

Ecstatic Dance as a Spiritual Practice

Movement Meditation

Dawn is one of the most experienced teachers of 5 Rhythms Dance in the country, practicing for over 16 years. She trained with Gabrielle Roth in America and has been teaching weekly classes in Moseley, Birmingham for the last 8 years.

Tell us your journey into dance?

In my family we often danced. My brothers and sisters, my mum, my granny and occasionally my dad, would all dance. It was always a way that I had to connect with others, express myself and let go. I remember that adolescent phase of being self-conscious and not really knowing how to speak to people at parties. I found that if I could get myself onto the dance floor, after dancing I would feel more relaxed and confident and be better able to socialise. I'm still like that, it's a very healthy alternative to alcohol!

Like many of us do, at some point in our lives, I went through a time of searching, of breakdown and breakthrough. When I started getting into healing, and personal growth, dancing was my way of taking a break from my worries and it also became a way I could creatively work things through; expressing feelings that I didn't know how to verbalize and letting go of the past. Dance was and still is a kind of retreat space for me where nothing except great music is required to experience a natural high and feeling of wellbeing.

It was around this time that I discovered the 5 Rhythms. Here I found a body of work dedicated to movement expression, awareness, healing, fun, spirituality and natural ecstasy, it was like coming home.

Why do I dance? To strengthen and resource myself on all levels. It keeps me fit and in touch with my heart, I dance to remember the wordless mysterious place of being (it is probably a similar feeling to prayer, appreciating a beautiful sunset or hanging out with someone you love). I love meeting people beyond and beneath

words, reminding me that we are all unique, we are all connected. A beauty emerges in us as we let go.

Some people are shy and feel embarrassed to dance – what would you tell them?

I would tell them that it's natural to feel embarrassed, don't let it stop you! Our culture generally is not that at home in our bodies... let alone a dancing body! We pick up pretty early on that to express ourselves in a physical and creative way is a 'no no' so there is a lot of containment. Strange really isn't it? I meet quite a number of people who come to a class after years of

Interview with international 5 Rhythms Dance teacher Dawn Morgan by Marketa Rozsypalova.



dancing alone at home with the curtains closed. There are probably millions of us all doing that, makes me chuckle to think of streets of people all dancing behind their curtains hiding from each other.

The 5 Rhythms Dance is one way to move through inertia and self-consciousness into the freedom of your own dance. It gets you into your body and into the moment, so the usual mental distractions like; worrying about what you might look like, or planning your 'to do' list, just melt away. Feelings get moved and expressed naturally. The 5 Rhythms offers simple tools for the journey of your own unfolding.

Many people would not put dance together with a spiritual practice, what would you say to them?

I think it is similar to the idea that the body is separate from spiritual practice. This practice acknowledges the flesh and blood of our sensual earthy physicality – an invitation to embrace the body as our home and temple. Historically people have always danced as a way to celebrate and pray. Being a wordless activity people of all faiths or no faith can come together. You can take the dance on any level you wish. Some people want to give their body a good work out and love the social aspect of the classes. And it can be a way to explore other dimensions of being and prayer. We have all got bodies, let's enjoy them!

What is your experience when dancing?

I experience everything in dancing that is about being a human being on this planet. All my beauty and

