

We need more circles!

It is apparent that in our current system the nature of specialization and the hierarchical, patriarchal structures are no longer serving the greater good of all involved. Existing structures are crumbling, it is time: we need more **circles**: find your tribes!

Form Circles

I'd like to gift you a **felt sense** of what that can mean...

For the last few summers I have had the privilege of being part of the International Interdisciplinary Artists Consortium (IIAC) at the annual weeklong gathering of this group at Earthdance in Massachusetts.

The "inter" in the words "interdisciplinary" and "international" holds the promise of **moving beyond**.

Prepare To Move Beyond

This past August as we were setting goals for our week together the model that we had used before was quickly challenged. We realized that words needed to be supplemented with symbols to express the full extent of our individual visions as one.

It became apparent that there was deep "knowing" in the room, the 20 creators present (all body-oriented performing arts professionals, from overlapping disciplines of music, theatre and movement) were there to stand for the wisdom and finesses of their **felt sense**.

Do Feel into that for a moment...

From the collected words, the lengthy discussion and the emerging mutual **sense**, an image of **3 concentric circles emerged, representing self (micro), together (medium), nature: our planet/ universe (macro)**.

Such a broad concept, though at the time in that space, for that entire week, for long after and -so I hope- from the spaces in between these words, the abstraction of that symbol was pulsing with a clarity and vitality of a mutually created **felt sense**.

We listened within and to those around us with the intent of the word "inter": we were primed to be present to **allow the transcendence of boundaries**.

Transcend Boundaries

Yet as a goal, "How to **focus** on that vast concept?" you might ask...

We delved into **heritage**, celebrating or grieving where our ancestral roots were less or more strong or known and listened and learned from one another. It was more than moving to sit in a circle and share the names of our grandmothers over a pot of tea that we passed around, led by an unexpectedly-matched duo: one a Maori male and the other an Irish-American female.

I was surprised and saddened to realize I could not repeat both my grandmothers' full names: perhaps because they had both had long, complicated names (each with 3 first and 2 last names) or because they are long gone? Or, perhaps because in my working-class family there has not been that much attention to lineage and heritage...

Explore Your Roots

We explored prejudice and assumptions, learning about each other in –physical- time and space. This allowed us to experience with our bodies, not just our minds, our bodies' **felt senses** couldn't be excluded.

We were invited to share from a place of **feeling**, not just thinking.

Do Feel

We were impressed by the extent of willingness to listen to one another. We heard not only about the vast differences in our histories, but especially the amazing **overlaps** in our experiences and feelings that transcended the issues of identity, economic differences and also race that we were addressing.

We were not surprised to find that everyone has a problem checking boxes on forms that attempt to group individuals into categories that we defy (race/ ethnicity/ gender/ income etc.).

None of us feel comfortable with the limited, quite literally 2-dimensional, options. I learned that –unknown to many- class differences underlie most of the racial tensions in the US today. And these tensions were intentionally created to protect economic interests... (see, for example, *“Requiem For The American Dream”*: the Netflix documentary with revered scholar Noam Chomsky).

This was new information to me, and it made **sense** from my personal experiences of racial and cultural discriminations in Europe and the US, which are very different here, much more divided along the lines of race than culture. In Europe it is mostly a cultural tension that I have witnessed (this then healed a piece of trust in my own ability to **sense**, which I had not been aware of being fragmented until that moment).

Listen. Emphasize Commonalities

The Earthdance setting allowed us to seamlessly flow from inside to outside spaces. We clearly felt that both our inner and our outer nature are one, merged, inseparable. The more we **tend to our inner nature the better the (outer) natural world fares**. The natural (outer) world asks of us to turn inward and interacts with/ reflects our inner nature. We were reminded that tending to the practice of building gentleness and deep listening, skill, fierceness and strength is desirable and necessary.

Tend And Listen To (Inner And Outer) Nature

Sharing in group formats -in classes, workshops and showings-, asked from each of us to **be careful, generous, patient and more generous still**: first with the members of IIAC, then with the larger community in the Moving Arts Lab (MAL) weekend (the weekend that as per tradition follows the IIAC residency- open to the general public) and not in the least with the ever-emerging discomfort within ourselves as **“change”** was continuously asked of each of us.

Be Careful, Generous, Patient And More Generous Still. Prepare To Change

It required each one of us to **practice merging with and emerging from the group**, tuning in to **felt sense** to know whether to **move in or move out**.

Practice Sensing When To Merge With/ Emerge From the Group

When at the end of the week we discussed our diverse experiences of this interdisciplinary sharing, one sentence uttered by a MAL participant really stuck with me: “We all gave so much this week and this weekend, and yet, what I see is that **we all can and must do even more**”.

As we are experiencing turbulent political and economic times and boundaries and existing structures are being stretched, shattered and redefined, I feel this sentence constantly whispering to my soul. How can we all listen more: to the micro and the macro and to each other, how can we merge more and emerge more, breathe through our discomforts, ease assumptions, heal and act?

Where Can You Do More?

On inauguration day I took a local yoga class and felt nurtured and inspired by the teachings and community practice. Our focus was on Hakini Mudra: reminding us to **focus**, not letting our attention and intention be veered by distractions. This **awareness** IS at the chore of yoga practice.

To **practice** not letting yourself be distracted by ideas of division and polarity. To practice **trusting** our path. Change is inevitable. Fear will arise.

Feel, breathe and let go.

In Washington during the Women’s March the positive PRO-active vibe was clear too. The disintegration we are witnessing may well be a necessary step on the way to a more integrated whole: like a bud bursting through it’s encasement to bloom into a flower, like a cocoon rupturing to reveal a butterfly.

Practice Focusing, Being Aware, Trusting, Feeling, Breathing, Letting Go

How are you physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually? Notice.

Where do you feel poor, where may you need to ask for help: ask.

And where can you give help? Now more than ever:

“If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go together”. –old African proverb

Community is calling...

Ask For/ Offer Help

It starts with that **felt sense**. Can you **feel** it between these lines?

Working with and through the body can restore this connection with felt sense.

Then take action, start on a small scale:

Some How To’s:

-Form/ Attend Circles

-Prepare To Move Beyond

-Do Feel

-Transcend Boundaries

-Explore Your Roots

-Listen. Emphasize Commonalities

-Tend And Listen To (Inner and Outer) Nature

-Be Careful, Generous, Patient and more Generous still. Prepare To Change

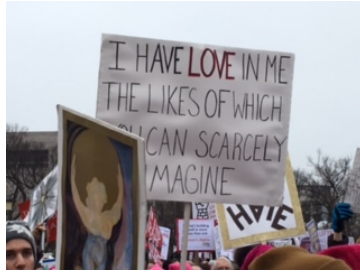
-Practice Sensing When To Merge With / Emerge From The Group

-Where Can You Do More?

-Practice Focusing, Being Aware, Trusting, Feeling, Breathing, Letting Go

-Ask For/ Offer Help

**-DO
-FEEL**



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