



Tibor Cece Kiss, leading dance therapist of the Integrated Expression and Dance Therapy, which believes in continuous change and development

EREJE

members of the group arrange themselves into pairs, finding their partner with their eyes closed, via the sole help of tactile perception. We hear a pleasant, soft music. One person in the pair stands with her eyes closed, and the other with her eyes open. The one who can see is the navigator: she places her palm on any part of the body of her

short stories where one of them is a sick person, the other is healthy and the third is the embodiment of the illness itself. The fears and emotions related to illness, the fight against it, the anger directed towards it, the self-assurance of the healthy person – all this becomes alive as the tale of the bodies unfolds.





Nadett



Ági



Zsuzsa

creating collages, making music, writing poetry and creating free performances."

MANIFOLD METHOD

"Dance therapy is very useful in healing illnesses where examinations didn't reveal an underlying systemic cause or where the illness can be traced back partly to mental reasons," continues Cece. "It is used for treating eating disorders,

therapeutic work we support following one's inner impulses; this is why there are no predetermined choreographies, but everything is driven by the then and there." During my conversation with Cece I also learn that each session is structured by the group leader according to the number of participants (ideally 8-18 people); however, the topics spontaneously brought in by the

of self-expression. And although it is not surprising, it is still a sad fact that most of the participants are women. Cece thinks this may have turned out this way because in our culture it is characteristic that we label showing emotions and caring about emotional things "unmanly" during the raising of our boys, which assures that

emotional problems and difficulties will arise. However, men and women will equally experience enrichment when exploring and truly getting to know themselves. For this, dance therapy offers an excellent opportunity.

GENUINELY AND CLEARLY

The most authentic relators of the therapeutic sessions are the participants, who experience the magic of self-exploration on their own skin. So, right after saying goodbye to Cece, I find myself in the middle of another, interesting conversation. The members of the group told me why are they here and why do they give up one weekend a month for getting to know themselves.

Nadett is a stylist, interior designer and journalist. She says she was taken mainly by the non-verbal approach and the dance, and she was drawn to dance therapy because of a crisis in her life she wanted to solve, her divorce. "The diversity, creativity and freedom characteristic of IEDT means especially a lot to me, as an artist," she says, "as here we meet with other therapeutic methods as well, not only dance. At the same time we have the opportunity to try ways of behavior, which otherwise we wouldn't be able to. Not to mention the significance of inner experiences, which are many times cathartic – even if it doesn't show on the outside – and help in the process of getting to know ourselves. One of the greatest experiences for me came during the dervish whirling. I was whirling and whirling around my axis until I was breathless, then I fanned out on the ground and a spiritual process started. Images appeared inside my head, and tears were running down my face from crying and laughing at the same time. It was an unbelievable experience!"

Ági, a Psychology-English major, joined the group because she finds self-awareness of utmost importance as a future psychologist. "I was taken by this method; I'm sure that



Krisztina



Berni



Zsófi



Boris

I will use it in my work later on as well," she says. "I dipped into several different kinds at the university, but I felt that this is the framework where I feel most comfortable. I also like that they work with a complete system. You can see the starting point and where you can get from there, and also, that at the end of the training you can become part of the therapist team as well." Zsuzsa, who is a geologist and studies psychology beside that, was drawn by the dance, which is a returning pattern in her life, and of course by the non-verbal nature of the method: "I really liked that I had a chance to try out this method in one or two workshops, so I didn't have to decide based on other peoples' experience whether this will be good for me or not." Krisztina, who works at a software development company, also decided at the demonstration workshop that she wanted to start with the therapy: "I learned standard dances and movement has always played a central role in my life; besides, psychology is my hobby. What I experienced at the demonstration workshop had a great impact on me."

Berni was also led here by the love of dance and psychology; she works as a financial assistant now, but she used to want to be a dance choreographer. Zsófi, who works with homeless people who used to be in foster care, is thankful to dance therapy for giving her such a deep self-awareness; Bori, who works with children as a special needs teacher, came to learn more about movement therapies.

ON THE ROAD OF SELF-AWARENESS

A feeling, a motion, that none of them would have thought could spring from herself. "We are continuously taken by surprise...", say the participants as one, laughing. "When we first did the mirroring exercise in pairs," remembers Krisztina, "I was just laughing while I was watching my partner as she was mimicking me. This is silly, I thought. Then suddenly I stopped in astonishment and I started to realize that I'm seeing myself. This was a very strong

feeling and a huge realization: this is really how I move, this is me."

As you go deeper in getting to know yourself during dance therapy, your communication with your environment changes as well. "My self-defense mechanisms used to work really strongly," says Boris. "I kept people away from myself, but this has changed a lot by now, I've become much more open." "I learnt here to pay attention to myself," explains Nadett. "Because in every other minute they ask me: »What do you need?« While earlier I just wanted to live up to the expectations of my environment, today I pay attention to myself too and I can verbalize what my needs are. This doesn't always make things easier, as it can lead to conflicts in my relationships, but I stopped running away from these." "By getting closer to your real self-image, you start to look at other people differently as well," continues Zsuzsa. "If earlier I was annoyed by some behavior, today I'm not judgmental of it; I've become clearly much more tolerant. I simply listen from another point of view." Dance therapy was very helpful for Berni in accepting her own feelings: "Suddenly the puzzle is complete: the world is not necessarily how we see it, and we develop a high level of tolerance towards others, which obviously helps in the communication with the world."

WHEN THE FENCES COME DOWN...

In the therapeutic setting name, age, occupation don't matter; these superficial pieces of information stay in the background. Although not consciously; they are just not needed. "It is simply a different level of knowing," says Zsuzsa. "Knowing ordinary information about each other will not create the kind of spiritual community we have." "Here introducing yourself is different; other questions become important: »How are you feeling? Show us a motion!« This tells so much about a person," tells me Ági. So that the participants of the therapy can step on the road to self-awareness, they have to open up entirely, and work off their deepest feelings in front of almost complete strangers. "I needed one year to

"IN THE THERAPEUTIC SETTING NAME, AGE, OCCUPATION DON'T MATTER; THESE SUPERFICIAL PIECES OF INFORMATION STAY IN THE BACKGROUND!"

THOUGHTS OF A DANCE THERAPIST

Experiences, stories, exploring the deepest ditches of the soul, trust, development, healing. These characterize that group as well, which started the third year of the self-awareness and therapist training course with the leadership of Vera Jarovinszkij.

How did you find dance therapy?

I was a Psychology major, and beside that I was already deeply engaged in contemporary dance. I started searching for a way to connect these two...

And you found it. With several years of experience behind your back, what do you think: can anyone become a therapist?

It's not primarily a matter of psychological training; the determining factor is the personality. It is necessary to be able to reflect upon yourself and to monitor your actions and feelings. This is important so that you can tune on the other person, and sense what is happening in a given moment. And of course, you should be able to find joy in movements and dance.

Is the therapist rather directing or observing?

The therapist needs to be able to stay in the background; she is just providing support, while her presence has to convey security and acceptance. Of course it feels good for anyone if the members of the group look up to her and look to her for a solution, but this is exactly what a leader needs to let go, so that everyone can find her own way in the healing process.

Healing sometimes goes hand in hand with painful and extreme reactions... Aren't you outworn by such untempered emotions?

It happens that a topic, life story, narrative or feeling is touching for me. One has to learn to handle these there in the therapeutic space. Sometimes we show our emotions to the group to some extent, as this apparent sympathy can be helpful to the patient as well.

Where do you see the greatest responsibility of the group leader lies?

It is important how much she is able to create a safe atmosphere, to provide space for free, genuine communication. Also, how much she respects that every person is her own healer in the first place.

That is, "so many men, so many minds..."

Exactly. The responsibility of the therapist lies also in how much she can sense the state the client is in. As this method put the emphasis on bodily expression and movements, many times very intense feelings surface in the form of physical reactions (sickness, physical pain), regressive (even falling back to pre-verbal times in one's life) or trance states. This is why it is very important that the therapist is there to support the participant when they have found the way out.

What is your relationship like with the members of the group?

I've received and I'm still receiving so much from them. Besides my five-year-old daughter Hanna, in a way they are also my "children." Two years is a long time, we've been moulded and have become a group together. The laughter, dancing, physical experiences, the experienced pain unwittingly tie us together.



stop caring, who my partner was," says Nadett. "Already at the first session we learnt unbelievably deep things about each other, while we hadn't even learnt each other's name yet." "Opening up happens when you get into a situation and suddenly you share a very strong experience," explains Krisztina. "This honesty gradually opens up the others as well..." "Because you realize that the others have feelings and problems similar to yours, which are much easier to talk about after another person has done it already," finishes Zsuzsa.

THE POWERFUL TOUCH

During the therapy touching has an important role, as getting to know ourselves includes getting to know our bodies. In this respect everyone is enriched by different emotions. Boris, for example, thinks that it is important to take it gradually. "At first we started with holding hands and giving massages, and it was a good feeling to explore how



pleasant these touches are, which have been missing from my life." It was a whole different experience for Nadett: "I discovered that I can always trust my body. My intuitions have been

soaring and today I dare to listen to my hunches, as I have experienced that my body always tells me everything." Ági thinks that nowadays we treat our bodies as secondary objects and take it for granted that we have them.

"In dance therapy it becomes evident that the body has its own life, with memories and emotions," explains Ági. "One example: as a child I did a lot of swinging. When we started using the swing in the

course of the therapy, memories came up, which I couldn't have remembered deliberately. The village where I was born came to life in me, as well as my grandmother who used to push me in the swing..., because my body was remembering."

Although the groups are not built around a special problem, and according to the thematic structure of the training the second and third years take the participants along the whole life, that is, they process the critical sections of life (like birth, childhood, adolescence, family, death), the group leader handles the topics in a flexible way, and everything can be brought in, as everything has a place here; even personal problems. "For me the first year was filled with the largest emotional storms," tells me Nadett. "On the first weekend I was already neck-deep in my divorce, and I wrote this down on a piece of paper with red crayon: »I want to ravage!« For this Cece wrote me back: »Blue mattress.« Then he improvised a "rubber room" from two large mattresses, where I could get rid of all my emotions. I was hitting, yelling, I gave out all my anger held back until then. I was greatly relieved and I started to see my situation in a very different light. If I had known that dance therapy existed, I would have come before my marriage

"BY GETTING CLOSER TO YOUR REAL SELF-IMAGE, YOU START TO LOOK AT OTHER PEOPLE DIFFERENTLY AS WELL."

here is where I've become an adult." So dance therapy is a place, where – according to Krisztina – you can meet yourself clearly and genuinely. "It is a huge power source to explore what lies within you," adds Ági. "When you lament the everyday problems, this is where you can draw energy from. Because you have experienced what you are capable of." Berni finishes: "Dance therapy is the deposit for physical and spiritual resources..."

