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Abstract

Presented as a workshop at the 50th anniversary of the founding of the ADTA conference in San Diego, this article describes a workshop that was designed to help participants navigate through multiple identities in dance/movement therapy and psychotherapy. In the article and in the workshop, the authors share their professional journeys and then use movement to guide participants through theirs. Dance/ movement therapy originated in the United States in the 1900s through private apprenticeship and master's level trainings. As the work and training developed internationally, however, some dance/movement therapists began to seek advanced education for psychotherapy and doctoral research, use sophisticated technology, and practice in diverse settings. *How will we integrate this new education and how does this shape our professional identities?* In an era of changing healthcare reimbursements and new professional choices, it is time to again look at core values and identity of our practice, and help dance movement therapists create professional identities and choices.

Keywords History of DMT \cdot Future of DMT \cdot Professional identity \cdot Professional journey \cdot Integration

How do we, as dance movement therapists develop after the master's level? What other trainings and degrees do we add? How do we integrate them? What do we call ourselves, how do we describe our work, how do we balance our multiple professional and personal lives?

Having personally made similar and not easy journeys through masters in dance/ movement therapy to doctorate degrees in psychology, we thought it might be

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helpful to hold a workshop exploring the process of integration through professional and personal development, so that others could find guidance for their own journeys.

In the workshop, we shared their personal and professional narratives to consider these questions of education, integration and professional identity. From folk dance and modern dance to Labanotation, depth psychology, Gestalt psychology, shamanism, and relational psychology, both of us bridged the early days of dance/movement therapy (DMT) and its pioneers to future directions of quantum physics, alternative medicine, and global applications. We designed a movement structure for participants to discover, discuss and integrate, with feedback from the group, their own work and identities.

As *pioneers in the mind/body connection*, early dance/movement therapists used breathing, relaxation, catharsis, and imaginal nonverbal language to express the whole person. Not only were later techniques such as mindfulness and grounding exercises anticipated by early dance/movement therapists, but the dance/movement therapists used them in an organic synthesis that moved the client from embodiment into relationship with others and into space.

The new models of collaborating and employing our skills were addressed by demonstrating new models of training, and new applications such as medical hospitals, nursing homes and wellness settings. Emerging national and global problems like trauma, PTSD, and natural and man-made disasters need innovative solutions; DMT is an ideal addition to available treatment resources.

Both of us felt the urgency of bringing DMT out of the psychiatric hospital and out into the world. We began separate training programs, and joined forces to create the Institute for Advanced Training in Dance/Movement Therapy. Examples from the training programs and student progress from Beijing, Istanbul, Greece, Australia and other countries were used to explore how students were trained in these countries. We discovered that DMT needed to be adapted to meet each county's particular cultural and professional situation. We note some differences in the way DMT is understood and expressed, with implications for training future generations of dance/movement therapists.

Our Stories

Ilene Serlin

I (Ilene Serlin) have always woven mind and body, from a lifetime of doing international folk dance, to an undergraduate degree in psychology and French literature, to an apprenticeship with Anna Halprin in 1970. My apprenticeship with Anna Halprin involved doing bodywork, healing circles, yoga at top of Mt. Tamalpais and street theatre in San Francisco. My interview of Anna was published in the *American Journal of Dance Therapy* (Serlin, 1996a, b).

My love of folk dance began with a visit to Israel in 1962, where I, at 14 years old, was the same age of Israel. There, I witnessed the power of dance used to bring communities together on Friday nights; in time of fear, war and celebration; to mobilize energies to build the new country. Years later I had the chance

to meet with ethnographers from the Hebrew University, who shared how the use of dance and music was a deliberately constructed way to solidify the culture of a new country. I became active in a Youth Socialist Zionist group in New York (Habonim, "The Builders") and was chosen to be the group choreographer with regular meetings with Fred Berk at the NY 92nd Street "Y", with a performance at Carnegie Hall. Many years later studies in Jungian psychology gave me a new language to talk about the archetypal power of circles, lines, and communitybuilding through story and folk dance that are keys to my work today. All of this gave me a strong foundation in dance as a community-building, folk process that was essential to issues of identity, belonging and healing.

Writing has always helped me to reflect on the narrative thread in these different experience and trainings. I wrote about traveling to Russia to find my DMT roots in Chassidic dance; I wrote about how my trainings in shamanism helped me explore archetypal root images of DMT; I interviewed significant cultural figures; and I explored my personal travels through Buddhism back to Judaism through sacred dance (Serlin, 1992e, 1993a, b, 2000).

My own DMT training started with the first class at Hunter College. There, I found a solid theoretical base and structure, and the pioneering work of Dr. Claire Schmais and Elissa White. I discovered Irmgard Bartenieff, Bartenieff Fundamentals and was in Irmgard's first movement choir introduced at the American Dance Therapy Association in 1976. Feeling the need for more in-depth psychological training, I trained and taught with Laura Perls at the NY Gestalt Institute. With Laura, I found my first real therapist and role model, and was with Laura in Germany when she died. Because of the profound influence Laura had on my life, I devoted myself to educating about the "feminine" side of Gestalt—recognition of Laura's impact and her own philosophy of "Gestalt as an Aesthetic Philosophy." I interviewed Laura at her home just before she died, resulting in a DVD cover portrait of her (Fig. 1).

I also published two articles and one chapter (co-author) about Laura and her legacy (Serlin, 1977, 1991a, 1992a, b, c, d, e, 1999a, b). One article was written under the influence and encouragement of Irmgard Bartenieff, who encouraged me to write about the confluence of Gestalt and movement (Serlin, 2007). Irmgard was another profound influence on me, and my master's thesis used effort-shape to look at gender differences in couples therapy.

The theme of mentors is important here in the narrative of one's life; who most influenced you and how?

I met Dr. Marcia Leventhal at the Dance Notation Bureau where we were both part of the initial introduction of movement choir to the ADTA in 1976. We formed a peer DMT collective that continued to move together and provide mutual supervision and support for years. We both emphasize the importance of ongoing group support to help us continue to grow professionally.

My interest in movement choirs led her to experiment with using them to open and close psychology conferences; below is a photo of a movement choir used to close the conference of Existential Psychology at Fudan University, Shanghai, in 2012 (Fig. 2).

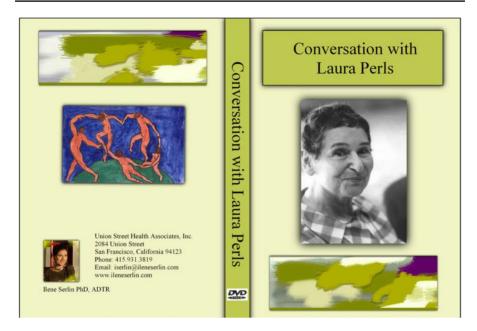


Fig. 1 Laura Perls



Fig. 2 Movement Choir Fudan University 2012

Below is a photograph of the Movement Choir used for women with breast cancer to open the annual Race for the Cure in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco (Fig. 3).

My internship was at Bronx State Hospital under Dr. Miriam Berger, Dr. Dianne Dulicai and others, where I got invaluable experience working with both people and institutions with very serious problems. *I think it is essential for young pro-fessionals to "do their time" in all kinds of institutions before rushing into private practice.* I worked at Queens Children's Hospital with autistic and conduct disorder



Fig. 3 Race for the Cure

children and teens, and South Beach Psychiatric Center in inpatient and out in the community. My thesis was completed under the guidance of Dr. Martha Davis using effort-shape to compare sex-role differences in nonverbal behavior of couples in psychotherapy.

During that time, I became involved with Buddhism and studied and taught at Naropa University. There, I developed an appreciation for mindfulness as a foundation for much of my work, studied Maitri and Space Awareness, and Contemplative Dance. Once again, writing helped me sort through the very personal spiritual/religious influences in my life, and understand how spirituality and DMT could be combined. Writings that reflect this period are: film reviews on Catholic topics; on transpersonal, Buddhist, nomadic spirituality and spiritual diversity: (Serlin, 1988, 1989a, b, 1990a, b, 1992a, b, c, d, e, 1993b; 2001a, 2004).

Although the emphasis from Gestalt and Buddhist therapy was on the present moment, I missed a deeper approach to the soul. So in 1978, I began a doctoral program in phenomenological and archetypal psychology under James Hillman, while continuing to work as a dance/movement therapist at Terrill State Hospital. The depth approach and the cultural richness of Jungian psychotherapy gave further dimension to my understanding of universal and individual symbolic expressions that come up in DMT. The articles that gave voice to that period reflect an interest in philosophical and depth psychology, combined with application in DMT. Thought pieces that helped me integrate these interests covered: Jewish films; religion and the body; and dance; women role models; DMT and depth psychology; phenomenology and the body; and embodiment (Serlin, 1986a, b, 1991b, 1992c, d, 1993c, 1995, 1996a, 1999c, 2001, 2007c, 2013, Serlin & Shane, 1999).

Some say that the best way to learn is to teach. Teaching has always been a big part of my life; I enjoy the creativity of students, the relationships formed, and new discoveries. From 1981 to 1984, I taught in the Masters Program in Dance Therapy at UCLA, completed an internship at the C.G. Jung Institute in

Los Angeles under the primary supervision of Dr. Ernest Rossi, and then taught in Zurich during the summer of 1991.

Returning to the East Coast, I taught at Lesley University in Boston from 1985 to 1988. There, I understood DMT in relation to expressive arts therapies, and saw a broader social context for the use of dance and expressive therapies as an agent of social activism and change. I also led DMT groups at a Catholic residential treatment center for emotionally impaired clergy during the height and at the epicenter of the sexual abuse revelations. This was a particularly painful lesson in how the separation of the body and soul can result in terrible consequences. An effort to understand the context of the changing Catholic Church and its effect on the waves of revelation was reflected in an article I wrote for the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology (Serlin, 1989a). Finally, between 1985 and 1988 I also led movement groups in nursing homes throughout Massachusetts. Years later, I was able to integrate the learning from this experience at a assisted living facility for people with dementia (AgeSong) where I supervised psychology interns learning how to integrate dance and movement approaches into their work. At AgeSong, I gave a keynote address at a conference on existential psychology called "Poetic Movement" which can be viewed at: http:// youtu.be/1SylWm F3jc.

In 1988, I came to San Francisco to teach at Saybrook Graduate School while continuing to teach at Lesley University's program in Israel. While in Israel, and during a trip to Russia for a conference on existential and transpersonal psychology, I rediscovered my roots in Judaism and family roots in Chassidic dance (Serlin 2005a, 2007b). Also, while in Israel I began to understand the ubiquity of trauma. I was amazed by the resilience of people who live there, and the tremendous difficulty of living with constant existential anxiety. Art was a powerful way for them to deal with trauma. The video at https://youtu.be/AVq3-KV6S7 k gives an example. I got involved with three trauma centers there that were open to whole person and expressive arts therapy approaches, and did some staff trainings (Fig. 4).

Special Interests

My interest in DMT for healing from trauma has continued to this day, and I am interested in the unique contribution of DMT (Serlin, 2010). I have explored the role of the arts to work with grief (Serlin, 2014), as a reflection of social change (Serlin, 2012a), as portrayed in literature (Serlin, 2012b), as nonverbal narrative (Serlin, 2007b), trauma from a humanistic perspective (Serlin, 2008, September/ October; Serlin & Hansen, 2015). A highlight of this time was the conference sponsored by Lesley University called "Imagine: Expression in the Service of Humanity" where I co-led a pre-conference workshop with Dr. Mimi Berger and was co-guest editor with Dr. Vivien Marcow of a special edition of the *Journal of Humanistic Therapy* that published contributions from that conference (Serlin & Speiser, 2007). Below is a photo from the conference (Fig. 5).

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Fig. 4 NATAL: Israel Center for Victims of Terror and War



Fig. 5 SELAH Israel Crisis Management Center

Theoretical Perspectives

Saybrook University was one of the first doctoral programs in humanistic psychology and, while at Saybrook, I worked with closely Rollo May, Jeanne Achterberg

and others. My early interests in French existentialism and literature, Gestalt psychology and phenomenology were closely allied with Rollo May's existential psychology and interest in mythology (Schneider et al., 2009). I found a home in the Division of Humanistic Psychology (Division 32) of the American Psychology Association, and developed an approach I think of as existential depth. I had to find a way to bring in the body and art into psychology, so I created a special interest area under Division 32 called Psychotherapy and the Arts. This area, still going after more than 10 years, is a clearing house for psychologists and interdisciplinary thinkers and clinicians interested in the arts and healing, for dance/movement therapists and expressive arts therapists, that supports members by publishing a bi-annual online newsletter and informing them of upcoming events related to art and psychotherapy. I then served as president and Council Representative of the Society of Humanistic Psychology (Division 32).

The articles written during my tenure at Saybrook from 1988 to 2004 reflected a deepening articulation of the existential/depth approach embodied in Rollo May and his work (Serlin, 1994, 2009), and I was just awarded the Rollo May lifetime achievement award from Division 32 at the American Psychological Association convention in San Francisco.

Where to Practice?

While I enjoy international and national activities, I believe that getting involved in the local community is grounding and valuable. So I got involved in, and was President of, the San Francisco Psychological Association. During this time, one of my initiatives was to get involved locally to bring mind/body practices to a local church that reached out and offered services to many disenfranchised people. Expressive arts therapy and DMT were part of the menu for the day, and art therapy is now an established part of their program (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6 Israeli and Palestinian women dancing

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While in California, I also became interested in eco-psychology and shamanism, and trained under wisdom teachers. As we were trained in the classic medical psychiatric model during the early DMT days, I think now we must acknowledge our bodies as relation to nature and the world around us. I became interested in energy psychology, and reviewed a book on energy psychology for *PsycCritiques*, the journal from APA that critiques new books (Serlin, 2005b).

In 1986, I returned to Israel and my Jewish roots. I studied for a Bat Mitzvah for my 50th birthday, and began looking for Jewish practices that I had found in Buddhism. Currently, I am part of a group bringing meditation and alternative practices into services at my synagogue, studied "Embodying Spirituality" with a rabbi/ dancer (Serlin, 1990a), and created a Rosh Chodesh women's spirituality group. I now see many dance/movement therapists as high priestesses or Miriam figures who use song as dance to bring connection and spirit into a community, and create a safe and sacred place to explore inner life and connection to the divine. I feel that my ancestors include Miriam, dancing dakini figures, my great-aunt Rae whose Chassidic dances were straight from the heart, and Isadora Duncan (Berger, Serlin & Siderits, 2007).

Finally, my experiences in Israel, then Turkey, directed my interests more strongly toward trauma and the inevitability and necessity to prepare all of us to work and live with trauma. In Istanbul, our students study how to work with trauma as well as other subjects, as do students from China and Hong Kong. I feel strongly that DMT has a lot to offer both victims and caregivers. While many studies are now showing the importance of the body and nonverbal behaviors in trauma work, these somatic therapies lack the knowledge of rhythm, symbolic nonverbal language, and interpersonal space that are core concepts in DMT (Serlin, 2008, 2012a, b, 2014; Serlin & Cannon, 2004b; Serlin & Speiser, 2007) (Fig. 7).

How are All These Interests Integrated?

The first way to integrate them has been through writing and reflecting on theory. My dissertation, *KinAesthetic Imagining* (Serlin, 2014), is a phenomenological study of the process DMT students go through as they develop an embodied and articulate relationship with their movements. Based on Paul Ricoeur's linguistic theory, KinAesthetic Imagining first establishes a movement process as a nonverbal text with levels of meaning that include the phenomenological (metaphor, conscious), the archeological (symbols, stories, archetypal, myths, unconscious) and the teleological (future, spiritual, ritual, numinous), and that is dialogical and relational with a mover and a witness or witnesses.

The second path to integration is professional. While at APA, I advocate for the role of the body and symbolic nonverbal communication (Bella & Serlin, 2013; Criswell & Serlin, 2015; Serlin, 2004, 2007a, b, c, d, e). I led a movement choir at the opening of APA's 2014 convention (see video at https://youtu.be/Jk8GB1c6rT4), served on a Presidential Task Force on Psychology and Art (Serlin, 2012a, b), edited a 3 volume textbook called *Whole Person Healthcare* in 2007 and am on the Editorial Board of *The American Journal of Dance Therapy, The Journal of Humanistic Psychology, The Humanistic Psychologist, Arts and Health, Journal of Applied*



Fig. 7 Glide Community Wellness Fair

Arts and Health, and *PsycCritiques*. I continue to supervise expressive arts interns at AgeSong (dementia care) and the Community Institute for the Psychotherapies, while enjoying carrying the training to Beijing and Istanbul. By bringing training in Whole Person approaches such as The Art of Embodiment to future generations of healthcare professionals and dance movement therapists, I feel that I am bridging the early DMT pioneers with future generations around the world.

How does one begin to deconstruct the multitude of life experiences which have shaped and formed one's essence and manifestations in our unusual profession?

Marcia Leventhal

I found that as each element in which there are memory traces of some significant experience or encounter is reviewed and re-experienced, one significant conclusion emerges. It is this *lifelong urge to explore and experience* that has been a constant in my life as long as I remember, and it surely is a characteristic embedded in my DNA. Basically, I discovered and I remember profound trust in my moving body:

finding my body in harmony with the flow of the shapes, the hills, the steps. Thus as I climbed, jumped, rolled, swung, leaped, flew, my world of sensation and wonder grew. Each time I returned to the foundation of me: my hands, my feet, my legs, my arms, my torso, my head, it seems I had discovered more power, more strength, more familiarity in the function of each part and then in their harmony together (Leventhal, 1979, 1991, 2013a). To create, the need to move one's body and play with gravity and find the joy of personal expression in dance and in pantomime and in theater—that initial urge and even longing began at birth (or possibly even in utero).

Mentors were so crucial to help me find the voice, the reason, the understanding of my personal unfolding and search, and their influences cannot be minimized. Learning that I could explore, lose myself in books, jump into experiences from a wide and varied group of influences and resources, and trust that there would be a way to organize and conceptualize and understand these sources, without having to stop the flow of learning, or limit a rationale or model. I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Alma Hawkins (Hawkins, 1971; Leventhal, 1984), Dr. Valerie Hunt (1995), Mary Whitehouse (Wallock, 1981), Blanche Evan and many other dance and drama teachers: The love of moment to moment exploration within a loosely structured environment of play and emotion, creative drama and improvisation, honing to a deep level of feeling, and trusting that that "felt level" had a truth, a way of deepening and expressing an authentic voice.

These early forming experiences worldwide, when I studied all forms of dance, theater, meditation, yoga and shamanism, allowed me to appreciate and embrace multinational and cultural traditions and experiences. Later, the privilege of working with students in Greece, in Argentina, in Japan, in Italy, in France, in Turkey, in China, the UK, Sweden and Australia have allowed my own unfolding to emerge. I learned from these multicultural experiences to hold, witness and appreciate every individual's similarities rather than their differences. I learned to appreciate that which is unique to each culture, but finally not to allow anyone to be stopped, blocked, or marginalized because of a particular cultural clamp (Refshauge, 2005).

Learning from *embracing that which is unique and vibrates with an aliveness and assisting individuals to release those structures which do not allow them to reach for their own personal best*, became a guiding force of the DMT training possibilities that I have embraced and which became imperative principles in my ultimate teaching, writing and clinical practice.

I began performing in my early teens in and around Los Angeles as an actor, a dancer, and as part of a water ballet troupe. Later, studies of mime in Paris with Jacque LeCoque and in Co-founding the Action Theatre of Paris allowed me to develop my choreographic and directing skills. Weaving a grounding note throughout was my meditation, yoga, Psychosynthesis, Gestalt psychology (Resnick et al., 2001) and shamanic traditions.

Determined to combine my love of dance, movement and personal development, I went to UCLA for a masters degree in Dance. I was fortunate in being able to do seminal research at the NPI at UCLA, which lead to the first Masters' Thesis in Dance Therapy. Still performing, I became head of Dance and Drama at Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles before departing for a year of acting in films in Los Angeles and Rome. When I arrived in New York, I was fortunate enough to be able to apply my research and clinical skills to develop programs with autistic and other special needs children. At the same time, I continued to perform in many off-Broadway productions and danced with Judith Scott and Margie Beals. I became a Professor at New York University and Director of the Graduate Dance Movement Therapy Program in 1974. Thus, performance skills and academic challenges became the foundation for opening up and embracing a multi-dimensional approach to healing/wholing. An important lesson has been learned: *all of our experiences and interests can become shaping forces to develop our own unique visions for being in the world*. We only need to be patient and trust an unfolding process with our own unique intent for evolving.

What we may embrace as universal has become a lifelong learning experience. So we find that the energy field, holding and witnessing, felt level, kinesthetic attunement, etc. all become teachable and life expanding experiences, whether in the US, in China, or in Turkey. These are credible language shapers of our unique profession (Leventhal, 2013b).

So we move to explore and present experiences that allow every individual to develop her or his unique WHOLENESS, her or his unique essence in its own yet universally recognizable form.

Experiential

We wanted the participants to have an experience with stages of personal and professional development. Instead of thinking about these stages, we wanted them to experience them. So we prepared a floor plan with three stations along the path: one for the first stage of life, the second for the middle years, and the third for the third part of life. After some time to go inward and listen to the narrative of stages and integration at each stage, participants took turns walking the path like a labyrinth, pausing to experience, and dance with memories of key mentors and theories from that stage. At the end was an integrative process to help clarify emerging themes (Figs. 8, 9). Themes that emerged from the personal narratives were: (1) There is no one model; each person's roadmap is a result of a very personal combination of thinking and feeling; (2) Writing helps clarify and formulate emerging theories and new integrations; (3) Support groups, especially ones that use movement to explore supervision and personal issues, can be very helpful; (4) Mentors can be extremely influential, and helpful resources in the professional journey. Reflections on the experiential group were that more time was needed, but that it provided a useful structure to frame and explore issues of life stages.

Conclusion

This article explored the need for dance/movement therapists to face a changing healthcare system, and the professional and identity challenges associated with integrating ongoing training into their work. It described a workshop led for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the American Dance Therapy Association. In the

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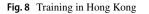






Fig. 9 Experiential workshop

workshop, its leaders told stories of their own challenges with integrating ongoing trainings into their work, and then designed a movement exercise for participants to explore their own professional identities.

The two authors, aware of the challenges of integrating new knowledge into our foundation as dance/movement therapists, held a workshop at the 50th anniversary convention of the American Dance Therapy Association. We told our individual stories, emphasizing that there was no model, each person's journey and results are different, but that we can bring consciousness and creativity to the search. To this end, we created a group structure with which participants could experience and express major themes and integrations with each stage of their personal and professional journeys.

Themes about the journey from dance movement therapist novice to integrating new experiences as a senior dance movement therapist that emerged were the importance of: the childhood and life experience that led up to the choice of being a dance movement therapist; teaching and writing to help formulate theoretical changes, and mentors and support groups.

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