

INTEGRATIVE LEADERSHIP INTERNATIONAL

“Helping individuals and organizations become integrated.”

Lessons on the Path

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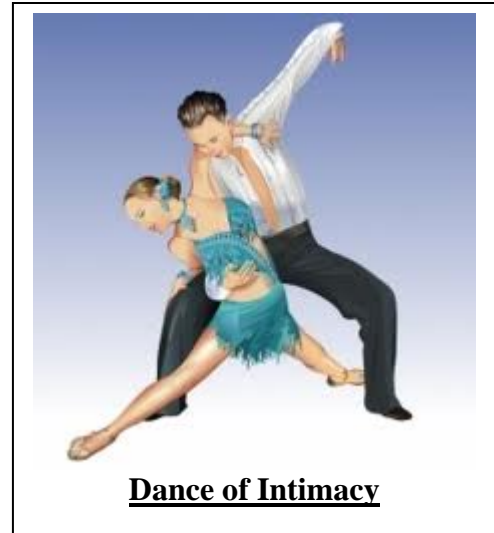
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“A Dance of Intimacy”

Andrew Richard Hatala

OBSERVATION: EXPERIENCE

I recently had the opportunity to attend the wildfire dance theatre performance that toured through Saskatoon, Saskatchewan last week. Wildfire is a Baha’i International youth dance group that seeks to challenge spectators thinking about such topics as race unity, equality of men and women, domestic abuse, peer pressure and substance abuse.



With an explosive beginning to the show my heart was warmly opened to receiving the thought provoking messages intended, so much so, that after the second act on the equality of men and women I was moved to tears.

The twenty minute segment of the total hour and a half performance began with a couple dancing alone on the stage. Although they began elegantly it became quickly apparent the message they were trying to portray. Shortly after the segment started the male dancer was exerting such a force on the female that I had to bite my tongue to not speak out and interrupt the atmosphere. He was pushing, pulling and throwing her in all directions clearly demonstrating his dominance of strength over his female partner. The female dancer was getting progressively more frustrated and tired as he exerted his force on her, she would try to break out and dance on her own but he would quickly subdue her and force her to dance the way he wanted, not letting her have any control, choice or power. Her energy was slowly drained as her partners overbearing force of will crushed her spirit.

As my eyes swelled during the show I could not help to think about the importance of the equality between men and women. Such an ugly and disturbing image it was watching the couples movements fall apart. The dissonant, destructive dances we were witnessing were quickly contrasted in my mind between what I was seeing and the typical beauty created from other theatrical dances I had seen.

I immediately began to think about how ugly our world’s dance must have been over the past 50 or so centuries and how we, as a global society, are continuing to dance together far below our true potential. It seems that only when both male and female dancers are empowered to do their best, as individuals and as a couple, can we as a society collectively move forward with grace and beauty.

When two thirds of the dance was over, the dancers broke off from each other and lamented in agony about how they had been dancing up until that point. After a powerful change of heart symbolized by a dramatic change in music from the intense strong violin that was playing before, to a soft beautiful piano solo, the couple locked eyes and chose to come together again. However, this time something was different. They had realized their mistakes and were intent on finishing the dance in a new state of consciousness. As they slowly began to move I was again brought to tears as their motion was in perfect sync and harmony with one another. They finished the sequence with the male dancer supporting his female partner allowing her to express herself fully. The equality, harmony and synchronicity they demonstrated proved to be the most beautiful dance of all.

The performance gave me hope that with a little effort and courage we can break away from the weight of an unbalanced society all around us and begin to create a rhythmic harmonious dance of life filled with the beauty, equality and balance that potentially exists within each of us.

The dance caused me to deeply reflect on my actions towards my intimate relationship with my partner and all other women in my life. My heart's desire was always to support them, love them and help them to be the best that they can be, for themselves, for others and for God.

But I wondered if my actions were always aligned with my desire to help and support within my personal and interpersonal dance of intimacy? Have you ever wondered about your present dance of intimacy?

APPLICATION: How often do we fall susceptible to the thinking and ways of an unbalanced society that's slowly breaking up all around us? Challenge yourself this week to reflect on your own lives. Is the dance of intimacy in your life in harmony or discord? The first step to meaningful change on the path towards integration is self-awareness. Reflect this week; be honest and critical with yourself. Try to observe your thoughts and actions. Try to act in alignment with your ideal; do you act in ways that fully demonstrate the equality between men and women, the male and female within yourself?

If not how can you strive to begin to move towards this goal this week?

INSPIRATION: *"Humanity is like a bird with its two wings—the one is male, the other female. Unless both wings are strong and impelled by some common force, the bird cannot fly heavenwards."* **Bahá'u'lláh.**
"Even after all this time the sun never says to the earth, "you owe me." Look what happens with a love like that. It lights the whole sky."
Hafiz of Shiraz

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On Love & Intimacy

...you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.

Love one another, but make not a bond of love:
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread but eat not of the same loaf.
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone,
Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.

Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.
For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.
And stand together yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.

The Prophet, Kahlil Gibran