

Elements of Mastery:

Longings of the Heart

by Leilah Be

I appreciate good questions and I invite you to consider some questions with me.

What do we long for as human beings?

How does the vehicle of the Dances of Universal Peace meet our needs, and what are some of the resultant feelings when these needs are met?

What are the components in the Dances of Universal Peace that help create an experience that is meaningful, powerful, nourishing, deep and rich?

What is it in us that is nourished, inspired, strengthened, opened, fed, uplifted by our experience within the context of a dance session?

That's a load of questions - we could just stop here and ponder together for a while.

For the sake of offering a more comprehensive picture, find below a list of some common ones.

beauty safety affection acceptance cooperation closeness
communion companionship consideration consistency inclusion
respect intimacy authenticity honesty presence play humor
peace movement
touch ease equality harmony order meaning
contribution discovery celebration mourning.

As human beings, we long to have meaningful connection with others.

We long to be witnessed, to be received, we long to feel warmth, affection and love, and to offer our loving presence. We long for empathy and for compassion. We long to belong, and some people very much long to build community, which this DUP culture naturally does.

We long to awaken from our dream of separateness from our Source and from each other. We long to be free from false ideas, concepts and beliefs. We long to feel light fill our bodies, hearts and minds.

We long to experience the sacred. We long for life to have meaning and to be connected to our soul's purpose. We long to unfold ourselves into vast and free beings. We long to know ourselves, to accept ourselves and to thrive in this life we have been so graciously given.

At one camp recently, a young woman in her 20's, and new to the dances,

expressed beautifully that her experience in the dances had allowed her to open to a new possibility; that of relating to other human beings with an intimate quality of presence, of seeing and being seen on a soul level, she had only thought was only possible in meeting with one's lover. She was grounded in her new experience and in awe of this way of connecting which felt safe and intimate without it being within a sexual context. I think everyone in the room felt her relief and sense of discovery of this new territory, and felt the way that she was warmed and changed by her experience, and also recognized it as part of their own experience.

An aspiration I hold for our body of dance leaders, mentees, and mentors is for us to consider these, mostly unspoken, yearnings; generating an atmosphere that holds the possibility for an abundance of these needs to be fulfilled. Within the context of our dance sessions, ideally we provide a space where the dancers are most likely to feel engaged, comfortable, open hearted, with a sense of friendliness and inclusion.

May the consequence of our work be one of great benefit, so that people walk away from our dance meetings and dance camps feeling inspired, tender, warmed, optimistic, grateful, invigorated, joyful, calm, clear-headed, tranquil, refreshed, enlivened, and radiant!

A Murshida in the Sufi Ruhaniat International, Leilah Be began leading the Dances of Universal Peace and the practice of Zikr in the early 1980's. She has composed many beautiful circle dances and Zikrs, danced the world over, and is appreciated for her depth of devotion. She lives on the Island of Maui with her husband, Bodhi. They are the parents of five grown children and one grandchild. Leilah and Bodhi live a rural home life with gardens and an orchard and serve the local community as counselors, cherags/ministers, and also help educate and serve in the field of death and dying. They also travel widely, sharing the fruits of their practice in retreats worldwide.



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