

ShadowDance: Road to Peace

ShadowDance harnesses the momentum of group movement to bring shifts in energetic fields near and far, in service to individual transformation, with potential effects at the community, national, and planetary levels.

I. THE MAGIC OF MOVING ENERGIES

What is ShadowDance?

We live in a time of unprecedented need for peace. While there are many roads to peace, we offer an unusual event called ShadowDance, a contemporary movement gathering that, rather than polarizing into one side of a conflict, embraces both sides. Using movement, ShadowDance rebalances energy systems, in ourselves and in our world.

In ShadowDance, we recognize that both sides of a conflict reside *within ourselves*. In ShadowDance, movers embody the energy of opposites—conservative and progressive, racist and liberal, misogynistic and supportive of womankind. We contain—we own—both the side we agree with, and the side with disagree with.

The world's history has overflowed with disagreements and battles. We can continue along the same path we've always followed, each side entrenched in its point of view—"You're wrong, I'm right, let's fight." Or we can try a new way—we can shift our consciousness to embrace both sides.

What is the Shadow?

Qualities that we disagree with, that we condemn in others, comprise our "shadow." The shadow is the side of us that we think we should never be. It is the extreme *opposite* of who we think we are. We hide our shadow from others.

Whatever we *judge* in another person gives us clues to our shadow: greed, crude behavior, secrecy, to name a few. Our shadow is carried by those we call "enemy."

The shadow is a natural, integral part of the human psyche which, like all human existence, is made up of opposites. Opposites are built into our bodies: right hand/left hand, right foot/left foot, right nostril/left nostril. Opposites are built into nature: day/night, summer/winter, mountain/valley. Opposites are built into our spatial orientation: up/down, in/out, backward/forward. So, too, our psyche is based on opposites. Hence, the shadow is fundamental to our existence. It is not wrong.

The Magic of ShadowDance

ShadowDance offers several profound gifts.

First, movement lets us experience the shadow through our bodies. When we're trying to get in contact with shadow energies, they can be difficult to access. How does a "nice, open-minded" person find the "mean, narrow-minded" energy within? And vice versa. Rather than do this intellectually, movement makes these challenging shadow energies more accessible. We can turn a smiling face into a menacing grimace, we transform pleasant hands into flailing fists, or morph a gentle walk into a military march. We've stepped into the embodied shadow.

Second, the power of dance magnifies energetic shifts. While an individual doing their own inner work can shift energies to a certain extent, group movement amplifies these shifts a thousand-fold. With intention, ShadowDance affects the energies of our neighborhoods, our states or provinces, our world.

Third, we reach the collective level. Psychoanalyst Carl Jung coined the term "collective unconscious" to refer to the vast psychic territory shared by all of humanity. While we can't actually see it or physically touch it, the collective is a field of energy that exists, shifting and evolving throughout time as it responds cumulatively to the feelings and actions of all of us.

In ShadowDance, we operate at both the personal and collective levels:

- *The Personal Level* – We dance energies that are familiar to us, energies that feel as comfortable as old shirts. Then we dance opposite energies, the shadow. We are aware of all these energies within ourselves as individuals.
- *The Collective Level* – At this level, the boundary of the dancing space expands beyond the walls of the room and extends as wide as imagination can carry it—beyond the personal and into the collective. As each dancer touches the hidden energies within, it is as if we are reaching an arm up into the collective and pulling a portion of that energy out of the collective and into ourselves—in effect, siphoning off a portion of that energy from the collective. By owning the energy in ourselves, we are literally taking that energy out of the collective pool.

II. PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING SHADOWDANCE

How ShadowDance Shifts Relational Systems

Relationships are closed energy systems, and they seek balance.

In any relationship, two parties have certain energies in common, and they have other energies that are diametrically opposed, such as: neat versus messy, talkative versus quiet, playful versus serious, emotional versus rational. When one person is neat and the other is messy, they get into arguments, each one thinking they are right and the other is wrong. Stalemate.

Each carries the shadow of the other. Messy is the shadow of the neat person. Neat is the shadow of the messy one. And yes, the shadow can be a very positive thing!

In all relationships, opposing energies are always at play. Yet, rather than follow the usual path of polarization—I'm right, you're wrong—we can take a whole new stance: we can *embrace the opposing qualities within ourselves*. We actually all have the capacity to do this, to embrace our shadow energies. This brings balance to the relational system.

When one member of a relationship decides to “own” a little bit of the other person’s energy, in a fascinating turn, the other person shifts to their own opposite energy. Let's say the person who's very neat says, “Okay, I'm going to find the messy energy within myself.” That doesn't mean they have to transform their office into a disaster zone. They can “taste” a little bit of the energy by acknowledging the capacity for this messy energy within themselves. When they do, their partner, who was previously messy, may all of a sudden start to get neater. It's not that the messy person *decides* to be less messy. Rather, the *energy shift* created by their partner beckons them to get neater. When one person picks up some of the opposing energy, the other person is free to do likewise. No words may have been spoken. It is simply a natural recalibration and rebalancing of the energies within the closed energy system of the relationship.

The shift in our own energy resonates out and affects the people whom we were previously polarized against. Balance comes to both.

ShadowDance in the World

Expand the idea of relationship from two individuals to two large groups, and you have “group” shadow. This is the shadow that occurs between cultural entities, religious factions, political parties, and warring nations. Democrats and Republicans hold opposite energies. Urban and rural dwellers hold opposite energies. Even countries hold opposite energies and can be thought of in the same way.

Yes, this is serious. This is big.

Rather than turning the “other” into our enemy, we can do something stupendous. We can find their opposing energy within ourselves. The Democrat finds the Republican within, and vice versa. The Urbanite finds the Farmer within, and vice versa. Hard work. But life-changing.

In ShadowDance, instead of reacting against different ideologies, we step into—we embody—the opposing points of view. We hold these alongside our own. We expand our consciousness to embrace both sides.

We do not need to *become* the shadow in our real life. The liberal does not need to become a racist, or vice versa. We only need to feel the opposite energy, acknowledge it, get a glimpse of its value. For every energy has some sort of value.

The whole world of energies lives inside us, and we can claim them all.

The Magic of Owning the Shadow

When we own the opposite within ourselves, this shifts the energetic balance. It frees the other side to own their shadow as well, often opening the door to empathy and resolution of disagreements, in surprising ways. If liberals gather together and begin to find within themselves the opposite conservative energy, conservatives will be freed up to carry some of the liberal energy. And vice versa.

Some people say that the best attitude to take toward the “enemy” is to love them. **But love is NOT the answer...unless we are talking about loving the shadow qualities people carry, and finding those energies within ourselves.** If one group becomes more and more loving, the other side will continue to polarize into its opposite.

Whatever we do not claim in our own psyches must play out around us—in our families, our communities, and our world.

Holding opposite energies is a high and challenging level of consciousness. We expand the range of energies *within* ourselves. And also, because of the nature of the unified field and the collective, we shift energies *beyond* ourselves.

Distance is Not a Factor

What is fascinating is that this shift of energies in any relational system—personal, political, religious—can occur over distance.

For example, I did a session with a man in Hawaii who was estranged from his son who lived on the mainland. Father and son had not spoken for a year. The father was identified with business power; the son, with the artist’s life. In the session, the father discovered within himself the artistic proclivities that his son carried. The father felt these qualities, embodied them, saw their good aspects rather than judging them as he had done before. That’s all the father did. Out of the blue, the next day the son phoned his father, wanting to talk and connect for the first time in a year. This energetic shift occurred over hundreds of miles. Distance was not a factor.

A Few Shadow Energies

~ both sides have value ~

Responsible	Carefree
Urban	Rural
Any Religion	Different Religion
Nice	Not-Nice
Concerned for Others	Concerned for Self
Educated	Uneducated
Rational	Emotional
Consistent	Spontaneous
Honest	Manipulative
Law-abiding	Law-breaking
Follow the Rules	Rebel
Honor Women	Men are superior
Pro-life	Pro-choice
Loyal	Free
Prim and Proper	Sexual
Contained	Wild
Loving	Hating

Dance Is More Powerful Than We Imagined

Some things we know in our bones.

This I know:

Dance is

the joy of being in a moving body,

gloriously propelled by music,

blaring or lilting.

Dance can be

theatrical entertainment, beautiful to behold,

moving bodies telling stories, or presenting abstractions.

Or dance can be social fun, waltzing and jitterbugs.

Or exercise.

But beyond these, there is an essence of dance

that moves energies

penetrating layers and dimensions of reality,

pulling on the strands of the energetic web

of the quantum world.

Power beyond imagining.

Tribal peoples knew this as they danced to bring rain.

We can harness the profound power of dance

For peace.

J.H.