beings. It is a much lower vibration than where you resonate now. There are times where you have the need to feel connected with the earth. When you feel the need to drum or are around drumming, what that is doing is connecting you with the earth, as you now live at a higher plane and resonate in a higher vibration. It's like going back home; it's a comfort zone, like connecting with your Mom, Mother Earth. As you vibrate higher and higher, you have less and less of a need to go there because you get closer to the light. Although we live on the earth plane, where we really want to be is with the Light.

Thank you Lauren and Delia for the interesting insights into other life experiences as a dancing healer.

14. Personal Healing Experiences as a Dancer

I have been dancing most of my life in one form or another. A cheerleader and pom pom girl throughout school, I loved feeling the energy build in the crowd and the team we were supporting. Then at age 17, I attended the Renaissance Pleasure Faire in Northern California and saw both belly dancing and flamenco dancing for the first time. I was hooked. I began taking

belly dancing classes, first through a local recreation department. One of my most memorable experiences was a show I went to at which a blind belly dancer performed. The audience sat around her in a circle on the floor as she performed and gently touched her leg if she got too close to the edge of her dance space. It was such an inspiration for the audience and a self-confidence booster for the dancer.

As a belly dance instructor, I saw women of all shapes, sizes and lifestyles come to class, mostly wanting something fun to do or to learn to dance for their husbands. Most of them ended up with something in common; through dance they shed their fears and they found themselves, self-confidence, grace, creativity and fun. Some of them, many more than originally intended, went on to become professional dancers. Some of my belly dancing friends insist that they have shorter and easier labor and delivery of their babies because of their dancing.

Some days when I am so tired, either physically, mentally, or emotionally, that I don't feel like dancing, I have learned from experience, that it is a particular time when I need to dance the most, to release tension and rediscover my joy. Inevitably I always feel better after dancing, whether it is a dance class, a dance performance for others, or watching others dance.

One of my most fascinating personal dance experiences was working as a belly dancer in Athens, Greece. Rhea, a famous belly dancer originally from California, moved to Plaka, the old part of Athens, near the base of the Parthenon, or what some people know as the Acropolis. She was visiting the San Francisco Bay Area and asked some of her long time students if any of us wanted to come to Plaka, stay at her flat, and dance her jobs for her while she went on holiday. Intrigued, I volunteered. Thus began 3 very interesting trips to Greece. Dancing in a foreign country allowed me to experience Greece in a very different way. I was an insider, dancing for tourists by the hundreds, from around the world...dashing from restaurant to restaurant, being guided by the map that Rhea drew for me the first night she took me around and introduced me to the restaurant owners, I was in full belly dance regalia, with a red backpack on, containing my veil, finger cymbals and lipstick, carrying my sword that I balance on my head during my performance. Many Greeks and tourists alike turned their heads to stare. For me the experience was quite an adventure and the healing came from learning more about myself and others and further developing my confidence and independence. Since I didn't learn to speak Greek until just before the third trip, I also learned how important movement and gestures are to expression, as an alternative to words.

15. Conclusion

Here is a recap of some of the many ways dance is used for healing:

- Integrate the body, mind and soul
- As ritual and prayer
- To access the Divine
- Expand or reach other states of consciousness
- Enhance physical strength, flexibility and the immune system
- As a universal communication conduit
- Contact spirit guides or power animals
- Evoke and express joy
- Worship the Goddess
- Access other worlds or dimensions
- Aid labor and childbirth
- For rest and relaxation
- Express and integrate feelings and emotions
- As an instrument of divining the future
- Enhance body image, self-confidence, and self esteem
- Facilitate spiritual awakening
- Evoke the soul
- Experience God
- Access the elemental powers

- Release old patterns, habits and beliefs
- Heal cancer and AIDS
- Invoke protection
- Bless the harvest
- Assist in spiritual evolution, ascension or resurrection
- Manifest the Divine on earth
- Enhance learning
- Facilitate creativity and imagination
- Exorcise evil spirits
- Minimize the deterioration of the chakras and reverse aging
- Heal the planet and society

Many forms of healing dance are thousands of years old, but have fallen into disuse over time or been suppressed. That many of these and other forms of dance are becoming popular again, indicates how hungry many now are to find new ways to access different levels of consciousness, contact the Divine and facilitate healing.

As Stewart describes "Dance is divinity, a natural state of grace in which we all reside. In its sacred form, dance is a language that reunites the body, soul, and mind. Working throughout the body, we integrate energetic information directly at the cellular level."

One of the things that has been constant throughout this journey of the healing powers of dance is the devotion, surrender, joy, compassion and love that permeate those leaders who bring these different forms of healing dance to the masses. But then....when one uses dance, or any other means of connecting with the Divine, how can it be anything else?

16. Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge a few of the many sources of inspiration for this collection of information about the healing power of dance.

One of my favorite pieces of art is *Dance of the Light* by Elizabeth Clark, which I purchased years ago at a belly dancing convention. I am truly moved by the flow of light into and out of the heart and soul of the dancer as she moves in ecstasy.

A more recently acquired inspiration is *Healing of the Mother*, by Kathi Gibson, herself an incredible dancer and healer. In this piece of art is a most exquisite dancer, shown with her heart energy of healing and compassion holding and surrounding Mother Earth. This beautiful work of art was gifted to me by another phenomenal dancer and healer, SharLa.

And last, but certainly not least, my exquisite flamenco teacher and dear friend Loli Reed; the embodiment of *duende* - fire in the soul.

Thank you all from the bottom of my dancing heart!

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www.adta.org

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www.authenticmovement-usa.com

The Dharma Dance Bistro – Personal and Communal Healing & Transformation through
Drumming, Dancing, Rhythm, and Ecstatic Ritual
www.ecstaticspirit.com

Iasos - Music from the Celestial Realms
www.iasos.com

International Institute for Dance Therapy IIDT
www.dancetherapy.com

Native American dances resource site
www.powersource.com

Polarity Therapy – Inner exploration & expressive dance
www.synergydance.com

Sacred Dance Guild – Dance as a language of faith and celebration
www.us.net/sdg/

Tahya – Danse Orientale – A Healing Dance
www.tahya.com

Watsu – healing water dance
www.aquaticwritings.com

Miscellaneous Resources

International Association of Sufism and Sufi Women's Organization
P.O. Box 2382
San Rafael, CA 94912
415-472-6959
www.ias.org

Iris Stewart, author of *Sacred Woman, Sacred Dance*
www.SacredDancer.com
iris@SacredDancer.com

PanEuRhythmy cassettes, videos, etc.
Ardella Nathanael
C/o Tom and Joyce McLellan
2438 Villa Nueva Way
Mountain View, CA 94040
650-366-2188

Tamalpa Institute (Anna Halprin's movement-based expressive arts education organization)
P.O. Box 794, Kentfield, CA 94914
415-457-8555
tamalpa@igc.apc.org
www.tamalpa.org