

ShadowDance: A Different Road to Peace

*A CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENT GATHERING THAT EMBRACES THE OPPOSITES
WITHIN*



What is ShadowDance?

We have entered 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 embraces the two sides of a conflict that reside within ourselves. The shadow is the side of us that we hide, the side of us that we think we should never be. The shadow is the extreme opposite of who we think we are.

Why is the “shadow” important? *Because whatever we do not claim in our own psyches must play out around us—in our families, our communities, and our world.*

Individual Shadow

Each individual has many opposites within. Some of these are simple and we wouldn’t actually call them “shadow.” For example: on a beautiful sunny day, you want to go outside and enjoy it, but you have a project around the house that really needs to get done. This shows opposites within you: the part that wants to go outside, and the part that wants to get things done.

Human existence is made up of opposites. It’s built right into our bodies: right hand, left hand, right foot, left foot, right nostril, left nostril. Opposites are also built into nature: summer/winter, mountain/valley. Opposites are built into our spatial orientation: up and down, in and out, backwards and forwards. Our fundamental existence is based on opposites.

When you begin to tap into deeper opposites within yourself—ways you would *never* want to be—you are approaching your personal shadow. Each individual has their own personal shadow qualities. Whatever you *judge* in another person gives you a clue to your shadow: greed, crude behavior, secrecy, to name a few.

Relationship Shadow

In any relationship two individuals have certain energies in common, and they have other energies which are diametrically opposed, such as: neat versus messy, talkative versus quiet, playful versus serious, emotional versus rational. Let's focus on "neat and messy." One person is neat, the other is messy. They may get into arguments about this, each one thinking they are right and the other is wrong. Stalemate.

Collective Shadow

Expand the idea of relationship from two individuals to two large groups, and you have the "collective" shadow. This is the play of opposites that occurs between cultural groups, religious factions, and warring nations.

A Few Shadow Energies

Nice	Not Nice
Concerned for Others	Self-centered
Respectful	Disrespectful
Intelligent	Not smart
Rational	Irrational
Consistent	Inconsistent
Honest	Lying
Law-abiding	Law-breaking
Follow the Rules	Rebel
Honor Women	Denigrate Women
Loyal	Disloyal
Responsible	Careless
Prim and Proper	Sexual
Contained	Wild
Loving	Hating



The Magic of Shifting Energies

Now, a few basic concepts:

1. Each quality, and its opposite, is an energy.
2. You have the capacity to shift these energies within yourself.
3. Relationships are closed energy systems that seek balance. When you are in a relationship in which opposing energies are at work, rather than polarizing, you can instead take a whole new stance: you can embrace *both* of the opposing energies within yourself.
4. The shift in your own energy will then resonate out and affect you as well as other people whom you were previously polarized against—this is the magic.

When one member of a relationship decides to discover a little bit of the other side's energy in themselves, then, in a fascinating turn, the other person shifts to their 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 just "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. 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. When one person picks up some of the opposing energy, the other person is free to do likewise.

Expanding this to more serious issues, rather than turning the "other" into our enemy, we can say, "I need to find that energy within myself." Whereas in the past we might have polarized against someone who was different from us, here we have the possibility to find that difference within ourselves.

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

Distance is Not a Factor

What is even more fascinating is that this shift of energies in any relationship system 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 over a year. The father was identified with power and strength, the son, with vulnerability and gentleness. In the session, the father discovered within himself the softer qualities 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. Then, 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.



How ShadowDance Shifts Energies

Dancing the Shadow at the Individual Level

When you're trying to get in contact with shadow energies, they can be difficult to access. How does a "nice, open-minded" person find the "meanness" within? Dance can make challenging shadow energies more accessible. Rather than find words for "meanness," you can turn a smiling face into a menacing grimace, you can transform pleasant hands into hitting fists, a gentle walk can morph into a military march. Dance lets you experience the energy of the shadow through full-body involvement.

Dancing the Shadow at the Collective Level

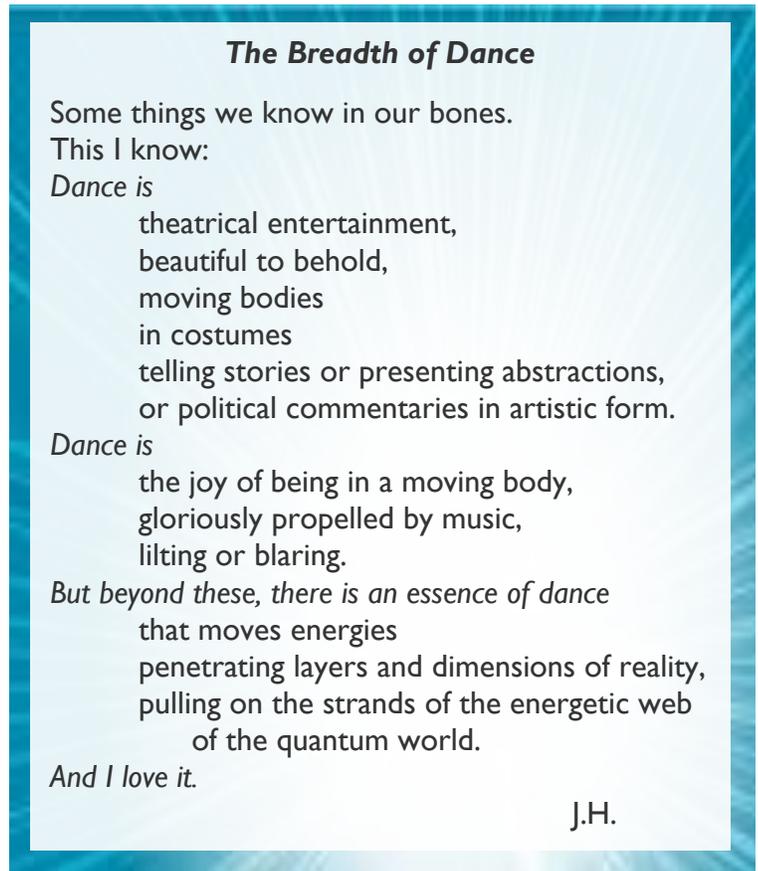
Now we come to the central magic of ShadowDance, this contemporary dance of opposites:

The power of dance magnifies energetic shifts. An individual dancing can shift energies to a certain extent. Add to that dancing in a group, and these energetic shifts are amplified even more. So in ShadowDance, the group dancing magnifies the energetic shift that one person alone can offer.

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, and that responds to the feelings and actions of each of us as individuals. It shifts and evolves throughout time.

In ShadowDance we dance as an individual while simultaneously affecting the collective:

- *The Individual Level* – We first dance energies that are familiar to us as individuals, energies that feel as comfortable as old shirts. Then we dance opposite energies.
- *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 individual and into the collective. Then, as each dancer touches the hidden energies within, it is as if they are reaching an arm up into the collective and pulling a portion of that energy out of the collective and into themselves—in effect, siphoning off a portion of that energy from the collective. By owning the energy in themselves, they are literally taking that energy out of the collective pool, so there is less of it “out there in the world.”



ShadowDance in the World

The world’s history has overflowed with constant disagreements and terrible 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 in *ourselves*.

The same dynamics occur at the level of a nation. Democrats and Republicans hold opposite energies. If liberals can gather together and begin to find within themselves the opposite conservative energy, the conservatives will be freed up to carry some of the liberal energy. And vice versa.

If we look at the United States this way, Trump is not an accident. He is the opposite, the “shadow,” finally coming up after having been hidden for a long time. Deepak Chopra writes, “There’s a powerful way to explain the rise of Donald Trump that most

commentators have missed entirely or undervalued. The standard line describes Trump as a bizarre anomaly.... But in reality Trump isn't bizarre or anomalous. He stands for something universal, something right before our eyes. It's an aspect of the human psyche that we feel embarrassed and ashamed of, which makes it our collective secret. Going back a century in the field of depth psychology [referring to Carl Jung], the secret side of human nature acquired a special name: the shadow.”

Even countries hold opposite energies and can be thought of in the same way: In ShadowDance, instead of reacting against ideologies we disagree with, we step into—we embody—the opposing points of view, and we hold these alongside our own. We expand our consciousness to embrace both sides of the conflict within ourselves. This shifts the energetic balance between opposing entities, freeing the other side to shift, often opening the door to empathy and resolution of disagreements, in surprising ways.

Some people say that the best attitude to take toward the “opposite” side is to love them. **But Love is NOT the answer...unless we are talking about loving the opposites within ourselves.** Because if one group becomes more and more loving, the other side will continue to polarize into its opposite energies.

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

In ShadowDance, movers embody the energy of opposites—conservative and liberal, racist and accepting, misogynistic and supportive of womankind. Then 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, planetary, and collective levels.

