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**Emotionally Intelligent Training and it's Impact on Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence:  
Discovering Flow**

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Wien, 15.08.2014

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Saskia Tindle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

## **Contents**

1. Introduction
  - a. Abstract
  - b. Personal Motives
  - c. Relevance of this Study in Relation to Teaching Classical Ballet
  
2. Literatur Review
  - a. The Traditional Teaching Methods of Classical Ballet
  - b. Emotions and Feelings Resulting from Authoritarian Teaching
  - c. The Dancer as an Individual and Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence
  - d. The Effects of Negative Emotions on the Body
  - e. The Effects of Positive Emotions on the Body
  - f. Flow
  - g. Summary of the Literature Review
  
3. Methodology
  
4. Analysis
  - a. Negative Experiences in Ballet Education
    - i. Looks
    - ii. Physical Handling
    - iii. Negative Comparisons
    - iv. General Negative Tension in the Class Atmosphere
  
  - b. Effects of Negative Experience/Lack of EI
    - i. Concentration
    - ii. Balance
    - iii. Shaking
    - iv. Flow of Movement and Tension
    - v. Breath
  
  - c. Flow
  
  - d. Students Acceptance of a Training Climate Lacking in Emotional Intelligence
  
5. Conclusion
  - a. Creating a Training Environment Rich in Emotional Intelligence
  - b. Further Research

## **1. Introduction**

### **a. Abstract**

The aim of this study is bi-fold: (a) to explore how a lack of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in training maybe disturbs the dancer's Bodily- Kinesthetic Intelligence and thus causes enduring negative movement patterns which may result in recurrent injury plus stunted progression in technique and artistry, (b) vice-versa to explore the positive effects on the Bodily- Kinesthetic Intelligence of a training climate which is rich in EI and how the beneficial psychological state of flow can be reached. A better understanding of the correlation between EI and Bodily- Kinesthetic Intelligence can help teachers, trainee teachers, dance students and dancers to asses physical, psychological and motoric reactions and to react constructively.

Based on EI Literature (Gardner 1983, Hecht 2012, Levine, 2010) that focuses on Emotional and Bodily- Kinesthetic Intelligence, Bodily- Kinesthetic Intelligence is defined. Using existing literature reactions of the body and mind while under stress in training climates lacking in EI are identified as are reactions to training climates rich in EI. These reactions are then discussed in relation to the psychological state of flow and how Bodily- Kinesthetic Intelligence, technique and further development could be influenced. Research for this project was undertaken with 40 dancers, ex-dancers and teachers. All participants took part voluntarily and no incentives were offered for taking part in the research. The data was transcribed and analyzed using a qualitative approach to all statements.

The analysis showed significant similarities in reactions to the training climate. Despite a general acceptance of a negative training climate, evidence that the vast majority of respondents believed a positive training atmosphere to be beneficial was found. Respondents, for the main part, believed that a negative training environment can result in negative movement patterns and that the aforementioned can lead to injury. Parallels as to what constructs a positive training atmosphere were established and used in conjunction with existing literature to propose a case for training situations rich in EI.

The research depicts that implementing EI will positively influence the dancer's Bodily- Kinesthetic Intelligence and that the psychological state of flow can be reached. The goal of which being that personal potential can be realised and many injuries caused by negative movement patterns, avoided. Finally, suggestions for further research are then made.

### **b. Personal Motives**

In my early dance education from 12-16 years old I often found myself (unknowingly) in training situations lacking in EI. When I started working in professional ballet companies at 19 I again came up against many very negative experiences. Through the tamed e.V. I came into contact with the subject of Emotional Intelligence in ballet teaching. Due to this I began observing myself in training and teaching situations more closely. While taking classes, I realized how my body was reacting in certain situations. There were certain teachers and certain teaching methods where I was constantly falling into a state of

anxiety. Although I understood the situation and how it reminded me (and my body) of past negative experiences, I was not able to change my motoric reactions. In the past I would have become frustrated and felt that I was a bad dancer with no talent and had obviously not tried hard enough. However due to my growing interest in EI, I began to realize that my “good days”, when I felt I was not such a bad dancer, occurred in relaxed environments where messaging from the teacher was supportive and inspiring. In these types of classes I felt I was able to achieve much more. I was aware of my body as a whole, I felt centered, energetic and motorically in control. I felt generally more positive about myself. I was not so tired afterwards and found that old pains/injuries did not disturb me.

It was clear to me, not just through reading about EI but also through personal discovery within my own body, that the negative situations that dance students and dancers are subject to in a training environment that is lacking in EI can cause a constant state of anxiety. The reason for this project was to find out what effects EI (or lack of it) can have on the dancer’s motoric (Kinesthetic Intelligence). I was interested to see how the theory of the psychological state of flow related to dance and the Kinesthetic Intelligence. I also wanted to find out if the enduring negative movement patterns possibly caused by teaching with a lack of EI (causing a constant state of anxiety) could result in recurrent injury plus stunted progression in technique and artistry.

Lastly, not only did I hope to find answers to the questions I posed about how EI in ballet training affects our Kinesthetic Intelligence but above all to question, scrutinize and finally develop and improve upon my own teaching skills and in this way I hoped to propose further ideas in developing a training scheme to help give student dancers and dancers more possibility of reaching their potential.

### **c. Relevance of this Study in Relation to Teaching Classical Ballet**

Ballet is a highly demanding physical art form. Students at vocational level are carefully selected for the coveted few places that exist in professional schools. There is a lot of pressure to achieve. This pressure is not only felt by students but also by the teachers. The teachers have almost always been through the same vocational schooling system and pass on the training that they themselves received. This training model is traditionally very authoritarian and does of course manage to produce many wonderful dancers. However, it seems that many dancers suffer from injuries and psychological problems that end their careers too early and many dancers might not be reaching their potential due to movement and psychological patterns cultivated in their formative training.

The reason for this research is to find out to what extent emotional intelligence in ballet education can affect the Kinesthetic Intelligence of the dancers and in turn how this may affect the amount of injuries (due to negative movement patterns caused by stress) and the reaching of personal potential.

This is a very sensitive topic and in no way do I mean to question the traditional values of classical ballet. I believe though that it could be possible to improve upon teaching methods while still maintaining these traditional values and thus enrich the experience of teaching and learning to dance.

## **2.Literature Review**

This literature review aims to give an overview of some existing findings and ideas in relation to the topics of emotionally intelligent dance training, Bodily- Kinesthetic Intelligence and the theory of “flow”. These findings build a solid argument for the integration of Emotional Intelligence in classical ballet training and vocational schools.

First, the traditional teaching methods of classical ballet are depicted. Then the emotions and feelings resulting from this kind of authoritarian teaching observed. Then the dancer as an individual plus Bodily- Kinesthetic Intelligence, as defined by Howard Gardner, are outlined. Following this, the effects of negative emotions on the body (and thus the Kinesthetic Intelligence) are discussed, as also the effects of positive emotions. These topics are followed with the imperative theory of flow as defined by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in order to underline the need for EI in classical ballet training and vocational schools. All findings are then summarized.

### **a. The Traditional Teaching methods of Classical Ballet**

Teaching methods in state-run schools has greatly developed and improved over the past few decades. In “*The Student Dancer*” Buckroyd draws a very clear picture of the current education philosophy in British education<sup>1</sup>:

“Teachers in state schools are no longer seen as remote, terrifying figures; pupils are encouraged to learn, discover and find out for themselves and to use the teacher as a learning resource ... it is unlikely that there will be a return to the old authoritarianism. Our society has become much more egalitarian and less hierarchical over the past half-century, and mainstream education has absorbed and reflected those trends.” (2000, p. 12).

This is however not often the case in the philosophy for teaching ballet<sup>2</sup>. Traditionally the relationship between teacher and student in the dance studio is a “model of teaching and learning that survives nowhere else. It is rare to find a studio/gym where the teacher/coach is not an absolute authority with a very clear hierarchical control over the students.” (Buckroyd, 2000, p. 12) and, “It is improper for a student ever to question a teacher’s authority in class.” Warren, (1989, p.369). In Gelsey Kirklands autobiography, “*Dancing on my Grave*”, Kirkland remembers a typical training scene that depicts this “absolute authority”: “I have a vivid memory of one of the teachers stopping me in the middle of class to demand that I turn out my feet. There was no regard for the knees, or hips, which in my case were distorted to the breaking point. The teacher refused to continue until I complied with her wishes” (1987, p.34). This authoritarian teaching style is not just accepted and reinforced by many people in the ballet world. Through my own personal experience I have found that it is something that people outside the

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<sup>1</sup> this statement is also true for other countries

<sup>2</sup> Classical Ballet is a very demanding and exacting dance form. The technique in itself is built on very simple rules-and almost impossible to perfect. An in-built feeling for line and a talent to portray emotions with the body are essential (these qualities cannot be taught). Unlike many, many other dance forms, particular physical attributes are necessary in order to accomplish this art and students taken into Vocational ballet schools are physically strictly screened.

dance world have come to expect. Over the years, even though the stick as a teaching utensil has disappeared from the minds of most, the image of the over strict and at times frightening ballet teacher remains.

#### **b. Emotions and Feelings resulting from Authoritarian Teaching**

It is clear from some of the recorded statements of students who took part in Hecht's (2007) study on emotional intelligence that the ultimate authority of the dance teacher in the traditional structure of a ballet class can result in the manifestation of various negative emotions and feelings such as fear and humiliation: "I am scared when I don't know what the teacher thinks of you. You do an exercise and she (the teacher) has told you the correction. And then I am always scared to not doing it right ... and then the teacher says 'I told you so many time ...' that is really scary." (StudentFG#1) (Hecht, 2007, p. 113). This student's declaration shows clearly the psychologically restricting effect that the training climate has on him/her. The effect that this situation has on the student's motoric intelligence, or, Kinesthetic Intelligence is not stated thus representing a gap in the literature on emotions in dance training.

A useful framework is provided by Gardner's (1987) theory of Multiple Intelligences. While writing about forms of apraxia<sup>3</sup> he mentions how pressure/stress can affect motoric actions, "- an inappropriate execution or an omitted action- are also found in normal individuals, particularly when they are operating under pressure." (Gardner, 1987, p. 213). Having to operate under negative stress/pressure can lead not just to "an inappropriate execution or an omitted action", but to a perpetual fear of making mistakes. This theory can be applied to one of the students in Hecht's study, who explains: "I found that at some points in my training, I get circled in some kind of paranoia, where in every exercise I am afraid of doing something wrong. I can't correct everything but I should be correcting it all at once" (StudentFG#14) (Hecht, 2007, p. 112)

Negative emotions seem to be an integral part of ballet education. Hecht's study reveals that negative emotions, such as disgust, anger, fear and sadness, (plus to some extent surprise) are unfortunately well established in the traditional style of ballet teaching. That this type of training is not as constructive as once believed is stressed by Buckroyd, "... learning cannot take place in an atmosphere of fear [and that] the teacher is responsible for providing the safe emotional environment which will maximize the student's capacity to learn" (2002, p. 122). Buckroyd quotes Linda Hamilton in regards to the problems that can later arise from critically negative training climates. "Dancers with critical teachers were unable to achieve their goals as professionals ..." (1997:73) (Buckroyd, 2000, p.76) There is a growing pool of research in this field, e.g. Buckroyd (2002), Hamilton (1998), Hecht (2007), but more research is obviously needed.

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<sup>3</sup>A disorder caused by damage to the cerebrum. Sufferers, despite having the desire and the physical capacity are unable to perform certain movements.

### **c. The Dancer as an Individual and Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence**

It is reasonable to suggest that unattained goals and unrealized potential could maybe be avoided if teachers were not only less negatively critical and recognized their responsibility for creating a positive emotional climate in the dance studio, but also strived to understand the “Personal Uniqueness” of each student as described by Hackney:

“There are basic patterns and principals of movement, but there is no one pathway for all persons to achieve full functioning. Human beings pattern their movement responses in ways in which they originally perceive will enable them to function in their environment, and each individual history is unique. Therefore, any training process must be done with an awareness of personal and cultural contexting, recognizing that personal history and motivation are operating continuously.” (Hackney, 2002, p.48)

Hackney goes on to say, “As the developmental [movement] patterns are being established, each individual is at the same time forming his/her expressive interaction with the world and, therefore, that interaction is included within the body patterning” (2002, p.48). Howard Gardner, who in the 1980’s coined the term “Multiple Intelligence” also stresses the importance of the connection between the individual and his/her environment in relationship to movement.

“... the individual’s perception of the world is itself affected by the status of his motor activities: information concerning the position and status of the body itself regulates the way in which subsequent perception of the world takes place. In fact, in the absence of such feedback from motor activity, perception cannot develop in a normal way.” (Gardner, 1987, p. 211)

In particular, Gardner’s theory of motoric or Bodily- Kinesthetic Intelligence, is very interesting in relation to the dancer. He argues that, “Our kinesthetic sense, which monitors the activity of these regions, [the various agonist and antagonist muscles, joints, and tendons] allows us to judge the timing, force and extent of our movements and to make necessary adjustments in the wake of this information.” (Gardner, 1987, p. 210) Under the heading “Mature Forms of Bodily Expression”, Gardner writes, “ Of all of the uses of the body, none has reached greater heights, or has been more variably deployed by culture than the dance. (1987, p. 222). The physical operation and organization of the bodily-kinesthetic system in a person/dancer is extremely complex, “ ... calling upon the coordination of a dizzying variety of neural and muscular components in a highly differentiated and integrated fashion.” (Gardner, 1987, p. 210). When considering this, it is very clear that this finely balanced system could easily be disturbed. For example, unexpected changes in weight distribution, unnecessary areas of tension, and inharmonious placement of limbs can surely disrupt the correct movement patterns which in turn might lead to at best an unsuccessful movement and at worst- injury.

Hamilton states, “Considering the close tie between mind and body, is it any surprise that psychological pressures also contribute to injuries? ... Psychological pressures also arise from negative teaching practices, whether through humiliation or being asked to perform in pain.” (1998, p. 156)

Psychological pressures will, due to the close connection between mind and body, eventually also cause physical anxiety which according to Hamilton, “can disrupt the fine motor control needed to dance”, (1998, p. 131).

#### **d. The Effects of Negative Emotions on the Body**

Clearly, negative emotions influence the body. A large pool of research shows the many ways in which emotions and motoric are inextricably linked. For example, Hamilton describes clearly what happens in the body when the dancer has a bad case of physical anxiety,

“... your body reacts as if you are being attacked by a lion. The blood flows immediately to your large muscles to help you get away” (which could lead to lack of blood and thus oxygen in the brain causing poor concentration)... Your muscles tense, forming a body “armour” and making your back ache. You become hypervigilant to small sounds and movements.” (1998, p. 131)

Bull, also, found when analyzing the fear response in the body that fear was: “... associated with a generalized tensing up or freezing of the whole body. It was also noted that subjects frequently reported the desire to get away, which was opposed by an inability to move. This opposition led to a paralysis of the entire body (though somewhat less in the head and neck).”(Levine, 2010, p. 332). Hackney describes how blockage of movement (for example caused by fear) can affect the Upper Body and explains the role of the Upper Body as being connection with the environment, “The ability of my Upper Body to connect to myself, to others ... and to the environment is an important part of my ability to respond to the world in an adaptive and interrelational way” (Hackney, 2002, p. 144). This connection is of high importance when interacting with other people, for example with a teacher, choreographer and also class mates or work mates but is vital in regards to the connection with the self, “ Breath helps put you in touch with your own internal state. It is a link to your proprioceptive<sup>4</sup> self. It can help you locate where you are in the moment, what you are feeling.” (Hackney, 2002, p. 53). She explains how tension in the Upper Body will debilitate breathing (which will disturb this connection to the self) and affect the personal Kinesthetic Intelligence negatively.

“... if the breath is not full, the heart may not be receiving adequate oxygen and hence the brain may not be fully oxygenated as well. Muscular holding patterns in the thoracic area can make it difficult to breathe fully. Inadequate usage of the scapula in arm movement can mean a tightening of the upper muscles which connect the shoulder girdle to the cervical area of the head/neck. This tightening can cause the cervical spine to lose its length and the head to pull back and down on the spine, possibly cutting off kinetic chains of nerves which supply the brain.” (2002, p. 145)

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<sup>4</sup> Dancers might be more accustomed to related terms to define this sense, such as “kinaesthesia,” muscle sense, or simply sense of movement. Although slight nuances exist between the meanings of these terms, “proprioception” is the scientific term for the physical feeling of your moving body.” Batson, G. & the Education Committee of the International Administration of Dance Medicine and Science (IADMS). (2008). *Proprioception*. Retrieved October 20, 2013, from <http://www.iadms.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=210>

One can clearly imagine what effects these bodily reactions might have on a student dancer or professional dancer in training. Shallow breathing and a tense thoracic area go hand in hand with the body weight being distributed to a greater part on to the heels. This in turn affects the line of the pelvis, puts strain on the front of the shins (often causing “shin splints”). The dancer has difficulty dancing on the music- being always behind the music. Lack of oxygen due to shallow breath causes tiredness and lack of concentration, both leading often to injury. Freedom of movement is not possible, balances and turns cannot function. The spine becomes stiff, losing its natural range of movement and suspension- which is of particular importance for allegro, (jumps). Furthermore, the resulting frustration for the dancer can be just as physically and psychologically debilitating as the aforementioned effects ... and one should take into account that there are many, many more effects of movement blockage caused by stress that can be described.

I propose that, considering the information from Buckroyd, Hamilton and Hecht that I quoted earlier and combining this with the information from Gardner and Hackney that it is possible to believe that a training climate lacking in emotional intelligence could well be a source of disturbed movement patterns. It goes without saying that “tensing up or freezing of the whole body” (Levine, 2010, p. 332) cannot be beneficial to a dancer’s (necessary) motoric flow and will certainly disrupt an organic, familiar and/or highly tuned movement pattern. The reasons for such instinctual behavior patterns lie deep within our evolutionary history:

“Biologically, we have evolved powerful movement systems designed for protection, hunting and avoiding being hunted. These automatic (instinctual) action systems – things that the body does to protect itself- were designed for rapid response when we came upon a snake or tiger. Without thinking we immediately react - escaping, fighting or freezing ...Without these compelling sensory prompts, our hunter-gatherer forbearers would not have lived to tell the tale.” (Levine, 2010, p. 274)

Levine goes on to say, “ ... our compelling instincts remain coiled, waiting to ignite and reunite body and mind into effective coordinated action.” (2010, p. 275). However, these instincts bear little relation to our modern day-to-day lives and can be “frequently detrimental” (Levine, 2010, p. 276): “... Today our survival depends very little on actually executing our basic instincts. Rather, our physical and psychological health depends on having deliberate and nonreactive access to them.” (Levine, 2010, p. 276). This is certainly true of a dancer who needs to stay calm and concentrated in order to maintain an organized kinesthetic sense but at the same time, as an artist, needs to tap into and utilize his /her emotions in order to create a moving and communicative performance.

#### **e. The Effects of Positive Emotions on the Body**

There is a significant difference between negative and positive emotions. It is well known how positive emotions influence us physically. When a person is happy, hopeful, enthusiastic etc, one can see it in the way the person holds themselves, how they speak, their tone of voice, the expression in their eyes. Apparently positive emotions even have an effect on our immune systems. The exact opposite is true of negative emotions. For example, the negative emotion of depression causes “a collapsed posture”,

(Levine, 2010, p. 333) which will have an effect on breath and alignment to name but two negative outcomes that will disturb the dancers kinesthetic sense. Levin states how when comparing depression, anger and disgust to the patterns of elation, triumph and joy how Bull observed that:

“[positive emotions]... did not have an inhibitory component; they were experienced as pure action. Subjects feeling joy reported an expanded sensation in their chests, which they experienced as buoyant, and which was associated with free deep breathing. The observation of postural changes included a lifting of the head and an extension of the spine. Those closely meshed behaviors and sensations facilitated the freer breathing. Most subjects feeling joy reported feeling “ready for action.” This readiness was accompanied with energy and the abundant sense of purpose and optimism that they would be able to achieve their goals.” (2010, p. 333)

These findings are similar to other research in this field from Buckroyd, Hamilton and Hecht. For example, a student statement in Hecht’s study shows clearly the effects of positive emotion induced by constructive feedback from a teacher, “Today I received a correction from my teacher, which I felt I really took on board and felt positive in my ability to make changes. (StudentJ#5)”(Hecht 2007, p.92). That the student felt so optimistic and empowered by his/her own “ability to make changes”, is just one example which shows that much potential lies in nurturing a positive atmosphere in the ballet studio.

#### **f. Flow**

Factors described in the above sections, breathing, concentration, a sense of purpose, optimism that goals would be achieved and connection within the body will be affected by a positive atmosphere in the ballet studio and are integral topics inherent in the theory of the psychological state of flow. Numerous descriptions of flow are to be found in literature, “Your concentration is very complete. Your mind isn’t wandering, you are not thinking of something else; you are totally involved in what you are doing.... Your energy is flowing very smoothly. You feel relaxed, comfortable, and energetic.” (Csikszentmihaly, 2008, p. 53). According to Hackney, “Flow is the key to mobility. Breath creates flow in your body.” (2002, p.54). Hamilton describes flow as,

“you are both concentrated and relaxed, even though you are facing a rather awesome technical feat. During these times, your mind begins to float in an effortless, unselfconscious way that’s accompanied by feelings of ecstasy, harmony, and oneness with the universe. Dancers may even feel a strong spiritual component in their work” (1998, p. 145)

The psychological state of flow, (resulting from the effects of a positive environment on the Kinesthetic Intelligence) is according to Csikszentmihalyi<sup>5</sup>, “a desired state for dancers because while in flow, movements are performed naturally and with ease” (Csikszentmihalyi M. in McGill, A. & Nordin, S. M. 2009). Csikszentmihalyi goes on to say, “When dancing is at its best, dancers lose themselves in the moment, becoming one with the sensation and experience... [flow] is characterized by deep concentration

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<sup>5</sup>Mihaly Csikszentmihaly developed upon the already existing concept of Flow in the mid 1970’s The concept of flow had already been explored in the western world at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> by (among others) Kurt Hahn and Maria Montessori. In the mid 1970’s Csikszentmihaly produced literature developing upon this idea.

and the feeling of going onto autopilot ... enjoyment is high, and there is no self-consciousness standing in the way of self-expression.” (Csikszentmihalyi M. in McGill, A. & Nordin, S. M. 2009).

Csikszentmihalyi explains that in order to achieve the state of flow as mentioned above, clear goals and immediate feedback are needed. He states that there should always be a balance between the challenge one is faced with and the skills that one possesses. Concentration must be at its maximum so that one's awareness is fully involved with the actions carried out and all energy is focused on the here and now. This of course deletes worrying about failure which is highly detrimental to success. Csikszentmihaly claims that enjoyment combined with high concentration is the key to such an optimal experience and that it is, “impossible to enjoy [a tennis game, a book, or a conversation] unless attention is fully concentrated on the activity.” (Csikszentmihaly, 2008, p. 46).

Free, deep breathing is of utmost importance if a high level of concentration is to be achieved. Going back to Hackney, “... if the breath is not full, the heart may not be receiving adequate oxygen and hence the brain may not be fully oxygenated as well”, (Hackney, 2002, p. 145) it is easy to make a connection between breath and concentration. Just as breath is important for concentration, so are positive emotions (e.g. joy) important for breath. The aforementioned from Levine, “Subjects feeling joy reported an expanded sensation in their chests, which they experienced as buoyant, and which was associated with free deep breathing”, (Levine, 2010, p. 333) helps us to see a connection between breath and enjoyment and helps us begin to understand the parameters needed to experience flow.

The importance of the psychological state of flow lies not just in the optimal experience of enjoyment, although this maybe should be paramount. Through the combination of concentration and enjoyment newer levels of physical achievement can be reached, “... by focusing on psychological factors that underlie excellence in performance, such as flow and creativity, instructors may be able to help their students reach higher levels of achievement” (Csikszentmihalyi M. in McGill, A. & Nordin, S. M. 2009). Psychologically, higher levels of achievement will, in most cases strengthen the self-confidence, which in turn will help to reach even higher physical achievement. This is also due to the fact of repeating and thus reinforcing the right movements, of developing and improving upon one's Kinesthetic Intelligence.

An experience of flow quoted, from a dancer, in, “*Flow, The Psychology of Optimal Experience*” describes, “A strong feeling of relaxation and calmness comes over me. I have no worries of failure. What a powerful and warm feeling it is! I want to expand, to hug the world. I feel enormous power to effect something of grace and beauty.” (Csikszentmihaly, 2008, p. 59-60). Similar experiences have been quoted in other research undertaken by Buckroyd, Hamilton and Hecht. For example, a student statement in Hecht's study shows clearly the effects of positive emotion, “I enjoyed the lesson and was able to feel more connection in my body. I really felt like I was dancing instead of doing a series of exercises. Wonderful experience. (StudentJ#6)” (Hecht, 2007, p.9). The fact that the StudentJ#6 in Hecht could “feel more connection” in his/her body due to positive emotions and that the dancer quoted in

Csikszentmihaly felt so relaxed, powerful and was not worried about failure, shows again that enormous potential lies in investigating the impact on the Kinesthetic Intelligence of fostering positive emotions (and thus flow) in the ballet studio.

#### **g. Summary of the Literature Review**

There are many studies on Emotional Intelligence in teaching in state schools<sup>6</sup>. Emotional Intelligence in teaching dance is however lagging behind the developments made in other genres of education. What one could find disturbing is that over the last 20 years research work has been done in the area of Emotional Intelligence in dance training, (Buckroyd, Hamilton, Hecht to name but a few) but the dance world has obviously not been able to embrace and integrate these findings fully. Much specific information about the effects of emotionally intelligent teaching on the motoric intelligence/ Kinesthetic Intelligence of dancers has been difficult to find and so represents a specialized area of emotional intelligence that needs more research.

### **3. Methodology**

The aim of this project was to research the effects of EI in classical ballet training on the Kinesthetic Intelligence of the dancer and the dance student, to point out similarities in experiences so that teaching methods can be improved accordingly and to bring into awareness the parameters needed for an optimal training experience.

Based on theories of EI a questionnaire was composed which dealt with topics related to Emotional Intelligence and Kinesthetic Intelligence. The aim of the questionnaire was to help fill the gap of information found in the literature.

Using information from questionnaires and interviews, collected from 40 dancers, ex-dancers and teachers who experienced training situations lacking in EI and in training rich in EI, tendencies and similarities in regards to experiences made are shown and analysed.

Of the 40 people who took part 17 were male, 23 female. The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 63<sup>7</sup>. All participants had been through a professional dance education and all had had the experience of learning classical ballet. The participants were spread around the world. Due to the many varied nationalities, the project was written in English. It is often not easy to express oneself in a foreign language, particularly when dealing with emotions but for the sake of clarity in the project it was important to use a common language. A positive argument for not using the native language of all

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<sup>6</sup> The term, "State schools", refers to primary and secondary schools that are free of charge and accept all children. These schools are mainly tax funded. Here general education is offered so that the students, on leaving, can begin work training or attend a college or university.

<sup>7</sup> Obviously there are large discrepancies between the experiences in ballet of a 19 year old and those of a 63 year old, however for the purpose of this study these differences cannot be dealt with.

participants is that when asked to respond in a language other than the native language one is obliged to think a little longer or harder about ones' response. Also, the time frame for this project would not have accommodated the amount of translation data that would have been necessary.

Participants were asked to write as little or as much as they wanted and were informed that all names and identities of persons, locations and institutions would remain anonymous. For the protection of identity, all participants were given a pseudonym. All participants took part voluntarily.

36 people answered questionnaires and four others were interviewed personally. Questionnaires were answered alone in privacy and interviews were held individually. Due to the very sensitive nature of the study a focus group model was not used. Undoubtedly, the topic would result in a very interesting outcome in a focus group. However, due to the many conflicting ideas on this and other subjects connected to ballet training, it was decided that anonymity for all involved would be retained.

All four interviews were recorded on a video camera and then to a large extent, transcribed. The questionnaires were filled out digitally by the respondents. Before analysis of the data was undertaken all participants were sent copies of their responses and were asked to check the validity of the material. The most personal information was gained through the individual interviews. The answers to the questionnaires gave a good insight into the similarities of experiences. No incentives for responding to the questionnaire or taking part in an individual interview were offered so that "socially desirable responding" (SDR)<sup>8</sup> and bias would be avoided.

## **4. Analysis**

### **a. Negative Experiences in Ballet Education**

Almost all of the dancers questioned had encountered negative experiences in the ballet studio that could be described as situations lacking in Emotional Intelligence. There were distinct topics that continually arose in the situations described. These topics were mainly to do with, looks, particularly weight and size, physical handling of dancers, negative comparisons, and general negative tension in the class atmosphere:

#### **i) Looks:**

Dance is to a great extent an aesthetic art form and in no way do I mean to challenge this. However, I feel it important to quote the dancers who had to deal with negative comments about weight and looks because the resulting emotions will have definitely affected the sense of self and probably co-ordination.

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<sup>8</sup> "Socially desirable responding (SDR) is typically defined as the tendency to give positive self- descriptions" (Paulhus D. 2002. In, *The role of Constructs in Psychological and Educational Measurement*, p. 49). This would falsify the results of the interviews and questionnaires- thus jeopardising the authenticity of the research project.

“... the humiliation happened mainly in X in the ausbildung<sup>9</sup>, feedback about my female physique [...] of course for a girl in an ausbildung it’s a lot about the looks...I never felt comfortable with my curves...and that affected the dancing of course (Betty, 2014). Dealing with an “ideal” and not being or being able to become this ideal is an experience known to many dancers, “... the reality of the ballet world where my body was simply “wrong”. No one used this term, but they made it clear – teachers and classmates – that I shouldn’t be there. I was too fat (51 kg at 162 cm), my legs and feet had the wrong shape” (Helen, 2014)

Sadly, this begins often at a very young and impressionable age, “... we were humiliated (e.g. “you are not good enough, you are too fat etc”) all the time and almost every day from some of our teachers. I remember it from the age from 12 years up.” (Ines, 2014). This often carries on through the schooling and adolescence – as one dancer wrote, “They use to weigh us every month, especially by the time we were in the adolescent period, the time when we were growing up, was very hard when we started to get woman bodies. The comment of our weight in front of everyone was humiliating.” (Sophia, 2014).

### **ii) Physical Handling**

The subject of “Hands On”<sup>10</sup> teaching is a sensitive one. Due to society becoming increasingly litigious, touch in class is used a lot less than in the past. The use of touch to show students where exactly to place their bodies is a very useful training tool and can be very effective. However, sometimes due to thoughtlessness on behalf of the teacher the message intended through “Hands-On” can be misinterpreted and/or uncomfortable for the dancer. There are also situations where the teacher through lack of knowledge or maybe frustration has caused harm to a dancer. When asked about experience of injury one dancer said, “Yeah, my pulled out thigh back muscles [...] it had to do with my instability and a teacher that pressed the leg up and I wasn’t prepared” (Betty, 2014) Another dancer explained how what was intended by the teacher to help the Kinesthetic Intelligence was actually quite unproductive, “My first ballet teacher used to “subtly” scratch the backs of my knees with her long fingernails, to remind me to keep them “pulled up”. No harm was done but it was very uncomfortable and I disliked it intensely which resulted in the method being quite ineffective”, (Leo, 2014) The last example that I quote in terms of unproductive “Hands-On” teaching is probably an exception and not by any means a run-of-the mill occurrence, however, I felt it might show the possible outer limits of the experiences made, “I most vividly remember [...] during ballet class was one time when she [the ballet teacher] actually kicked the girl in front of me with her foot. I think it was because her butt stuck out, that’s why she kicked her. We were about 14 years old.” (Mary, 2014)

### **iii) Negative Comparisons**

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<sup>9</sup>German for “professional dance training”

<sup>10</sup>Refers to use of touch to guide dancers through corrections. In Great Britain, to avoid complications either “Hands On” is just not used or schools will make known that they are a “Hands-On” school, mostly through hanging up a notice.

The experience of being negatively compared to another dancer seemed to be quite common. "... she [the ballet teacher] was pushing me down all the time...critic and negative things were always told to me...but I was young and was accepting everything...my sister was also dancing and she put us in a competition<sup>11</sup> .. she was always better than me.. (Dorothy, 2014). Another dancer describes being put into competition with a whole group, "...my teacher would always have this way in class of comparing me to girls who were just doing it as a hobby, and making me feel like I wasn't up to scratch with them." (Ines, 2014). One dancer offered her own idea of why teachers do this, "The teachers used to compare the students, [...] sometimes making you unsure (I am sure they thought that system is to "make you stronger)" (Sophia, 2014). Even if teachers well-meaningly practice methods like this, sadly the result is often not that which is intended, "At some point ( I think depressingly early on) I lost that [joy] through a process of humiliation and teaching based on undermining some to promote others... (Clive, 2014).

#### **iv) General Negative Tension in the Class Atmosphere**

Probably almost every dancer who has been through a vocational training programme can remember situations of general negative tension in the class atmosphere. The first example quoted is almost a cliché of what commonly is thought of as being typical for a ballet class:

"Oh girls, girls, Miss Y is coming in" or "Miss X is coming in today" you know, can't be seeing this- or can't be seeing that- and it just- they made it feel as if, you know this person comes in and this is our life, you know, in their hands- and- so it was just this not necessarily saying, you know they're this horrible person- it's just that everyone's- um the tension in the class would just raise because this person's watching." (Viola, 2014).

The second example shows clearly that the consequence of unnecessary negative tension in the class atmosphere can be that it leaves a lasting impression upon the dancer:

"I definitely remember the situation where we were supposed to memorize this adagio and simply couldn't because the tension in the room kept growing. Up until today I dread the moment when we go about memorizing the adagio. I am not quite sure if this one incident is solely responsible for my dislike, but it for sure has added to it."(Mary, 2014)

#### **b. Effects of Negative Experience/Lack of EI**

The analysis of the data from the dancers, students-dancers, dance teachers and ex-dancers revealed that the lack of EI in training situations interfered particularly with concentration, balance, flow of movement and co-ordination. Some dancers mentioned that they had problems with shaking and many described debilitating tension.

"It is obvious that if a pleasant climate prevails, the teachers are supportive and positive, the exercises work, etc. easier/better. I cannot work under pressure and stress, be good, remember the exercises etc. For me it's too much if someone in ballet shouts "Stomach! Bottom!" because then I am terrified, I can't breathe, etc. The teacher's voice, the tone, the calmness, etc. in speaking makes a big difference. Master in this is X. His quiet way - what he says, but also how he says it - makes such a difference. Of course, my body already (the first time was about 20 years ago with

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<sup>11</sup> This dancer means not that she and her sister were entered for a competition, but put in competition with one another.

him) knows his classes well, but I find it fascinating to see how my posture etc. changes immediately when I only hear his voice. And not just with me.” (Naomi, 2014)

The participant for the questionnaire who wrote the above has very clearly stated what she feels in a training situation lacking in EI- and how she feels in a training environment that has a positive emotional atmosphere. The respondent describes the positive effects experienced personally on the Kinesthetic Intelligence and makes the observation that other dancers in the particular training environment mentioned seem to also experience positive effects on their Kinesthetic Intelligence. Another dancer described how due to a positive atmosphere she was able to dance (or be “danced”) with better balance, more precision, better co-ordination and less tension.

“With beautiful trainings, quite short rehearsals and a very friendly behavior, X managed to create such an atmosphere, that dancing seemed easier and more pleasant than ever. Other situation: time with the German choreographer X and one of my colleagues helping me to overcome my fear of being lifted [...] they both were reassuring and supportive [...] I felt calm, curious, busy discovering and learning, often playful. Physically dancing was easier, I had better balance, more precision and less tension [...] I felt “danced”, not dancing. Coordination worked better too for these steps. It seemed somehow natural. (Helen, 2014).

This dancer goes on to tell how she experienced classes where the teacher empowered the dancers by encouraging them to accept their own physique and to dance with their own bodies and not some external image “ideal” that they might have of a dancer:

“A positive experience was attending X’s Workshop in X, where, in spite of a very long break, I felt again able to dance and found dancing easy and pleasant. He insisted a lot on dancing with our body, not with an external ideal image, had very inspiring combinations and created a light atmosphere.” (Helen, 2014).

However, a sharp contrast to these positive experiences was shown by another dancer who felt that she simply could not cope any further with the negative training environment that she found herself in:

“I had an anxiety attack- and um ... it wasn’t necessarily due to what happened at that point, but it was a build-up of a teacher who a very um ... er ... kind of ... harsh way of saying things or- of the atmosphere in the class was always very uptight and ... as it was leading up to auditions... um- I just ... lost it- and was hyperventilating and crying a lot and just felt like I didn’t have control over anything I did or felt- um and I DO think that was just because of the whole general atmosphere and maybe perhaps not feeling that I could talk to them about anything.” (Viola, 2014)

### **i) Concentration**

Not being able to concentrate, (“I cannot work under pressure and stress, be good, remember the exercises etc” ) seemed to be a problem that many respondents had experienced in a training climate lacking in EI, “I remember that I was terrified to make mistakes or not to pick up fast enough steps or centre combinations. Our teacher at the X forced us to train more hardly till we should feel pain.” (Olivia, 2014). The main problem with lack of concentration really seemed to be not HOW the exercises should

be executed but just WHICH steps should be accomplished. “I found it hard to pick-up the exercises because I was so worried about not being good enough ...” (Timea, 2014), “... we were in the center doing an adagio. The teacher utterly and completely flipped because we could not remember the sequence – by that time we were all totally confused and paralyzed with fear about doing something wrong.” (Mary, 2014). It is clear to see that if the problems with concentration start with just the content and not even the quality, that the dancer has no chance to work towards the realization of personal potential.

## **ii) Balance**

Negative effects on balance, particularly concerning turns was also often mentioned by respondents, “I am literally afraid of turning more than a double turn. When I have to make a pirouette, I just get very tensed, with the two contradictory texts in my head – I should be able to do it, and I should turn at least a triple, but of course I can’t. Afterwards I feel always, but always very disappointed.” (Helen,2014). One dancer explained how despite a great talent for balance, when it came to pirouettes, due to too much imposed tension and maybe a lack of knowledge from her teachers about her particular physique, found it impossible to co-ordinate the responses needed in the body to succeed at multiple pirouettes.

“They always say - “X, you have to work more, why you don’t manage to turn at least 3 or 4 pirouette?”- and I don’t know, I had a bit of sway legs and I think it’s a lot is because of this- because I er they teach me, “Ahh you have such beautiful leg you have to use it”. So I work with the X-legs, and it was hard for me to find the balance and it was hard for me to get on pointe and during that, spot and turn a pirouette. And for me it was really a humiliation because they say- “Oh but with your balance you should be able to turn at least four pirouettes- and it’s just because you don’t want to move your head!” (Isabel, 2014)

## **iii) Shaking**

Other dancers mentioned shaking, “I think mainly in balance-stuff...holding a position on one leg made me shake all the time” (Betty, 2014). How this manifestation can escalate is described by another young dancer as, “... when it comes to balance-exercises, my feet get unstable and start to shake. My body responds in shaking as well and another indirect respond is that I start to think, which makes it even worse. I feel very frustrated when I experience these things because it influences my whole body language and dancing style” (Claire, 2014).

## **iv) Flow of Movement and Tension**

Flow of movement negatively affected by tension was also mentioned by the respondents:

“I always struggled with kind of tension here, [puts hand on chest] and that was just generally throughout and I think it would get worse if a certain teacher of a director would walk in- and I would, you know, suddenly not be able to do things fluidly because, you know, there’s too much tension, I can’t jump because I’m never going down, I’m just staying up ...”(Viola, 2014).

One dancer remembered how boredom due to repetition could lead her into a state of negative tension that would cause great hindrance to the flow of movement:

“these mental or physical blockages was more when I really get bored, because when it over, over and over you had to do the same thing and it was so strict in the form and you couldn’t express yourself and then I get so bored – and also the body gets really tensed and, and there’s no motivation at all so I think this normal energy, how you can move, and have the flow of the movement goes away.” (Kate,2014).

#### **(v) Breath**

In the data analysis, what was found to be the most interesting and maybe most important, was that the emotional climate in a training situation seems to directly affect the breath, (“I am terrified, I can’t breathe,”). Incorrect use of breath- or just not breathing will cause lack of stamina, lack of concentration, waste products will build up in the body, injuries will not heal as quickly as they could, balance and co-ordination will be disturbed and restrictive tension will be caused. Some participants in the survey were very aware of the difficulty that they had in breathing and reported, “I try to elongate every part of my body, creating tension, even a sort of stiffness in my joints. My breathing becomes superficial and my jaws get tight.” (Helen, 2014), “The fear of not being good enough actually caused me to badly hyperventilate and have a panic attack so badly in a ballet exam that the examiner told me to stop dancing and calm down- unthinkable in an exam”, (Timea, 2014) Participants were also aware though of the positive effects correct breathing has on the body: “when the atmosphere was built by trust, not just by corrections, ... body responses with more capacity, you are BREATHING and all muscles are connected with air, you feel complete as ONE, everything is working together, warm, fluently and no fear, no pain” (Louisa, 2014) The emphasis in this last quote is on breath within a positive atmosphere. This dancer is obviously well acquainted with the benefits of correct breathing if not actually aware of the state of flow, that she must have experienced. That correct breathing reduces tension, improves co-ordination and concentration and is pivotal for the psychological state of flow is clearly stated in the literature review.

#### **c. Flow**

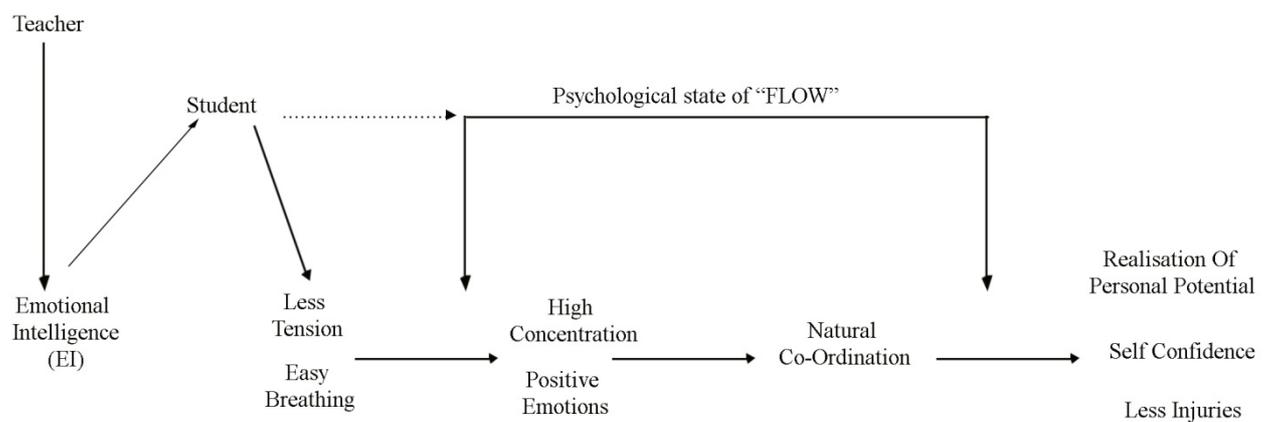
Flow must surely be the absolute desired state for the dancer to reach in order fulfill personal potential. However, none of the participants in the survey named or spoke about the experience of flow as such. Only two of the dancers interviewed and two of the respondents reported similar experiences that could be interpreted as flow. A general description of the experience of flow must certainly be that from Louisa (2014), “you are BREATHING ... you feel complete as ONE, everything is working together, ... fluently and no fear”. Three other dancers reported similar experiences of an almost out-of-body, trance-like state that could be interpreted as flow. One dancer was able to experience flow through empowering herself by mentally taking control of the situation and reducing her stress and tensions levels which in turn enabled her to enjoy the performance and concentrate fully:

“I remember I had to jump in for Daphnis and Chloe and the performance was er- I did it in a kind of er- trance- it was wonderful, I was flying- lets` say it that way- and er ... the second one, after my second pregnancy when I came back and I decided that nobody could tell me er ... what I had to do and how and I was going to decide - and take it easy-and that’s what I did and it was wonderful- and it just worked.” (Ursula, 2014).

Another dancer described how he was able to “let go” which must have stopped him from thinking about failure and given him a great sense of security which consequently would have reduced debilitating tension: “I remember one show were I really let go [...] and I got chills on my whole body and I was in the piece I felt all the other dancers around me, it was amazing I still remember this feel to this day” (Noa, 2014). One young female dancer described how she felt that everything (the steps) became a whole sentence and that she had not been thinking, “just doing”. This is most likely the “autopilot” that Csikszentmihaly refers to, (see Literature Review) and shows how completely immersed in the dance she must have been. She had most certainly reached an almost trance-like state of deep concentration combined with easy breathing:

“I just think, it was just one of those moments where you- where I came off and I couldn’t remember – you know, if someone said Oh, did that work? Or, how did that feel for you? I just remember it as being a whole and being a whole sentence and just everything flowed ... and it was just that moment of not thinking and just doing” (Viola, 2014).

Using the diagram I. underneath, taking the literature available and the results of the questionnaire into account, it is easy to understand that EI in the training environment has a great impact on the Kinesthetic Intelligence and is of utmost importance if flow is to be achieved and personal potential reached.



(diagram I.)

#### d. Students Acceptance of a Training Climate lacking in Emotional Intelligence

That many dancers do not maybe often experience the positive effects of EI on their Kinesthetic Intelligence (and therefore flow) can be often due to a lack of EI in their training environment. However, it is interesting to note that most of the dancers accepted the negative training experiences as, “it made me stronger and I think that this experience helped me getting better“, (Elena, 2014), “I really think it’s good to experience these negative emotions early on because we will have to deal with them in stage and in

later life. Necessary evil can be transformed”, (Martin, 2014). Buckroyd has however contrasting ideas to those of the two respondents mentioned above:

“The issue is how we prepare students for that world. My view is that they are best prepared by the experience of being treated well and being encouraged to take responsibility for themselves. In this way they have the chance to mature in such a way that they are less vulnerable to being treated badly in the professional world.” (2002, p. 75)

Buckroyd goes on to explain that developing a nurturing environment should not be confused with “being soft and easy-going” and that “It is perfectly possible to demand high standards without being unpleasant. Indeed if the student’s energies are enlisted in a collaborative venture with the teacher, those standards are more likely to be achieved.” (2002, p. 75) According to Buckroyd a large amount of research for academic subjects has been carried out which confirms this argument but that research for “elite arts students” is needed.

The general acceptance of a training climate lacking in EI could be associated with the age of when most of the dancers first came into contact with dance training and/or when they reached the decision to become a professional dancer. Not all of the respondents experienced negative training climates from the beginning of their education. Mostly the negative experiences started when, “... the studying got more demanding”, (Paula, 2014), when vocational training was embarked upon. However, from the 39 respondents who revealed their age when they began dance classes, a large percent of these had started dance classes by the age of nine (75%) and from the 35 respondents who made the decision to become a dancer, many, (78,4%) had already made the decision to become a dancer by the age of 14. This shows that the respondents were possibly subject to negative training climates from an early and impressionable age, “... pre- adolescents, whether we speak chronologically or psychologically, are malleable and conformist; they are eager to please” (Buckroyd, 2002, p. 87). Often the decision to become a professional dancer is made, if not years beforehand, then when the student enters a Conservatory. The dependence on the Institution and thus on the teacher is great; “the ‘Conservatory’ has made itself so powerful because of it’s influence within the dance world that students feel they must endure what happens there if they want to get a job. The dance student therefore permits himself to be badly treated.” (Smith in Buckroyd, 2002, p. 81).

The desire to please and to be accepted- in some cases just tolerated, is high in young dance students: “There was a constant fear of forgetting the exercises and not being good enough to keep the scholarship place-which I was convinced was the only way for me to become a professional dancer (maybe because the teacher made us believe this with the things that she said)”. (Timea, 2014). One respondent described how even just a smile from the teacher sufficed, “For me ballet teachers were always people of very high status, I had a lot of respect for all of them [...] I wanted to do everything “right” in order to earn a nod, a smile or some other form of approval”, (Mary, 2014).

Often the student cannot see that there is a world outside of the Institution where they find themselves, with this I do not even refer to the “real world” but just that there are other dance schools that also train

young people to become professional dancers. The students become very dependent on the teacher and sadly, through lack of knowledge and “repeating of history”, the teacher can be prone to abuse this situation, “the teacher who uses methods of interacting that are experienced by the students as abusive is repeating ways of teaching that she herself experienced” (Buckroyd, 2002, p. 79). This of course snowballs on into company life “... it also stems into company mentality and behavior so much ... old habits die hard and when they are instilled in us as fledgling dancers they rarely leave us...” (Clive, 2014). The company dancers maybe become teachers and the cycle of negativity with lack of EI in the dance studio starts again.

## **5. Conclusion**

Even in this small and limited research it was very clear from the data that all of the survey participants believed that a positive atmosphere was beneficial for a training situation. Contrastingly to this there seemed to be a general acceptance of a training environment that lacked EI, either in the past during time spent for example, in vocational training, or even in the present while working as a dancer or teacher or as an ex dancer observing the past.

When asked if they thought that negative movement patterns can be caused by fear or stress 95% of the participants confirmed this idea. Some of the dancers questioned had had direct personal experience of the connection of negative movement patterns to injury and others had observed this in friends and work mates. Also 95% of the dancers questioned believed that negative movement patterns cause injury. Of course fear and stress can be direct by-products of a training lacking in EI. Fear and stress, as stated earlier have a great influence on the Kinesthetic Intelligence, so one can assume that not only are balance, concentration and breath affected (as stated in the Analysis) but also the lack of EI in training goes so far in it's affect on the Kinesthetic Intelligence as to maybe cause injury.

Only three out of 40 respondents described a definite experience which can be interpreted as flow If respondents had been questioned directly about flow the results might have been different. However, the present integration of EI in training needed to produce positive effects on the Kinesthetic Intelligence and induce flow seems unfortunately inadequate. Therefore, it is possible to believe that even with direct questioning about flow that answers would remain sparse mainly due to a lack of experience with a positive atmosphere, an environment rich in EI, in the ballet studio.

### **a. Creating a Training Environment Rich in Emotional Intelligence**

The teacher has a great influence on the students/dancers. It is the teacher's responsibility to create a positive atmosphere, one of respect, where learning can take place without any restrictions and personal potential can be worked towards - an atmosphere rich in EI. “ The teacher's responsibility is to the whole class ... the teacher's task is to create a positive learning environment for all students, irrespective of talent. Within such an even- handed environment it should be possible for each student to reach towards

her own potential” (Buckroyd, 2002, p. 78). Over challenging students will make them feel incompetent, which in turn will produce maybe tension, fear, lack of concentration etc, likewise under-challenging dancers will result in boredom and possibly tension and frustration- all feelings negatively productive for the Kinesthetic Intelligence and flow. If the student has a sense of “belonging” in the class they will feel safe and supported within the group. It is also important for the autonomy of the dancer that he/she takes responsibility for himself/herself and his or her training.

Thankfully many of the participants remembered training situations where enjoyment was high. In these situations all participants claimed that it was the teacher who was responsible for this. One dancer described a situation where the teacher obviously accepted every dancer just how they were, which in turn helped the dancers to accept themselves and work with a sense of self responsibility and autonomy:

“... she gave such a BEAUTIFUL ballet class and I felt sooooo long and I felt sooo light and I felt soo free to move [...] she didn't force any pictures- so- “the attitude has to look like this”- “your leg has to look like this” but you felt so warm from inside. Then finally you had a beautiful attitude, it doesn't look like the Russian books- I don't know that, but you felt right in the position, you felt long and you felt you could stay and turn a pirouette [...] and work with your body, for what YOU have [...] and you got so inspired [...] and I don't know, but I think it was a lot because of her.” Isabel, 2014.

Other dancers described their teachers as being inspiring due to their enthusiasm for dance: “I had a really lovely Teacher called X, [...] she really got the love for dance across in her class.” (Noa, 2014). Looking forward to class because he knew he would be pushed to extremes is beautifully described by one ex-dancer. One can feel his and the teachers enjoyment in the following text.

“X, X and X (and X) had such ENTHUSIASM for the dance. They were clearly enjoying teaching and consequently they made you enjoy what you were doing even more than you were doing so [...] All three were full of life. You always looked forward to class. You knew they were going to work you to the extremes of your ability, energy and suffering but of course that is what you were there for. They positively INSPIRED you and so brought out things that you might never have thought possible.” (Quinten, 2014).

Along with helping dancers to take self-responsibility for their training, empowering them, showing enthusiasm, inspiring them and accepting them, it could be productive to offer alternative forms of complementary training that concentrate on breath, such as yoga. The topic of practices such as yoga and the resulting effects on the Kinesthetic Intelligence in regards to the dancer is not widely represented in literature and is an area that needs more research.

However, all these positive approaches could possibly be lost on some dancers who have the experiences of negative training climates ingrained in their Kinesthetic Intelligence. One of the respondents noticed that in certain situations he still, after many years of company life, falls into a state of physical anxiety:

“... I am still sometimes in rehearsals being coached by the people that really set this behavior when I was a teenager and my body desperately wants to behave in the same way now as then. I

can sometimes overcome it but it is a real struggle. It feels that the pedagogy is unchanged and as such has an immediate and definite response physically.” (Clive, 2014)

This dancer then went on to say:

“I feel an element of regret as an adult looking back over a career that could have involved much more joy in actually dancing. At some point (I think depressingly early on) I lost that through a process of humiliation and teaching based on undermining some to promote others... The good thing is that I now know how good it can be if one can liberate dancers, get them to feel ownership of movement and their own bodies...” (Clive, 2014)

## **b. Further Research**

I propose, as further research and to, “liberate dancers, get them to feel ownership of movement and their own bodies”, the development of a training scheme that can help re-programme the Kinesthetic Intelligence and help delete the debilitating automatic reactions that many dancers experience physically. Future research should concentrate on the development of a training environment that creates new beneficial associations in the psyche. For example, an experiment that I began in first semester of the school year 2013-2014, helped to positively prime the students for the new school year. Every day of the ballet class, before we began, each person wrote down a compliment (concerning dance) for another student. This was done before every class until each student had received a compliment about his or her dancing from everyone in the class. From the very first day of the experiment concentration improved dramatically and the group went on to make unusually extensive developments in co-ordination. The positive feedback received and also the giving of positive feedback helped to strengthen the self-confidence of the students. Tension was certainly reduced and they all began the class with positive emotions.

Developing exercises closely linked with ballet using deep breathing, meditation and somatics<sup>12</sup> will undoubtedly bring positive results. Research into how music and surroundings affect the dancer is needed to help find out how to construct a working space with a positive and supportive atmosphere. Overall, the aim should be to create an environment where flow can be discovered and experienced and one where the dancer is able to learn to empower herself/himself through the ability to tap into the experience of flow and thus profit from positive effects on the Kinesthetic Intelligence. This possibility will enable dancers to experience longer dancing careers with fewer injuries and give them the chance to realise their own personal potential.

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<sup>12</sup> The term somatic (from the Greek *σωματικός*) means 'of the body'—relating to the body distinct from the mind, soul, or spirit. Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somatic>, retrieved 15.06.2014.

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## **Appendix**

1. Questionnaire (including information concerning the project plus assurance of anonymity)
2. Responses to Questionnaire
3. Transcribed Interviews
4. Declarations of Consent for Transcribed Interviews
5. Analysis of Questionnaire Data

### **1. Questionnaire (including information concerning the project plus assurance of anonymity)**

#### **Information concerning the project “Emotionally Intelligent Training and it’s Impact on Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence”:**

The aim of this study is bi-fold: (a) to explore how a lack of emotional intelligence (EI) in training maybe disturbs the dancer’s bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (motoric intelligence) and thus causes enduring negative movement patterns which may result in recurrent injury plus stunted progression in technique and artistry, (b) vice-versa to explore the positive effects on the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence of a training climate which is rich in EI.

A better understanding of the correlation in training situations between emotional Intelligence and bodily-kinesthetic intelligence can help teachers, trainee teachers, dance students and dancers to asses physical, psychological and motoric reactions and to react constructively.

#### **The Traditional Teaching methods of Classical Ballet**

Teaching methods in state-run schools has greatly developed and improved over the past few decades. Buckroyd draws a very clear picture of the current education philosophy in European education in “The Student Dancer”:

Teachers in state schools are no longer seen as remote, terrifying figures; pupils are encouraged to learn, discover and find out for themselves and to use the teacher as a learning resource ... it is unlikely that there will be a return to the old authoritarianism. Our society has become much more egalitarian and less hierarchical over the past half-century, and mainstream education has absorbed and reflected those trends. (2000, p. 12).

This is however, not often the case in the philosophy for teaching ballet. Traditionally the relationship between teacher and student in the dance studio is a “model of teaching and learning that survives nowhere else. It is rare to find a studio/gym where the teacher/coach is not an absolute authority with a very clear hierarchical control over the students.” (Buckroyd, 2000, p. 12)

#### **Protection of privacy and identity**

The identity of the respondents and any other persons and/or organisations which might be mentioned as a result of this questionnaire shall be protected. In order to do this, the individuals sharing their experiences should complete the questionnaire alone in privacy. A discussion situation concerning these questions (as in working with a focus group) has been deliberately avoided in order to preserve anonymity of persons involved and authenticity of the reactions to the questionnaire.

### **Questions**

1. How old were you when you started attending ballet classes?
2. How old were you when you decided you wanted to become a dancer?
3. Did you ever experience emotions and feelings such as fear, humiliation and inadequacy in the ballet class? If so, what happened and how old do you remember being when you had this experience?
4. Did you ever experience emotions and feelings such as joy, affirmation, reassurance and inspiration in the ballet class? If so, what happened and how old do you remember being when you had this experience?
5. Did you sometimes experience as a student or a dancer, mental or/and physical blockages with certain steps, or in certain situations? If so, how did you feel in these situations? How did your body respond?
6. Did you sometimes experience as a student or a dancer, greater ease of movement and coordination when performing certain steps or when in certain situations? If so, how did you feel in these situations? How did your body respond?
7. Did you ever have reoccurring injuries? Were these injuries “sudden accidents” or were they more to do with your own personal movement patterns? Do you think that negative movement patterns cause injury? Do you think that negative movement patterns can be caused by fear or stress?
8. Do you have any further experiences in connection with bodily responses to emotional training climates that you would like to share?

### **2.Responses to Questionnaire** (Names have been changed)

#### **1 Annie (63)**

1. 3 yrs old
2. 3 yrs old
3. never fear, only much later in my professional career felt humiliation (around 30ish) but very little inadequacy (maybe not getting a role or two that I knew I was being looked at for).
4. always from 3yrs old onwards.

5. sometimes but I would look at someone who could do the steps right and try to copy how they maneuvered the task.

6. if the steps are repeated enough you always feel better with them and there is always room for improvement plus the older you get the more ease there is in interpreting and knowing your body will do the executing practically by itself so the feeling is even greater enjoyment in controlling both technical and emotional feelings.

7. always felt better in warm climates...but it makes no difference if there is good heating too!!! in my time there was a lack of heating in many theatres but got better after a few generations. today I would say that whenever possible not to be around air conditioning or central heating as the body heats itself as you move and work, plus many injuries come from breezes ie... open doors, windows and air conditioning.

## **2 Betty (37)**

1. 15

2. 18

3. yes a lot...I had no confidence....though the humiliation happened mainly in PCA in the ausbildung...feedback about my female physique, my hyperextension and because of that lack of tension

4. actually joy and inspiration came a lot from movies I've seen....and it made me dance in the basement back home.....later on I got inspired when choreographing by myself or together with albert...which is why I make students create, too... if only it is 2 counts of 8

5. I think mainly in balance-stuff....holding a position on one leg made me shake all the time...I found out if I slightly shake one hand a tiny bit (audience can't see it), like I'm freezing, then my leg stands much more calm.... this revelation came in teaching

6. I was always a real good dancer when the choreographies were "safe" for me, hard technical stuff with attitude turns, triple turns or hard jumps weakened me because of my lack of balance

## **Saskia Tindle**

Just a Zwischenfrage: do you think that certain training environments were damaging for you- for you confidence?

## **Betty (37)**

definitely...of course for a girl in an ausbildung it's a lot about the looks...I never felt comfortable with my curves....and that affected the dancing of course...and being on the other side now....i keep telling the kids that I don't care how much talent they have or how they look, I just want them to try hard and be there

and I've seen so many come so far with that

and the good teachers that I remember just gave me the feeling it's all about the input/or the project, so they were focused on teaching and not judging

### **Saskia Tindle**

Did you ever have reoccurring injuries? Were these injuries "sudden accidents" or were they more to do with your own personal movement patterns? Do you think that negative movement patterns cause injury? Do you think that negative movement patterns can be caused by fear or stress?

### **Betty**

yeah my pulled out thuy back muscles (you know what I mean right?)

hm it had to do with my instability and a teacher that pressed the leg up and I wasn't prepared

well stress can cause tensions that might end in stiff backs or necks, or of course, the older you get, in a lack of warm up before shows

yeah so basically that's it...the nasty strains.

### **3 Claire (23)**

1. I was five years old when I started attending ballet classes.

2. I guess I always wanted to become a dancer, since I have started to dance... but officially when I started my education at a private musical school in Vienna, when I was 19 years old

3. Yes, I experienced uncertainty and a kind of fear when I started to dance professionally, as long as I danced for myself or at my ballet school (where I felt pretty save) I never felt fear. This also influenced my dance, I only used my head instead of my feelings and intuition and tried to control my dance, this caused uncertainty, pressure and inadequacy.

4. Yes, I think I was about five or six years old, we did some improvisation-exercises and I really enjoyed feeling free and capable of making decisions. I was surprised about my variations of movements and my teacher also gave me the feeling of reassurance.

5. Yes, I feel mental blockades when it comes to movements on the floor, but it became better when I tried to practice it and when I tried to do floor-exercises with my eyes closed. This really helped me to learn trusting my feelings again. I also feel physical blockades when it comes to balance-exercises, my feet get unstable and start to shake. My body responds in shaking as well and another indirect respond is that I start to think, which makes it even worse. I feel very frustrated when I experience these things because it influences my whole body language and dancing style.

Yes I think so... I guess that in that moment when I "let go", which usually worked well when I was younger, the teacher told me to stretch my foot or to suck in my stomach or something... therefore I think I started to associate letting go and dance what I feel with a loss of control and a lack of precision

6. Yes, I love jumps and movements where I can “feel” my spine (right word?). What I noticed is that movements which start from my hands and arms are more comfortable for me... I sometimes have the feeling that it is hard for me to feel consciousness for my legs and feet therefore I guess I feel safer when I use my hands or arms. Within these movements my body starts to get wider than it actually is and I can get easily in contact with the room in which I am dancing when I do certain jumps and turns,- round movements.

7. Personally, I love to decide my attitude to certain dance movements or choreographies (personally often influenced by the music) before I start dancing, and my body responds. This is a very good way for me to balance my “overthinking” because I have a concrete idea, which I also feel and my body responds in a certain way. It happens that my body language tells me something different afterwards, but that’s ok, it’s interesting to experience that my head and the rest of my body need some time to get together harmonically.

#### **4 Adrian (43)**

1.10 yrs old

2.16 yrs old

3.From 13-18 yrs old,being regularly picked on at academic school for dancing. This caused extreme humiliation most days of my middle school life. Again aged 18 yrs old, at entry to RBS Upper School. Mostly realising I had SOO much to catch up...

4.18 yrs old, before going off to London, when performing for the academic school classmates - most of whom had picked on me for dancing over the last 5 yrs. (See Answer 3). The idea that I had maybe made them see what dancing could be was a huge source of internal motivation.

5.As a "not natural turner", all pirouettes were coupled with a certain amount of anxiety - definitely not the best preparation for optimal execution.

6.Jumping was always fun and exhilarating, I enjoyed a lot more ease of movement while performing allegro steps. Hopefully this feeling of freedom was visible as light movement, ease and confidence from inside.

7.actually I never had any recurring injuries - thank goodness. The one time I had a serious injury was when I landed a double saut de basque, and completely damaged all the lateral ligaments. I was off for 7 weeks, BUT it happened during a very happy period, when personally everything was running smoothly, and at work my boss was giving me stuff to do and overall I was having a very nice time thank you very much ;)

On the other hand, just because I didn't personally experience any of the problems you mention doesn't mean I don't think it can happen - just the opposite is infact true. I see regularly weak areas affecting

dancers' bodies in adverse ways, and there could be more to this than "it's my weak side". I "vermut" (guess at?) a strong connection between psychological situations and physical weaknesses, that would lead to recurring injuries. But not having experienced this myself from the inside, makes my thesis remain a thesis. I hope you find some definite links, I would be very interested to hear from you if you do....

8. Auditioning was always, predictably, linked with tension (physical and psychologically) which left me in the majority of auditions feeling that I wasn't fulfilling my true potential.

### **5 Benjamin (50)**

1. 7 years old

2. 14 years old

3. 15 years old

4. 14 years old

5. 16 years old

6. 16 years old

7. When the body is warm he can move better, everthing gets easier in a warm condition. One of the reasons I moved to Brazil.

### **6 Dorothy (49)**

1. 9y

2. 11y

3. 13y

4. 16.y

5. 13y my body and my soul was blocked...and was going like this until i came to Germany to start a new life as solo.

6. 15

### **Saskia Tindle**

You wrote; " 5.13y my body and my soul was blocked...and was going like this until i came to Germany to start a new life as solo."

### **Dorothy**

Dear Saskia, i was in a ballet school where the teacher was pedagogik not the best...she didn't understand anything about me..i loved ballet but i didn't like her she was pushing me down all the time...kritik and negative things were always told to me...but i was young and was accepting everything...my sister was also dancing and she put us in a competition..she was always better than me.. at the moment where i left the school started a new coming out and evolution of my self... so was vergiss man nicht u das sind irgendwie schatten die werden dir immer folgen , aber man hört nicht auf zu lernen u jetzt das ich auch tanzpädagogin geworden bin weiss was das alles für ein mensch.tänzer bedeuten kann...i'm always trying to give the best i can!

## 7 Clive (46)

1. 4

2. 8

3. 7

4. 9

5. Retrospectively I realise that it was the reason I always (and still do) feel inadequate / unconfident as a performer in a classical scenario. It made me stop thinking of 'dance' and more of a vocabulary of steps... I really felt unable to put steps together.

6. This was, without a doubt when I was working in a contemporary environment. Suddenly the ease and joy of moving was there again. Lord knows why that wasn't therefore the route I chose - I think somehow the release I felt in a contemporary setting felt so denigrated by the classical world I felt such a need to be a part of.

7. Interesting that I don't have this response as a partner. I am able to be a part of a physical representation of a classical style and can function really well... it's only when I am trying to dance alone. Also I am still sometimes in rehearsals being coached by the people that really set this behaviour when I was a teenager and my body desperately wants to behave in the same way now as then. I can sometimes overcome it but it is a real struggle. It feels that the pedagogy is unchanged and as such has an immediate and definite response physically.

More Response from **Clive (46)**:

Hello lovely! Am actually writing this out in the states where I am making a new piece X Ballet in X... lovely company and great, quick dancers - fun! I think your idea is really interesting - if hard to describe as a response! I feel an element of regret as an adult looking back over a career that could have involved much more joy in actually dancing. At some point (I think depressingly early on) I lost that through a process of humiliation and teaching based on undermining some to promote others... The good thing is that I now know how good it can be if one can liberate dancers, get them to feel ownership of movement

and their own bodies... But it sounds like lovely and very wise advice from your old director... guess it's up to us to make sure the next load of dancers feel empowered or at least have the language and freedom to describe and therefore change how they feel!

And teaching practice is, I fear, the same almost everywhere... Such a shame... It's funny as I think it also stems into company mentality and behaviour so much for as you say old habits die hard and when they are instilled in us as fledgling dancers they rarely leave us...

### **8 Elena (21)**

1. I was five years old and when I started taking ballet classes and when I was 7 I started my education at the X ballet school

2. I wanted to be a dancer since I was a little girl (since i was 4-5 years old), but at the age of 12 I got a better mark in my ballet exam and since this time I wanted to get better and better and wanted to be a soloist at the X state opera

3. I've made this experience several times at the ballet school during my whole education, but it made me stronger and I think that this experience helped me getting better

4. When I decided to become a dancer at the X I worked very hard on myself to become better. the more I achieved the more positive feedback I got. And then I got my first solo, which also pushed me forward to get better

5. I've often experienced mental blockages, but dancing always helped me to just let go and get rid of all the stress. Whenever I felt bad I turned on some music and started dancing and when I did this all the problems fade away for some minutes. When I danced I didn't think about ballet techniques...I just danced and "felt" the music. I think sometimes you need to switch your head off to see what your body can do. Because when I stopped thinking all the time about what I should do and how I should use the right technique, I got much better because I didn't push myself so hard and felt freer to dance and so my body didn't work against me.

6. I don't really understand the question

7. Yes I had a problem with my achilles several times. But my problems appeared slowly. I also once had a "Knochenmarködem". I think because I've been trained in a wrong way. When I was 16 we had a ballet teacher who trained us in a very bad way. At the beginning of the year, there have been twelve people in my class. And at the end of the year, two of them have done the exam, because all the other girls have been injured (me too). Yes, I think if you're afraid to do a certain step it could be possible that you train in a wrong way and you get injured

8. not really... I think I actually wrote everything I've experienced in the answers above

## **9 Edward (48)**

1. I started, when i was 8 years old.
2. I decided to be a dancer when i was 13 after my father has died.
3. I didnt felt this way of being humiliated cause i growth up with a father who expected me to be like an adult. so for me it was a Feeling to be in a elite Group of children, which is stronger and harder than others. i just felt sad for other friends in the class who were not so strong when they were treated bad.
4. This question is hard to answer for me . i had a lot of fun , but real joy? that was not easy, cause in a Company or School u have pressure all the time. joy i had with own Projects outside.
5. Basicly not , exept one teacher mad me always doing mistakes when he looked at me. we didnt accept each other and he could feel that too. as Long as i got the Feeling that ouer teacher is beliving in me i had no blockades.maybe thats the Point? i worked very hard for one of my balletdirektors, till i found out that he is very selfish and actualy not interested in my Talent,he just tried to ern the flowers of my work.when i re cognized it, i could not do any step of his choreographies and stopt dancing in the opera.
6. As soon as i had the Feeling that the teacher or choreorgapher is beliving in my skills.Then i felt joy.
7. I never being injured seriously:-) the usual pain, we know to handle as u know.
- 8.i think the answer is the same as nr 5. i hope u can deal with my answeres

## **10 Felix(48)**

- 1.16,
- 2.18,
- 3.Those are very strong feelings already on their own. But together, never !
- 4.16, I started very late so it's more than normal that my body took a litle longer to respond.
7. Great

## **11 Francesca (44)**

Dear Saskia, in my career I did not have big injuries, sometimes tendons inflammation but nothing more. I believe that stress, unhappiness can cause injuries ( in certain types of person) and OF COURSE negative movement patterns cause injuries too. ...Big hug to you too xxx

- 1.8y
2. 8y
3. 14y

4. 16y

5. real blockages never, when I was 19y (before to arrive to D´dorf) I was unsure and afraid to don´t get the " right" contract! I loose a bit of self confidence/

6. Yes, good feeling more I got " older" and got experience I could dance and enjoy every ballet-story-situation much more

7. warm is very good for body and soul .....

## **12 Greg (40)**

Ciao Saskia ...here I come with my answers, I hope they can be somehow helpfull

1. I was 9 years old

2. I was 14

3. I was 10, it was my first dance school demonstration

4. Yes it was during my dancer career when I was more confident. Before I remember that at least I had much fun with my school fellows at the dance academy. So as a dancer between 19 and 34...and sometimes now too..

5. Well I always hated battement fondus...but I don't know if that matters. And I never was particularly skilled in acrobatic big jumps. I was sometime very scared to forget my steps during a show...most of the time it was when the choreography wasn't for me particularly interesting.

6. When I had to dance and also act a particular role, the fact of acting aswell made me more comfortable. And in general the more I had the choreographie in my legs, the better I was dancing and feeling.

7. I had one big injury when I was at Tanztheater Regenbogen, I ripped one muscle fiber in the calf, but this was, I think, an accident because was sudden and by the way during an audition in Saarbrücken. I had mostly pain in my back and knees, but even if i think, I can't tell if they were given bu psychological matters. I think they were more connected to wrong postures during dance and partnering...especially I think it had to do with posture of the pelvis (for knees and pelvis) and by wrong coordination during partnerin between my body amd the weight of the other dancer.. If I remember more I will write back again. I must say that today having understood my posture mistakes I do much much better. I especially replaced my pelvis more straight and forward with less weight on my heels, and all my body weight is much better relax on the floor...and less on my joints

8. I think that more the dancer has clear and assimilated instructions the better can he respond both in his body and mind performance.

### **13 Gail (50)**

1. 9 Jahre

2. (15) 17 Jahre

3. 14 Jahre

4. 17 Jahre (das Freiheitsgefühl)

5. 19 Jahre, when "our" teacher told me . " du willst zu viel " Did I really wanted to learn to much? And I knew that I was dancing more as a student, than at this time.

6. 17 Jahre as a student, when I was dancing more than some dancers. I was believing a lot on myself and realized big progress. Also I loved to dream on old classical stories- maybe dreaming = "visualisieren " and like Yves + Stefan Warm weather is sooooo good and moving is so easier . Good luck Saskia !!!

Martina

7. I had once an injury at the achilles tendency- no reoccurring injuries! no accident. Now as a teacher I ve a knee problem. I got it after a longer time of jogging . When I started ballet again after 16 years break , I had less! problems because we are using more muscles around the knee.

### **14 Howard (42)**

1.9 years old

2.14 I think was when I really knew

3. 11

4.16. I really started enjoying my dancing when I left home to go to London. Being with people inside the same situation really helped whereas before living in a small town where people didn't really understand what I was doing.

5. I can only think of certain steps I wasn't good at but with practice and good teach learnt to do better.

6. Personally, I was lucky to dance a lot of Bournonville and Bejart ballets which were my favourite to watch. With the Bournonville, it suited me as a dancer so I was more confident dancing these styles.

7. I had recurring knee and big toe injuries. I had an operation on my big toe when I was 18 or 19 to remove spurs and a cyst from it. It was always weak from then on and I have subsequently broken it a few times since; on stage and off. My knee injury I put down to poor training as a child. After years of dancing it finally gave in on stage and I had to have an operation on it.

8. It's hard to think of any but a couple of things that always surprised me were the amount of dancers who would come into the studio before class and start stretching straight away without warming up. Also,

I often saw dancers icing an injury then get straight up and start dancing on it. Although it seemed like common sense not to do these things, many dancers did.

### **15 Ian (50)**

Hi Sakia, it's not easy to remember exactly but I try my best

1. 09
2. 14
3. 12
4. 15
5. With modern dance. It was frustrating. Many back pain.
6. Warm weather is sooooo god and moving is so easier

### **16 Jerry (35)**

1. 15
2. 5 and 19
3. Yest I was 19 it was my First year, and though I Had dance experience I was put into Level cero; antiker Time, I felt that've Way during my dance exams in the second year, when Jugend especially harshly
4. Yes I came back from my Training Summer in New York and was put into the Ballett class, I also got great feedback from my teachers concerning my discipline ( I still took a lot of evening classes and became a danceaholic")
5. Absolutely; especially when my blood sugar was down, an the steps where very coordinated and the music was hard to count... I usually felt like the first animal in the dance world; What I observed with a lot of colleagues was something else: a certain pattern of movements which were connected to a certain psychological part part of expression: erotic; poetic; martial; deadly, couldn't be performed convincingly if the person was struggling with identification with this or that part of her persona; the usual paedagogical response of the bad teacher was to point that out in front of everybody as failure in art; which did nt improve at all; I found out as a coach; it is usually better to work around the kitchen- psychology by just tying different approaches ( little technical tricks) to the movement and ALWAYS give the student the feeling; that ANYBODY can LEARN anything; it just is a matter of time... Interesting enough... Once the difficult movement part was learned... The self confidence improved by itsel, and the persona changed without on bit of public humiliation...

6. Usually and always if the movement was explained to me in a moving picture or dramatic scenery; later when my dance spectrum was wider also in technical step by step break downs; very important also in clear connection with the music....however, a lot of the harder stuff I usually figured out all by myself AFTER the class, when translating the vocabulary of the teacher into my the vocabulary of my own experience ( and without the pressure of having to deliver a result on the spot while everybody was watching)

7. a) the latter b) yes c) yes. Also important aspect on this ground: en suite production choreographies are sadly very often the source of bad body patterns; since they are not balanced or healthy but effective and have to function dramatically.... However if you turn 8 shows a week 15 times to the left ( because the choreographer likes to the left better) and have. To through yourself about 20 times on the floor on the left side... Naturally your muscles will respond by hypertrophating to the left after the 3rd week; now imagine dancing these shows not only 1 but 5 or 6 sometimes 13 years (!!!!); no wonder everybody is injured in the big houses... In my opinion there should be a clear guidelines for choreographers to either slightly change choreographies to other sides; or have the company's always learn both sides in the rehearsal period and then change sides every second or third week... This might sound perilous at first sight but I really would like to see the injury results after 3 months... Usually injuries do not happen when u r still concentrated on routine, but when you know it in and out and your mind is concerned with something ELSE ( usually self esteem in the in relation to the company... But ofcourse also private issues)

8. guess I have just done that in at least half of the answers above basically my paedagogical guideline to any teacher in art: Do not start with the whip, never start with the whip ( unless the brat is lazy little bastard in which case you kick him out of her class until he/she as changed her attitude); but the ones who want but lack the talent NEVER tell them so; always believe in their improvement, and tell them all it takes is TIME and the good will which they already have... THEN when they start improving ( which they will!) and their confidence gets bigger; you pull the strings a little tighter and you tell them: " I am doing and saying this because I can see you have improved, and you can take it; because I know that I can ask this from you and, because you are living proof of your success!!" Then the better they get the rougher you can challenge them, and they will LOVE it every time you do... However every now and then, look them deep in the eye and tell them with all honesty: " good god you make me so proud!!" ( which should be easy because they usually really do!!)

### **Saskia Tindle**

Did you ever have reoccurring injuries? Were these injuries "sudden accidents" or were they more to do with your own personal movement patterns? Do you think that negative movement patterns cause injury? Do you think that negative movement patterns can be caused by fear or stress?

### **Jerry (35)**

Yes, Yes& yes... And sadly but at least one or two sources for bad movement behaviour lie in the excruciating stress dance students undergo in a professional dance academy or in a poorly supervised theatre company...constantly being judged is definitely not a helper for the healthy movement; as are jealousy & disrespect out of pure self consciousness... Which you find very often in academic teaching and theatre policy ( quite sure you don't count into either category, but this is my experience- not so much from school, but from my time in big theatres)

### **17 Kieth (41)**

Saskia alot of my injuries actually came from being too carefull ie. standing different or putting more weight on one side because of an ache. I would say there's a little but of fear involved not wanting something to get worse, so you adjust . This caused other worse problems in other areas. And being a dancer you never run straight to the doctor in case he says something you don't wanna hear dancers know their bodies really well, but yes we are aswell only human :-)) xx

So yes a little bit of fear is always with you

### **18 Helen (35)**

1.I was eight. There were classes at the Opera in my hometown, twice a week, held by dancers of the company.

2. Soon after joining the ballet class at the opera I was sure I want to become a dancer. My mum wasn't so excited. It took six years, many tears and enormous luck to start professional training (at fourteen).

3. My first experience of inadequacy was after starting the professional training (14). The phase of dreaming and fighting for my dream has been replaced by my first encounter with the reality of the ballet world where my body was simply "wrong". No one used this term, but they made it clear – teachers and classmates – that I shouldn't be there. I was too fat (51 kg at 162 cm), my legs and feet had the wrong shape and my flexibility was not enough for ballet. As a professional dancer I always had this feeling of inadequacy due to the wrong and ugly shape of my legs and feet. But there was another reason: my height. I've been several times left out of performances because of being too short. This was especially painful in the cases when I wanted to be part of a certain performance.

4. Joy most of the time. That's why I followed this path. It was a joy to dance, to be in tune with the music (I'm crazy about music), to deal with new physical challenges and be able to "grow", to conquer new steps. And it was a joy to attend some of my teachers' classes. Later, during my dancing career, it was a great joy both to attend our trainer's inspiring classes, and to work with guest choreographers. Affirmation and reassurance were also part of my experience. Close to the end of my second year of

training (16) things changed a lot: weighing only 43 kg I saw the admiration of some of the teachers and classmates, progresses in my technique were also considerable. The last two years of training were thus very different, with more frequent experiences of affirmation and reassurance, not only from teachers, but from classmates and members of the ballet company. Later, I had very often support from my colleagues in the company, but also reassurance from some of the choreographers we've worked with. It's more difficult for me to find a definite moment when I felt inspired, but I did experience inspiration often.

5. Oh yes, I still do when it comes to turns and pirouettes. I am literally afraid of turning more than a double turn. When I have to make a pirouette, I just get very tensed, with the two contradictory texts in my head – I should be able to do it, and I should turn at least a triple, but of course I can't. Afterwards I feel always, but always very disappointed. This was and is my main mental blockage. There is a physical one too. During my training I once injured some tendons, in my left hamstring. I forced, didn't rest enough and the pain became chronic. When stretching, doing penchees or other similar movements I often had the sensation something is going to rip (sorry, I'm not sure the term is right) . This was a big stress during my training and my dancing career. Sometimes was better, but never really ok. Trying to hide this handicap from others, I found different ways to compensate, but there were moments of enormous stress, like during a tour where I had to perform several times a week a split at the end of a can-can. I remember, there were moments, before entering the stage, when I was frightened that this could be my last performance and a very painful one. A different blockage I experienced during the first years of my dancer career was my extreme fear of being lifted. Although one of the lightest young dancers, I've been the nightmare of any partner. And being lifted was my nightmare. I couldn't jump at all, feeling like a sack full of potatoes.

6. Situation, yes. Preparing a performance with X. It was a challenge: mainly French technique with Balanchine-influences (I've been trained by a former student of Tarassow), beautiful but difficult music (Britten) and a lot to dance (being on stage almost the whole piece), plus turns and lifts . With beautiful trainings, quite short rehearsals and a very friendly behaviour, X managed to create such an atmosphere, that dancing seemed easier and more pleasant than ever. Other situation: time with the German choreographer X and one of my colleagues helping me to overcome my fear of being lifted. She used benches and chairs, decomposed steps, and they both were reassuring and supportive. Most of the time when I loved the music. Or playing the role of a child in the first act of The Nutcracker. In these situations I felt calm, curious, busy discovering and learning, often playful. Physically dancing was easier, I had better balance, more precision and less tension. As for steps, most of the sequences inspired by dances (like waltz, minuet, bourre) and jumps. They just carried me, gave me "schwung". I felt "danced", not dancing. Coordination worked better too for these steps. It seemed somehow natural.

7. One very uncomfortable experience was during my work with a choreographer always busy with what the dancers think, who does or does not like him, and completely unauthentic. Both during rehearsals and performances I was feeling heavy, dull, resisting any kind of movement. Generally, during my training, I

remember feeling physical tension. It was connected partly to the fact that we've been taught to hold our buttocks tight and our knees strongly stretched, but also to my desire to please my teachers, to do not my best, but the best ever. Many years later I realized that this extra tension was a hindrance to my technique too. A positive experience was attending X's Workshop in Vienna, where, in spite of a very long break, I felt again able to dance and found dancing easy and pleasant. He insisted a lot on dancing with our body, not with an external ideal image, had very inspiring combinations and created a light atmosphere. He also encouraged us to reflect. Looking back, there is one thing that comes to my mind. It's not so much related to the emotional climate, but to the very core of ballet-image. I always tried to change my body or at least to seem to have a different body. Even now, if I perform a step for my students, I still do this. I try to elongate every part of my body, creating tension, even a sort of stiffness in my joints. My breathing becomes superficial and my jaws get tight.

### **19 Ines (38)**

1. I was 8 years old and it was in Prag.

2. With 10years I started to study the state dance conservatory of Prag, so I think around this age I decided to become a dancer.

3. Oh yes, we were humiliated (e.g.,,you are not good enough, you are to fat etc“) all the time and almost every day from some of our teachers. I remember it from the age from 12 years up.

4. Sometimes I felt this feelings (especcially the joy )when my ballet class was succesfull( for.ex.I was good technically)and the day atmosphere (depending on the teachers mood)in the class was good and when I have received some praise from our teacher . Another kind of joy and inspiration I felt through the classical music (I mean hearing the nice piano music during the ballet class). This connection- movement with music was a pleasure and inspiration. I remember it maybe around the age of 15.

5. For instance some days I was not able to turn the pirouettes very good and I did not know why it works one day and another day it didn't. So I tried to turn and turn/practice and practice and my body responded so that it got worse and worse and I did not trust myself. I felt bad.

6. I think some steps or choreographies which were technically not so difficult or I was good at them or they were easier for my body and I felt secure. I felt I can rely on my body and this brought me a positive feeling in my body. And I was finally able to enjoy myself during the movements and not having the fear that something could go wrong.

And in the ballet class - when my teacher gave me a positive feedback – my body respond with the pleasure and satisfaction and than everything worked better (..because I was not scared).

7. After the many years of experience in the field of dance and the dance pedagogy and looking back to my childhood experience I am sure that the good,,training climate“ depending on the teacher is very important. If the teacher humiliate the students and they work under pressure and FEAR! they can't get

better and develop their technique better. If there's an emotional fear in the head, the body reacts– it closes and protects itself, can't open and experiment or develop. It is the law of nature and I think most of the dance students can't work and develop under the pressure and humiliation – because they are human beings.

## **20 Jewel (40)**

1.3

2.11

3.I was bullied at normal comprehensive school so ballet class was a release for me and the teacher and fellow dance students were a much safer environment. I was however aware that there was a pecking order and for all the dance festivals I entered, it was generally considered that I should only come 4th or lower and was therefore given the equivalent solo to perform! this made me tougher as I worked harder to prove myself, and often came higher up in being placed which was a big confidence boost.

4.I remember being at X School, aged 16/17 and having the feeling of sheer joy from moving through space to inspiring live music in contemporary class (does this count?!) Also in my professional experience, aged 20 I had the sensation of utter freedom, out of body and weightless joy when rehearsing a solo one day that I particularly connected with.

5.Sometimes I would lose the ability to do a step as well as I had previously done (for example losing your balance on pirouettes). This would be frustrating but it made me practise more and teachers would help correct me to regain my confidence. Casting for shows could be hard when you weren't picked for a piece you wanted to be in or if someone else specifically was picked over you. But this is a dancers life and you learn to grow a tough exterior.

6.Certain styles of movement suited me and my body more and I clearly remember the choreographic pieces that I felt almost euphoric dancing and savored every moment I was on stage performing them. These movements made my body feel alive and free and filled every sense of my being and awareness.

7.I had lower back pain when I was 14 due to hypermobile knees and swayback posture. My parents and teachers were very supportive and I went to Pilates training and private ballet lessons to correct my faults. This was hard to start with as it was changing a lifetimes idea of where my posture should be. I was lucky to have a strong body and minimal injuries and my lower back only ever really niggled after that and I had exercises to help me correct it. I was also well looked after in Germany with Physio and sports massage. I did have a couple of sudden injuries during performance and rehearsals due to specific movements but I quickly recovered from these. Fear is different for everyone and how they react to it, I have seen fear affect peoples movement as they tense and can often take their weight back (in reaction to the fight or flight natural body instinct)

8.I have had a mixture of positive and negative training and I think your own strength of character and determination levels will decide whether you make it or not as it is a difficult profession to get in to and do well. I had a teacher who was very sarcastic with me, I was sarcastic back and we thrived off the experience and understood how each other worked, for other people they couldn't take the comments!

## **21 Karen (35)**

1.5 years

2.The final decision was relatively late - at 15!

3.Yes, I have (from 5 upwards) I often felt very uncomfortable as a child, when being watched by "older" students and was often anxious then about making a mistake. It was strange - on the one hand, I knew that I was absolutely up to the demands (and a lot better than most classmates), on the other hand there was always a great fear of failure. Also because I was treated as a great talent ...

4.Really happy moments while dancing I remember until I was relatively old. But it was less the joy of dance itself, as the confirmation that I got from outside. Since I was 14 or 15 years old. Before, it was easy to operate "normally".

5.Yes, of course! ;-) There are some steps that just do not want to get into the body cleanly and then you automatically cramp when something is coming ... rotations(turns) were always a challenge. Or I also noted that MY body in some cases, works totally differently to those of other students. On top for example! It would have been useful at the time when the teachers had more knowledge of the body and individual needs. Before I went to France I never experienced this (with 18 years).

6.Yes, I thought my body would be more and more made for Adagio - so everything is graceful and elegant. Later in Jazz Dance I found that there is quite a lot of power. Whenever (whether graceful or forceful) I could express my movement from deep within, it just felt good and right. The steps or choreography have of course often worked supportively. Also if I had the feeling that everything was put together "organically" .

7.Also I think definitely that negative movement patterns of stress or anxiety come and as a result accidents happen - because we like to focus on the negative, instead of better to tap into the resources. I myself have had relatively few injuries - rather chronic pain from overload. I had an accident in which I have torn two ligaments. It was at the end of a workshop and I think I was both overtired and careless with my body. Mindfulness is not necessarily something that you are taught to use as a tool when you are a professional dancer as a tool ... we are more like a top athlete who has an "Expiration Time" .

8.I can especially from my perspective as a teacher say that there is a supportive effect on the performance if you are emotionally balanced and experience joy of body and movement. The body has its limits, which should be respected. As a teacher it is (emotionally) to support the most important thing the students individually, the best possible way to explain the steps and then let them try without additional pressure. The own motivation to learn something is absolutely sufficient in most cases and should this not

be the case, then probably a professional dance career is not the right way and one just remains experiencing with ones body and its abilities to explore further.

## **22 Leo (45)**

1. 7 years

2. 11 years

3. Humiliation a couple of times. Once when the local dance teacher jokingly asked who else was modest. I misunderstood the meaning of modest and raised my hand. Consequently all the mothers watching the class laughed their heads off. I was about 8/9 years old at the time.

4. All of these feelings. Regularly, right from the start.

5. Yes, on several occasions. For example when turning to the left. On the ground and in the air. In the earlier days I would get quite insecure. Later on, with more experience, I was usually able to piece the technique needed back together again. There was no need to get upset anymore.

6. This leads me to mention my all time favourite choreographer, Mats Ek. Dancing his piece “Norbotten” was the most remarkable experience. I immediately felt at home with the movement, timing and technique required. Not meaning to say that it needed less effort or thought, but the choreography seemed to flow so much more naturally, that I felt a much greater thrill of movement, timing and interpretation.

7. Maybe this is interesting: My first ballet teacher used to “subtly” scratch the backs of my knees with her long fingernails, to remind me to keep them “pulled up”. No harm was done but it was very uncomfortable and I disliked it intensely which resulted in the method being quite ineffective. A positive mental image (the knee compacting itself and parallel the whole leg pressing downwards into the floor) offered many years later by another tutor, enjoyed a much greater success. On the whole I was very lucky to have had tutors who were accomplished in positive training methods. They used inspiration and encouragement when dealing with technique and interpretation in an attempt to get the best results possible.

## **23 Louisa (46)**

1. 9

2. 6

3. Yes, fear by “not having perfect turn out” (9- 15), inadequacy—to follow - while working on solo peaces-I always added some own creations ...

4. Joy- always even by fear of perfection; affirmation- with 16 by jazz teacher -first solo, than with 18 8youngest member in the modern dance company of Smiljana Mandukic in Belgrade; than with 34 in

NYC – reaching advanced level in the Martha Graham school; inspiration- by music, images, dancers, even by “bad” teachers- to grow more, to work on details ...

5. As a student- mental blockades because of day dreaming or emotional stress, physical- mostly by too much corrections and long talk by teachers, body respond - krampf, tightness, cold

6. Yes, when the atmosphere was build by trust, not just by corrections, with good music or poetry, story tellings, images – body responses with more capacity, you are BREATHING and all muscles are connected with air, you feel complete as ONE, everything is working together, warm, fluently and no fear, no pain: pirouettes pique with balances, pas de flash, pas de basque with 6<sup>th</sup> port de bras, arabesque with valse ...

7. Yes, Achilles- by jumping ( le petite allegro) on point shoes after “too many” changements before ... Overstretched iliopsoas by forcing developpe ecarte without warming up ...

And, yes, “wrong” patterns could cause injury if we don’t work on corrections before dancing and use corrections while dancing; those patterns could also be caused by fear, in order to “cheat” some positions which we are not able to do correctly or even to overcome fear and to be able to do something what we find difficult- in that case it could be sometimes helpful to developpe some “wrong” patterns to overcome mental blockades ...

8. I could experience while performing that we must overcome personal emotional domination, to be able to perform for audiences but we MUST consciously work on all our fears, sadnesses, pains, joys, ..., to find balance with body-mind-spirit - and not to ignore our “heart messages”, hiding them inside and collecting pain, anger, joy, love, fear, ... building blockades and becoming cramped ... As artists, especially as ballet dancers, we must cultivate our vulnerability and work on our authentic expression. Emotional intelligence is an important part of our “knowledge package”, and it starts with empathy – feeling as a part of micro and /or macro cosmos, we learn to recognise, to respond, to feel with and to exchange. Frustration is often a product of the lack of the selftrust, caused by not self-reflective work and ignorant teachers and colleagues.

## **24 Mary (31)**

1.4 ½ years old

2. That’s a tricky one. As far as I remember I was told all my life that „you can dance well but are not really a dancer (- nor ever will be)“. I was told so by my parents, and frankly, most of my dance teachers too. I am sure they all tried to „protect“ me from pursuing this physically as well as emotionally demanding career on the one hand, on the other hand I do come from a family where having an academic career is preferably endorsed. – I guess the answer to this one is: I never dared to dream of really

becoming a professional dancer... However, at my best I did practice five times a week for two to three hours a day. I was part of a studio's company and participated successfully in dance championships. Even when I started to give classes myself at the age of 17 it never occurred to me that I had actually become a dancer. Frankly, it is only now, after years of not daring to participate in a dance class, that I can actually see that I always have been a dancer.

3. Definitely all three of them. For me ballet teachers were always people of very high status, I had a lot of respect for all of them; whether they actually were respectable people or not. I wanted to do everything "right" in order to earn a nod, a smile or some other form of approval. Not to be too much self-praising but I actually was the most talented of the dancers in the company that I belonged to. (The owner of the studio liked me very much – saw me as a substitutional daughter maybe, what did lead to a big fight years later, when I wanted out of the company) This caused my inner dilemma of wanting to endlessly please every teacher that came along. Those who could not deal with my overly visible submissiveness, which for me came out of the need to feel accepted and for them was probably unarticulated yet plain brown-nosing, did take advantage of it and let me feel even more submissive. In particular am thinking of a teacher who still teaches at the X school.

However, somewhere around the age of 14 ( I cannot exactly remember when, sorry) until the age of 24 I had become a devout follower of a teacher who now lives and teaches in Berlin. By that time it had become a clear concept to me that dance classes were supposed to make me feel "small". The harder I worked the harder it seemed to get the approval I was so yearning for. It had become a drug; I was addicted to the odd compliment. (Nevertheless, I'd like to add that of course, I really loved dancing! Otherwise I'd most likely never have joined in in this foolish power game.)

So this one teacher is the one I think about 99% of the time I think back to being in fear and humiliated during ballet class. Being older now I can see that she was mentally unstable – and probably should never have been allowed to teach children's classes. I also learned years later that she had been abused as a child, hit by her parents as well as the teachers at her ballet school.

Anyhow, the two incidents I most vividly remember that occurred during ballet class was one time when she actually kicked the girl in front of me with her foot. I think it was because her butt stuck out, that's why she kicked her. We were about 14 years old.

The other incident occurred around that time as well I think, when we were in the center doing an adagio. The teacher utterly and completely flipped because we could not remember the sequence – by that time we were all totally confused and paralyzed with fear about doing something wrong. She screamed, yelled at us and left the room, continued yelling in the wardrobe. After what seemed to be an eternity in which we tried to quietly figure out the steps, she came back and the class continued as if nothing had happened.

Come to think of it, she was only my ballet teacher till the age of 18, so about four years. After that I did continue to take modern contemporary classes with her till the age of 24. I was always her favorite, and

always the one who feared her most. It was hard never ever to be allowed a single mistake. If someone else made a mistake it was okay, but every mistake I made weighed three times as much to her. That was hard. It was also hard to finally acknowledge that this was an unhealthy student-teacher relationship. However, it all fell apart when I told her I was going to move to London to study acting. There is a whole story about how she reacted, but I think that's beside the point of this study. Fact is, she never spoke to me again. I stopped going to ballet classes and eventually to dance classes all together because with her final blow she'd made me feel like I didn't deserve to be there.

4. Yes, thank God, I did. When I did study abroad in San Diego for a year I had a wonderful ballet teacher. She had come from Alvin Ailey and someone nicknamed her classes "ballet boot-camp" because they were highly demanding. Yet we loved her, her good spirit and fresh takes on ballet. She did deliberately include non-classical ballet strength exercises to help us develop the muscles we needed. By that time I was already 22 years old.

Not too much later, just coming back from my year abroad, I met another wonderful teacher here in Vienna. The funny thing was that she was the only "humane" teacher at this ballet school. Not to say that her classes were not demanding, quite on the contrary, but again, every other ballet teacher I encountered at this school made a point of making you feel "little"; it seemed like their only pleasure in life. This great teacher however, had come from a very strict school herself. She understood that there is a difference between wearing people down in order to make them give up whatever blockages they may or may not have that prevent them to achieve their best and encouraging them, providing them with a safe environment so they can grow.

5. As described above, I definitely remember the situation where we were supposed to memorize this adagio and simply couldn't because the tension in the room kept growing. Up until today I dread the moment when we go about memorizing the adagio. I am not quite sure if this one incident is solely responsible for my dislike, but it for sure has added to it.

6. Ballet class right now makes me feel accepted and not scrutinized. It's feeling safe that makes me at ease. Not having to fear someone's emotional outburst, nobody judges my character by the way I move. My legs won't get up as high as they used to, and my plié has always been very small, but I no longer hurt myself to achieve what other's perceive as "correct".

7. I have problems in my lower spine, one disk slightly slipped. That happened when I was 22, when I was all about pleasing my Nemesis teacher in modern contemporary classes. Most likely I'd say due to my own movement pattern, yet nobody stopped me. I wanted to give it all for this teacher, and so I went past my limits week after week after week.

I probably also may be the only dancer in the world with shortened Achilles tendons. I overstretched them when I was six or seven years old. Nobody told me that I'd have to carefully continue to stretch them in

order for them not to cicatrize (not sure if that word's correct..). This it seems to me was due to the lack of knowledge of my teacher at that time.

8. I am in therapy for chronic depression for two and a half years now, part of which comes from the fact that I have extremely low self-esteem and never learned to actually cherish what I am capable of. More than once negatively afflicted memories of dance classes have popped up during my therapy sessions.

However, the current ballet classes are a great pleasure to attend. Of course this is the work of X, yet I feel everyone is enjoying the class so much that we stimulate each other. I dare to laugh at myself if something goes wrong, and, most importantly for me, I've rediscovered how to connect with my breath while dancing. I love it!

### **25 Martin (53)**

1. I was almost 18

2. I was 10

3. From my very first class and in almost all of them I experienced all or one of these emotions. My worse was when I was thrown out of class because I exceeded the number of classes I was allowed to take a week. My pleasure of doing ballet class was far far far greater than the negative feelings. It dwarfs them. Alas I really think it's good to experience these negative emotions early on because we will have to deal with them in stage and in later life. Necessary evil can be transformed.

4. Again as I said above I always had immense joy and gratitude for the privilege of doing a ballet class no matter how bad it was. Unconditional love. Ballet classes are my children.

5. Yes a few of them. But I fought hard to conquer technical hardships.

5. I only had tendinitis that plagued my life this due to the fact that I voluntarily overworked. My teachers were without exception all great and helped me through the injury. Repetition is our job. If you do not like repetition choose something else like go home and cook lasagne.

6. Yes I could beat my legs with incredible energy and I loved petit allegro. It was a blessing for me.

7. I mixed the answers... sorry. I had always problems due to my late start but I overcame them. Yes one time as I was starting to practice Buddhism my tendinitis was so strong that I could not even walk. I had a very very hard solo and was principal in a ballet full of turns and jumps on the injured foot. Without taking any medicine I chanted for three hours before the show. The pain went and I did the best ever performance of my entire career (even my rivals came to congratulate me on the evening). I never ever felt like that again in my life. So I decided that I would always be a Buddhist and a dancer/teacher for the rest of eternity. Ballet has no parallel in any other art. I am an accomplished pianist but ballet and only ballet can inundate my life with such joy. In addition I realize (I come from a family of intellectuals) that no other being is so acute as a good ballet dancer or teacher. Ballet is bashed by many today but ballet is the

highest form of art this planet has ever seen. And it enables anyone to elevate him/herself spiritually and morally.

8. Hierarchy is excellent when applied with care and love and ballet is the only surviving place where it truly exists. I love hierarchy. A society without it is doomed.

## 26 Noa (38)

I hope you can use this if you have questions let me know ... I know it is full of spell errors but it is hard with no English auto correct and I just wanted to write as I would talk ....

1. I was 10.

2. I was 8.

3. When I was young I never had a bad experience. I had a really lovely Teacher called X, she was a Solist at the opera and was a very musical and actor on stage and she really got the love for dance across in her class. We did lots of technique but we also danced a lot. When I was around 15 and 16 the pressure got bigger and bigger at school. And most teachers didn't really know how to communicate and guide you. I remember that most dancers from my class got picked to dance in a piece which was choreographed for the school and went on tour with it. Me and two others had to stay in X and do class. Of course I felt like I wasn't good enough and also the teacher made you feel that way. But on the up side, while they were on tour someone got sick in the company at the opera and I was picked to jump in. I learned the piece really quick, I think 3 days and did well and from that time on was called in, all the time when they needed someone to jump in quickly. I remember how my teacher looked at me when the Opera asked specially for me to come over and learn a part. Fear, I never felt and I mostly challenge the teachers with questions and good teachers always had answers or came back to me with answers. But with some teacher they just asked me to leave class when I asked too many questions,

4. I had one teacher for one year. Her name was X. She was Asian. She mostly came 5 minutes late and stopped class 5 minutes early, but in that time we worked, we worked like hell. She was the first teacher I had, which tried to find solutions for each student and also said, I am not quite sure how to fix it, we have to try different things. I remember working really hard, but doing it with joy and feeling that I am getting guidance and I am an individual. I also remember a modern teacher who got to pick 3 men and 4 women to dance in his piece. And he picked me. All teachers were surprised and he pushed me, and I showed all of them at the end and he was really proud of me, as was I.

5. For me, the „Problem was, that I have / had a really long, really flexible Back. For me to turn and special to do Double Turns on l'air, were really difficult and I am a left turner and nobody could help me. I heard always „do it like him“ „look at him“ ... „close the legs“. When I started training in NYC I learned which muscle I had to use and that I need to go to the GYM to get stronger back muscles and use my Side Muscle. and suddenly it worked. That's why I love Pilates that helped me a lot. Feeling all my

Muscle and knowing how to seich them on when I need them. So yes When i had to do turs on stage that was my nightmare!!! Funny Now I can do them as I know how to use my body. It was also one of the reasons why I left the company and moved to NYC.

6. I remember I danced a piece in NYC for X, which was danced to Kurt Weil music and had lot of Acting while dancing in it. You really had to forget about the steps and just dance and be in the moment. The Company Members were mostly older and really strong technic and amazing acting wise. I remeber one Show were I really let go and was in the piece and I got chills on my hole body and I was in the piece I felt all the other dancers around me, it was amazing I still remeber this feel to this day. I remember a piece I dance for Complexions in NYC. It was so difficult technic wise. And I was so nervous putting it on stage. I remember beeing on stage an owning it and moving from difficult part to the next. it was like a rolllercoaster and I could feel every muscel in my Body. I danced with this really really tall black Musculaire Dancer I from Ailey. We danced a Duett and he was Lifting me and throwing me around. It was amazing, but hard, But I felt free and it was amazing to be challenged.

7. For me it was again „wrong“ Training. I am very very turned out, but no one really tought me how I still have to use my muscel for the turn out. as I could just stand in a perfect 1 st with out using my muscle. but when I liftet me lege then my hips hurted, as I was not prepared for the movment. So to this day I have to foccus on using my muscle for my turn out. Other then that i never had injuries.

8. Well I must say for me now to this day and that is why I teach the way I teach. I try to look at a dancer and see the body see the moment and try to find corrections for the body and dancer. I try to find a way that they can unterstand the Moment and unterstand there bodies so they can do everything, by doing the moment in such a way that there body can do that. I would never put them all in one box. I wish I had the understanding of my body with 21 The only think I really love about about the change in teaching dance is the finding and helping everyone in the most possibel way. And not just shaping the body that anyway are perfect.

## **27 Naomi (38)**

1.I wanted as an elementary school child (6-8 years approx) to dance, but just jazz dance - after I had seen the musical "Cats". But my mother did not know where there were courses and I did not want to take ballet classes. Once I went with a girlfriend, but that only confirmed my rejection ... I then started at about 14 years with jazz dance. I did not like the course. By chance I came after 1 year through summer workshops upon another studio where I thought it was great. There it was suggested to me to visit ballet classes (1x/week): I hated it and did not understand a word (was Russian Ballet).

2.Since my parents were both academics, it was always clear to them that I would do my Matura, then study and then go on to be a civil servant or something. So I kept largely to their desire, even not thinking of something else. When I took my Matura, I was already a few hours daily in training (at that time still a

lot of jazz dance, but also Modern / Contemporary and probably about 2x/week ballet). So I wanted to study something that at least had to do with theater, eg. Theatre Studies. That was quite a scandal. And then when I was done with school, I was finally able to go to professional training for Contemporary in the morning and have therefore eagerly studied only 1-2 semesters, then more dancing. My studies I completed after 10 years, but it just so happened that I grew into the world of dance .... It was more like this: I would not even dare me to dream that I am a dancer .... it happened. After school, I looked for a new Studio for Ballet, (I think because the hobby class, where I was, were too bland) and am come X School to X. Eventually I started there, then, quite often to go to ballet because it was difficult elsewhere. Especially a few years later, when there was no longer the professional training and the Tanzquartier did not exist, I attended ballet a lot, sometimes daily. At 21 attended the Iwanson school in Munich, but endured it only half a year, then I was a few months at a "school" of X in Cologne, but the teachers had a falling out and I returned to Vienna. Soon after I left for NY for one month. That was my apprenticeship and travel year.

3. In Munich it was so that I actually had a "too high" level in Contemporary, but was not as good in ballet. The Contemporary there was quite dated, but they behaved as if it were the most innovative work. Everyone wanted to be with this strange X, the boss in the company and I could not hide the fact that I thought it all totally bland and old-fashioned and stupid. ... (I had learned already 2 years with really great international contemporary teachers who fully have a vision in professional training and previously had good teachers in Vienna ...). Because of this my life was made hard in Munich. They always told me they would have classified me in Contemporary almost equal to the second year, but I had no center and therefore they could not do that. And after months of everybody saying I had no center, I really could not stand anymore. "Oddly enough," that was before and also after (in Cologne, Vienna, NY) no problem .....

I also found it stressful when the ballet teacher there always said, when you see yourselves every day in tights and leotards in the mirror, you will all want to anyway loose weight ... I was certainly suffering from a slight eating disorder and my best friend did actually have an eating disorder.

4. It was like this especially in NY. I thought I was going to be much worse than all the others, but this was not so, I was much praised and a teacher I had met at a festival in Austria and where I could live, introduced me to others as "Dancer from Vienna ". I also learned for the first time to call myself so. Until then, I had said: I am a student and I dance. So, wait. Somehow ....

5., 6., 7., It is obvious that if a pleasant climate prevails, the teachers are supportive and positive, the exercises work, etc. easier/better. I cannot work under pressure and stress, be good, remember the exercises etc. For me it's too much if someone in ballet shouts "Stomach! Bottom!" because then I am terrified, I can't breathe, etc. The teacher's voice, the tone, the calmness, etc. in speaking makes a big difference. Master in this is X. His quiet way - what he says, but also how he says it - makes such a difference. Of course, my body already (the first time was about 20 years ago with him) knows his classes

well, but I find it fascinating to see how my posture etc. changes immediately when I only hear his voice. And not just with me.

I also noticed when I myself teach. It is important to have a room to create an atmosphere in which students can trust, can get involved, can also let go - especially when I teach Release, where we can research together. I see myself not as an authority, but only as someone who is a step ahead. We learn and research together. Then learning can occur by itself, with ease and enthusiasm. It's not about right and wrong. Emotions are a part of us, I do not think they "leave at the door", as is so often required. But you can try, with awareness (!) to integrate them, to use them, to deal with them or develop methods with which to let go of them consciously (such as meditation).

I often watch as teacher-how colleagues do not understand why their students are "so bad" (which is also a matter of opinion ...) and complain that they said the same things that I say and why do they still not understand. But they say it with a completely different tone. Or threaten immediately if the students cannot implement it all immediately. Or they run them down, degrade them, (you've all totally unintelligent bodies, etc.), then it is no wonder that it does not work.

I find the topic of shoulders super: I read in an anatomy book, the task of the muscular levator scapulae is - logically - the raising of the shoulders. But it was also written that this happens especially in dangerous situations. And ballet classes are often (psycho-emotional) a dangerous situation for 90 minutes! On top of this it is screamed that one should pull the shoulders down, but then more than ever they again to go up (risk of attack!) and so the voltage-offset voltage effect becomes more and more tense.

Also, generally, the idea that one must constantly remind students of their shortcomings and mistakes promotes an emotional tension. Of course you have to lead them out from these, but if someone tells me every day, your shoulders are constantly raised, then they are at some point raised (happened to me as a teenager. Previously I had never had a problem with it ....). Because the body as the mind does not hear "no", but only: shoulders up / high, and which is then also accomplished ....

Also the idea is still widespread that students are basically lazy, lax and weak. (I was always referred to as "floppy". Today I would say that was just jealousy, because I was so released ...). Yet it is often too much tension that is the problem, respectively, just a lack of balance. But there are always two sides and it is almost always that more muscles, harder even harder work, is more recognized ....

I think often it is very difficult for a teacher (us) to see students as they are. To see them completely is probably not possible, but it should be the goal, instead of pressing them into a grid, into our ideas. Of course we must teach what is important, aesthetically, but we should remain humble and recognize that we are not "the truth" and should not present ourselves as omnipotent. Even if it makes us weak and vulnerable, I think it is at least the honest way to empower our students to independent action and thinking and feeling. For only he who feels himself knows and knows what is good for him. And in reality, no guru-teacher can do this for him .....

## 28 Olivia (50)

1. Well, I was seven or eight years old when I started taking ballet classes. At first we did just rhythmical exercises, and we learned geometrical figures in space, rather than typical ballet steps. But we were forced to do it as seriously as the advanced students and the adult.
2. For the first time I realized that I want dancing on stage was the moment as I had to make a decision if I do the Audition for the Conservatory at the age of 12. But it was also clear for me that I will never become a classical dancer. I want to dance but I could not imagine me dancing in Tutu and pointe shoes.
3. I remember that I was terrified to make mistakes or not to pick up fast enough steps or centre combinations. Our teacher at the Cons. forced us to train more hard till we should feel pain. In his eyes I was too small, too weak and too less ambitious for a ballerina. And it was the truth, I went to the classes, but I had no ambition to do it at my best, or to compare with the other students. I call it inner emigration.
4. Oh, yes, my first summer in N.Y offers me a new view over the classical ballet. At the first time I heard the word „relax“ in context with ballet. And of course in X classes, he gave me the feeling, that it doesn't matter how your body is, that ballet should be fitted to the singular body and not the body should be forced to a ballet aesthetic. He gave everybody a positive affirmation „every improve is good“, and I realized that I have to love ballet to do it good, that means I have to do it for myself and not do someone a favour.
5. Are there any steps /combinations or certain situations who blocks me physically or emotional? I don't know. Maybe, for a short time I was convinced that the anatomical structure of my body doesn't allow me to execute any kind of turns correctly, in result, that ballet teachers focused only on my turns and the mistakes I did. It was really frustrating! A physically or emotionally blockades- may be both. I was getting afraid to blame me, so I avoid doing more than a single turn at time.
6. There is a question concern the atmosphere in a class. If the teacher is open minded, patient, when I get a positive confirmation about what I'm doing than I could also enjoy class and feel free to try out steps, to make mistakes and to improve my dance technique.
7. Yes, once! I had a slipped disc, when I was in a partnering class. But it was more a “sudden accident” than a result of a negative movement pattern or wrong technique. In fact, right before the accident I thought this person I had to lift up, is much taller and heavier than me, and maybe this is not a good idea. So yes negative thoughts can causes injuries!
8. Today, with all the experiences I made, I train much more conscious, and get more respond from my body and mind. So I feel immediately when I tense my feeds or chest, I recognized that ambition has nothing to do with competition. Taking a ballet class means working on efficient of movements, to improve myself in any kind and to share nice time with nice people.

### **29 Paula (45)**

1. I started taking Ballet classes at the age of 6.
2. Winning a Summer School Scholarship for the Royal Academy of Dancing when I was 15, was for me the turning point. I knew I wanted too try to make dancing my future.
3. I believe that fear & co, are part of a student's life and will also be there while managing a professional carrer. Going back in time it's still clear in my memory when at around the age of 15 I firstly experienced fear. Exactly when the studying got more demanding.
4. The same, fortunately , can exactly been experience with positive, beautiful emotions or joy and inspiration. To simplify the two questions I would surely match fear with inability to perform different steps and combinations. While joy is wonderful to be felt if the body can easily perform what requested.
5. Each dancer can be classified in lyrical, drammatic, fast or slow mover and many more. In the moment that we receive to perform what matches our talent, our inner qualities, we surely feel at ease, when this doesn't happen then we start to fight against our nature. It's the moment when we experience blockages and difficulties. Nevertheless it's a learning progress to try with intelligence and calmness to find a way out, also when it's not so easy. Much depends also on who teaches us what confidence and feed back we receive, what the person in front things of us.
6. Trough practice and repetitions, easiness accours, while trying not to expect too much too soon. Always believing in ourselves , keeping consciousness of what our limitations are.
7. It's hard to answer. Luckily in my 23 years of career I really had few injuries. I always tried to listen to my body, listen to my instrument, trying to find answers to the first signs of pain, before being too late. Yoga, Pilates and Gyrotonic helped me a lot, to offer some healthy movements.
8. There is a strong connection with body and mind. Not only in dancing but in every activity that we do. In a ballet studio as well as in an office. Acceptance, confidence and support can win. We need to be conscious of the moment with full awareness.

### **30 Oscar (46)**

1. 16 ys.
2. 14 ys.
3. Fear comes around, inadequacy comes from expectations and the standards around, humiliation comes as a result of of failure or a confrontation, i think this emotions are always there, what have change is how we react to them
4. joy for sure, affirmation and reassurance sometimes, inspiration comes a lot from the teacher, the music the classmates, the exercises self, this feelings alternate with the ones in the question before

5. totally, in the beginning i felt terrible, isolate, in time, i learn to deal with the limitation by putting it in my list of goals, try to see it as a challenge

6. i definatly preffer open spaces, i feel i can dance better in open spaces, small studios doesn't make it for me, many people is not problem as long as they are focus, many people without a clear focus bring me down, i learn to reject atmosphere that for some reason were not positive to me, chemistry in the crowd i think

7. have the tendon phase and then after came the bcd phase, in terms of injuries that repeat themselves for a while, for sure there's an emotion connected to them, but i was not always aware of it

8. changes in my life defiantly change my relationship with my body and my work...and the other way around

### **31 Quinten (56)**

1. 7 years old

2. 11 years old

3. Yes, when I was battling with my weak back and falling behind in terms of progression through the grades given my age. However, my determination to dance, and memory that Nureyev was 17 before he started at the Kirov School, drove me on.

I felt this really from time time-to-time ages 16-18

4. Quite frequently at all ages 7-18. Especially from 12 years old when I started my full-time training at X. I always felt inspired to dance, particularly under X, X, X and X. Allegro was when I felt most inspired and confident, especially when I was doing a solo variation with leaps and tours-en-l'airs with everyone else watching. I never had any self-doubts.

5. Not in classical ballet classes and rarely in National. I was much less confident in modern and tap. I did not have the feel for it and so found these very difficult, eventually dropping out of them at 16.

6. My body always felt at ease in classical ballet. Adagio was perhaps the most difficult because of my weak back - which meant I did not really make much progress beyond Elementary. I felt exhilaration in allegro and pirouettes. In adagio I simply felt a determination to succeed and make a good job of it.

7. I was fortunate enough never to suffer any injuries, one-off or recurring - unless you count the problems with my back. I was very careful never to try any "virtuoso" steps unless I was properly "warmed-up". I am sure that some injuries are caused by dancers trying something like a grand jete the moment they walked in the door. Fear and stress must inevitably lead to negative responses in the body. I believe this because of my experiences in higher education and beyond : these emotions will prevent you making a good job of things. My university education turned me from a timid little shrew unable to speak

in class to being able to address public meetings of 100,000s or even 1,000,000s (on one occasion) of people.

8. My ballet training certainly helped me in building my self-confidence to speak in public. It also helped me to learn/understand the correct positioning/stance/bodily movements/reflexes to use when making these speeches or giving talks in many different situations. I have spoken and debated publicly and privately, to small and large groups, to Peace, Green, Human Rights Groups and political parties, either as the solo speaker or one of a number of speakers, in small rooms, large halls, and enormous outdoor venues such as Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park. I have no doubt that my ballet training in part at least enabled me to do this, because when I speak/debate I am in a sense "performing". Now 56 I intend to go on doing so for at least as long as my friend and hero Tony Benn, so tragically lost to us recently.

### **Saskia Tindle**

What would you say made these particular teachers inspiring for you?

### **Quinten**

X, X and X (and X) had such ENTHUSIASM for the dance. They were clearly enjoying teaching and consequently they made you enjoy what you were doing even more than you were doing so. After all, I desperately wanted to dance, unlike many of the girls of my time. A lot of them were there as status symbols for their parents and to get them out of the way. This sounds very sad but it was clearly true from what many of them said to me - or what I overheard them saying to one another.

X and X had been very talented ballerina's in their youth and danced professionally so I think that gave them some extra ZEST. I knew X and X socially (although of course they were very much older than me) and so of course I was privileged to hear some of their stories of dance in their youth, and how X had her injury which left her partially paralysed and so unable to continue with her dancing career - and thus became one of the greatest of teachers.

All three were full of life. You always looked forward to class. You knew they were going to work you to the extremes of your ability, energy and suffering but of course that is what you were there for. They positively INSPIRED you and so brought out things that you might never have thought possible. I can think of one particular occasion towards the end of my dance training when Joy had me doing the most incredible grand jetes en tournant colliding with the stupid beams across one of the ill-designed studio's - the one next to the Wells studio.

I left before X and X arrived so I cannot comment on them; and I was rarely in class with Miss X, for whom I nevertheless had the greatest respect.

X in particular had great musicality, something others have remarked upon on Facebook and Twitter - which I have been forced to leave this evening for personal reasons. I hope this is of help to you. Do not hesitate to contact me again if I can be of any further help to you. I very much look forward to seeing the results of your research.

### 32 Raffaella (56)

1. Three and a half

2. About 4 when I was in my first show (but it was not really ever considered an option as my parents were very uncultured and always thought of it as bit of a joke!) It was only after a long and broken series of moves of area, schools and dancing lessons with various teachers that it was suggested to my parents when I was 14 that I was actually a natural and quite talented dancer and then I progressed to go to X.

3. I don't remember having this feeling until I got to Bush and realized how much better I needed to be! I think it just spurred me on though – it was pretty inspirational seeing all those amazing dancers who's been there for ages!

4. Yes all the time – dancing did and still does make me feel incredibly 'one' - happy and complete. If I hadn't of had the serious knee injury that caused me to have to stop and still causes problems I would dance, dance and dance!!

5. I can't remember experiencing long term mental blocks – I can remember that (magical) process that happens when you keep on and on practicing a move – eg. Pirouettes – and they get worse and worse and then you sleep (and continue brain processing) and the next day the move is so improved! I do remember hating tap lessons but being told I was really good at tap because I was so relaxed! Maybe there was a message in there somewhere – relax and let it happen!

6. Yes, I would say this often depended on the teacher and their ability to focus on positives and bring out the best in each individual (X was a great example of this to me – she was so passionate about the dance but also about 'her' dancers!) I'm sure there are certain steps and styles that each person prefers (and music of course) and that when performing these one feels more at ease and able to fully perform. I personally feel this changes for me as I have progressed through life and become more emotionally experienced and aware.

7. Yes – at X at the beginning of my second year I sustained serious knee injury – dislocated patella whilst doing grand battement en fondu – It was agonizing and led ultimately to me having to leave and stop dancing. The specialist I went to see back home recommended an operation but said the chances of a full recovery (enough to continue a demanding dance career) were limited and that we would have to pay for the operation privately which my parents weren't able or didn't want to do. It was a very dramatic event – I remember hearing this most agonized groan and then realizing it was emanating from me! Poor X stopped mid chord, someone over the room fainted and Miss X just said in that ice way – 'that's what happens when you don't turn out properly girls!'

Since this time I have had recurring incidence of my knee collapsing on occasions, each time agonizing physically but also, interestingly, psychologically very upsetting. (somatic memory?) great book which you probably know of anyway - [http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Body-Remembers-Psychophysiology-Professional/dp/0393703274#reader\\_0393703274](http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Body-Remembers-Psychophysiology-Professional/dp/0393703274#reader_0393703274)

8. Well as an experienced trainer myself I do know that people learn most when they feel

supported, relaxed and even having fun! I always try to ensure that people attending any training sessions I am delivering whether that be work related more academic subjects or dance and movement related feel safe and encouraged and can enjoy the experience.

### **33 Sophia (38)**

1. I was seven years old.

2. Seven years old, or maybe before... (?)

3. Many times. I started the career at X Institute (Eight years education) when I was ten. a- The teachers used to compare the students, sometimes for good corrections, sometimes making you unsure (I am sure they thought that system is to “make you stronger”), sometime the feeling was humiliations if I didn’t understand the corrections. b- They use to weight us every month, especially by the time we were in the adolescent period, the time when we were growing up, was very hard when we started to get woman bodies. The comment of our weight in front of everyone was humiliating, but after that feeling was less insignificant.

4. Of course, many times, otherwise I wouldn’t continuous dancing. Somehow, I remember feeling better and better each time, and feeling sure of myself. Also some teacher used to help us to love the ballet without “traumas”, they very few but the most important for my career.

5. Normally not, sometimes after many hours of rehearsal, many repetitions, I felt dizzy and blocked, I guess tiredness and not much food in the body.

6. I felt very good, it was a great sensations, dance have to make you feel great, you have to feel relief and happy although we are searching the best technique. It’s happen to me when I feel not under pressure or stress of course.

7. The most of my injuries were in moments when I was stressed, or doing very bad work in classes or choreographies, repeating non sense sequences. And if my mine is blocked I do wrong movements, which cause injuries.

8. The more differences dances I learn, techniques, Yoga, Alexander Technique, Felenkreis and other languages of movement I get to know, more it’s help to dance from other part of my body, I guess the age and the experiences and the injuries make you more conscience of the way you connect with your body.

### **34 Robert (44)**

1.8

2. 10-11

3. None at all

4. In the first few years of starting – always encouraged from family, teachers and other students.
5. Which dancer does not feel this in some way or other? I found myself getting angry more with myself and then came the mental block and I just needed to find some distance from the situation and try again later or work on something else.
6. I found that all movements and feelings were more free and deeper as soon as I was on the stage and the lights went up
7. reoccurring injuries? , in my back. Do you think that negative movement patterns can be caused by fear or stress? No
8. I can say that I never had any negative experiences from my family, friends or teachers. The worst for me were the kids in secondary school – that was a nightmare.

### **35 Steven (43)**

1. 16 years old, at the small school in the south of France, directed by an ex-royal ballet dancer Graham Goodbody, I started with jazz class 2 times a week, and then later people told me that ballet would be good also...
2. I was about 17 years old
3. I never felt those feelings quiet the opposite I was very happy about it
4. Yes being the only boy in the school, I received lots of attention, performing on stage having a role gave me lots of confidence
5. At 17 years old, at the very beginning 17 years old, I was quite nervous to go on stage, sometimes I had the feeling that I wanted to throw up, but it never happened, and it disappeared as soon as I was on stage, or sometimes I was frustrated not being able to do some steps.. but it just gave me later more will to work on it
6. Yes I was very soon a good jumper, I loved to perform jumps, my body was of course in tune with this ability
7. I was very seldomly injured, yes I believe bad position causes injury, and of course when I have pain somewhere it causes some extra stress : getting it worse, or being not being able to work, and as you say being blamed for it, as often in ballet when you are injured it's because you haven't worked properly, you are blamed for it, and often also directors try to have you go on even if you have pain..
8. I never have recurring injuries, the fear of being injured happens after, in most cases you don't realise that you have a dangerous pattern or you cannot change it, so you are not afraid about it.. sometimes political situations within the group, can cause the person to be extra nervous, and eventually to get

injured, most injuries happen when the person is not only physically exhausted, but mentally also, mental stress cause more injuries than wrong work pattern

### **36 Timea (43)**

1. 3

2. Even before I went to the dance classes. I had seen ballet on the television and was always, like every child, I guess, dancing at home. I remember around the age of eight when I actually found out that people got paid for doing the job that I had already chosen with my whole heart.

3. When I received a scholarship for the RAD at around the age of 11 I went to another teacher for the scholarship classes. The training was much harder and intensive than I had had before. I had a lot of catching up to do and the teacher regularly reminded me of this. There was a constant fear of forgetting the exercises and not being good enough to keep the scholarship place-which I was convinced was the only way for me to become a professional dancer (maybe because the teacher made us believe this with the things that she said)

4. From the age of 3 to 11 I always experienced these things. After the age of 11 always joy (along with the fear because I just LOVED dancing so much) but hardly ever affirmation and never reassurance.

5. I found it hard to pick-up the exercises because I was so worried about not being good enough and that I had to stretch my knees and feet as much as I could. This was a big mental blockage for me- remembering the exercises. I often felt that steps joined together confused me. The fear of not being good enough actually caused me to badly hyperventilate and have a panic attack so badly in a ballet exam that the examiner told me to stop dancing and calm down- unthinkable in an X exam. Looking back I realize how nice and concerned he was. I didn't realize this then- I was just so terrified of getting a bad mark and making my teacher angry.

6. Yes. When I felt that teacher believed in me- or gave me at least a bit of approval for a particular exercise, choreography or step I felt strong inside and the steps and the feeling for the dance locked together and I felt in control. The steps seemed easy then, as if made for me.

7. I often had a lot of problems with my knees. I don't have hyperextended knees and from the age of 11 upwards teachers (also ballet masters in companies were always on at me to stretch my knees. I even had one ballet master squash my knees together, pressing his hands around my kneecaps after coming up from a plié. I used to hang back in my knees as far as I could- always searching for swayback legs. Sadly I had no idea of anatomy- and maybe this would not have influenced me anyway. Painful cartilage problems were the consequence.

I had a problem with my FHL for a long time, due to rolling in and pushing on my knees. This problem was very painful for about a year. When I physiotherapist explained what I had to do differently it went away within a couple of weeks.

8.I think staying calm and being conscious of your chest being relaxed really helps to improve the coordination. To do this you have to be really a bit detached from a bad, frightening atmosphere - or you just have to be in an atmosphere where you feel safe and appreciated.

### **3.Transcribed Interviews**

**Kate**

Saskia: How old were you when you started attending ballet classes?

Kate: I think it was seven or eight years when I started.

Saskia: Ok. The next one is, how old were you when you decided you wanted to become a dancer?

Kate: Oh this is really difficult. (laughs) I think I never decided to become a dancer- I just became a dancer –

Saskia: You just became?

Kate: Yeah- I never decided- never decided- I HAVE to – or I WANT to- it was just there and I and I did- and it's like-

Saskia: Ok

Kate: I can't say it when.

Saskia: Ok- thank you. Did you ever experience emotions and feelings such as fear, humiliation and inadequacy in the ballet class? If so, what happened and how old do you remember being when you had this experience?

Kate: I never felt this in class but I saw my colleges er really had- er yeah- fear- or ...

Saskia: yes?

Kate: or all these experiences. But I never let this come to me.

Saskia: You never let it ... - do you think that maybe ... the absence of the decision of wanting to be a dancer ... helped you to stay objective- or removed from this situation?

Kate: Yah- could be. Could be- I always wanted to be creative, I wanted to be on stage and to choreograph or to paint or to be a musician- to do music or to compose, so it was always to be an artist but so ...

Saskia: OK

Kate: ... in one way.

Saskia: Ok- so-Did you ever experience emotions and feelings such as joy, affirmation, reassurance and inspiration in the ballet class? If so, what happened, as in maybe a comparison, and how old do you remember being when you had this experience?

Kate: Questions- a lot of questions. Yes, yeah joy, of course joy, a lot of joy, we loved to move- and affirmation, yes- I was really energetic, jumping around, and- reassurance of course, also, more or less I was also one of the best students in class so that's why it was easy for me. And ... inspiration in class was more the group. The group sensation- so it was not that I'm good- so it was to come together to enjoy the group, to have this feeling that you can do something together with the music- you have this choreography- to do something creative.

Saskia: Ok

Kate: Of course the music always was- is, an inspiration but also the other dancers.

Saskia: Um ... would you say that being one of the good ones in the class made your life easy- or did you see other good ones in the class- because they wanted to do so much, also having a difficult time? If you understand what I mean ...

Kate: You mean that the others have maybe a difficult time?

Saskia: Yes- but even the good ones.

Kate: yeah, yeah- sure- yeah.

Saskia: So, it's not just if you're good, you have an easy time ... it's much more the ... emotional situation.

Kate: Yes, yes

Saskia: Ok, right

Kate: Ya- I saw this- also my best friend she became soloist in the state opera, and er- she had also difficult – really difficult times and she was also humiliated and er yes, I went over this ...

Saskia: and she really wanted to do it?

Kate: Yeah, yeah, yeah er ... well- you're a child- it's ... there are some periods where you want- and some periods where you get- don't want ...

Saskia: Ok

Kate: - or not sure of what you want or IF you want- then your parents come and ...

I think, I think that , that the children don't think so much of I really want to become this and this and this- or to do this and this and the whole time, the whole year work on this, I don't think so. They just do

it because you go to school, you go to the kindergarten, they go the school, they go to the university and you have this society around you have to choose a profession- and you do these things.

Saskia: Ok

Kate: I think if you could decide maybe you ... would do something completely else.

Saskia: Ok- Ok- right. Did you sometimes experience as a student or a dancer, mental or/and physical blockages with certain steps, or in certain situations? If so, how did you feel in these situations? How did your body respond?

Kate: Yeah, in school of course, these mental or physical blockages was more when I really get bored, because when it over, over and over you had to do the same thing and it was so strict in the form and you couldn't express yourself and then I get so bored – and also the body gets really tensed and, and there's no motivation at all so I think this normal energy, how you can move, and have the flow of the movement goes away. If you- if you, Ya, but maybe this is also a way you have to learn, I don't know - but ... I don't know if there's some other methods to learn it, I would prefer, I mean wouldn't do this with my, with children- I wouldn't, I would give them always other tasks, and more feel the emotion, emotions, really work a little bit more with the emotions- so this was really cut- there is no feeling, no emotions you just have to do all this technical – but how can you move if you don't have a sub text or something to say or to express or have the motivation to do something.

Saskia: OK

Kate: I think this goes- this is completely connected, the body movement and the emotion.

Saskia: Ok, thank you.

Saskia: Did you sometimes experience as a student or a dancer, greater ease of movement and coordination when performing certain steps or when in certain situations? If so, how did you feel in these situations? How did your body respond?

Kate: Yes ... when I went to New York and I experienced something completely different. Different way to move or to dance, or to have really joy in ballet class- so it was a different music a different timing, rhythm, different timing, er swinging the arms getting on pointe- erm and ... there I really experienced a great of joy and easy to move and- yeah, that you also can be happy and to have enjoyment in class in ballet class. And in school it wasn't like this. Yeah- you don't have to be happy or enjoy it- you just suffer, suffer, suffer (laughs)- so ...

Saskia For your art!

Kate: S then I experienced the contrary side of it.

Saskia: OK

Kate: Of course everything goes much, much easier- easier, you can turn six pirouettes on pointe or- then everything happens.

Saskia: Would you say um ... this was to do with the teachers or would you say it was to do with the actual technique? The actual style, the American style? Or- because the timing IS so different- développé , one, two ... for example?

Kate: That's ... that I don't know ...

Saskia: Ok

Kate: but I think both- I think with other teachers a good technique, good class. When the teacher doesn't respond, I think it's also not going on. I think both has to come together.

Saskia: Yes

Bettina: Also, that you really like the teacher, and be motivated and also to- you like to dance for him-

Saskia: Yes

Kate:- or for the others- for the other students. And also of course the music and the, the different timing- different rhythm- like in the Russian school-but I think yeah- .... I think yeah- that I don't know ...

Saskia: Ok

Kate - so we have to research about it (laughs)

Saskia: Ok, thank you.

Saskia: Did you ever have reoccurring injuries? Were these injuries "sudden accidents" or were they more to do with your own personal movement patterns? Do you think that negative movement patterns cause injury? Do you think that negative movement patterns can be caused by fear or stress?

Kate: So I never had injuries, thank God

Saskia: Oh wow

Kate: - and but then I think it comes from not just only the negative movement patterns, but also from the negative thinking, so, how you speak to yourself how you approach is to your body and how you speak to your body and to your movement- and how you see yourself.

Saskia: Yes? Just a quick question in between; what would you say influences how you speak to yourself?

Kate: Aahh ... the teacher in ballet- Because the teacher really as to- to ... aufmerksam machen? To er ...

Saskia: Make you aware of.

Kate: make you aware of it-

Saskia: Yes

Kate: How you speak to yourself, what is going on in your mind, your brain- what you-

How you see the others- how you reflect, how you reflect corrections- I think this is- yeah- very important for the teacher to tell the students this.

Saskia: Yes

Kate: Otherwise it's- it goes in a circle, circle, circle and you get more negative and more negative and you're not able to see you, to feel you.

Saskia: Yeah.

Kate: And, "do you think that negative movement patterns can be caused by fear or stress?" Yes, of course, of course. When you stress to turn out more and you go over your limits and or you have to do this ... in this and this way and you are not able to, to fulfill the wishes of the choreographer or the teacher - of course then, then it's very dangerous for the body.

Saskia: Ok. Do you have any further experiences in connection with bodily responses to emotional training climates that you would like to share?

Kate: Ja- I mean- this would be a good research – erm ... for sure also that maybe you could also change musics- like pop music or romantic songs or love songs and er ... the whole exercises get a different emotion and so also the steps can be done differently, I think this could be also a point, and of course how they, how the teacher sees himself as a person. If he's a teacher to push you down or ... he's just here as a facilitator- like a playground- you have the possibility to experience with your body- or not- and I think this is also very important. That ... you just can't teach yourself, ... and you need time to discover things how you get into the plié how you change from one leg to the other leg and how you lift your arms. And it takes time and sometimes for some students it's a short time and other students need much, much more time. And ... of course for a teacher it's not easy but, but he ... has to let the students also to experiment a while- to learn the movement otherwise ...

Saskia: I must say this is something that I really appreciate in your classes that I don't feel squashed in to doing something in a certain way and I have the freedom to find out how I can put the correction on to my body and how I can change, improve my technique, something that really um I really appreciate- I must say.

Kate: Yeah- because you just can do what you know, do a movement what you know, you can't do anything you don't know- so if you have this first experience that you do it your way and then you feel the flow- then it's very easy to decide, Ok then I don't take the arms here I take the arms here, next time I take it here.

Saskia: Yes.

Kate: So you can just go from one step to the other step. Otherwise there is so much information and you are so pressed into a form that ... that's so uncoordinated- and so much stress in your body that it takes SO long time to do- ja- to do so...

Saskia: And also- if you keep on doing something the same way- you will also get the same results- so if you're going in the same way- the wrong way- but you're going that way because the teacher says that is how it has to be, and it just doesn't work, it's not going to go ahead. So this is something I find very valuable.

Kate: Yeah, and everybody is special and individual and even if you have a corps de ballet – 20 or 32 swans- they can be all very, very different but on stage they all can find their way that they look the same. I think this is possible.

Saskia: Yes

Kate: So it's not that you always have to be educated the same way- and just this is right and this is wrong but I think this is also different styles, different bodies, different possibilities, you can do this on stage that everybody looks the same- I think so.

Saskia: Ok- Thank you very much- great.

Kate: You're welcome.

## **Ursula**

Saskia: How old were you when you started attending ballet classes?

Ursula: I was ten.

Saskia: How old were you when you decided you wanted to become a dancer?

Ursula: That I can't really clearly remember, because it just- it just happened. It just happened

Saskia: Ok

Saskia: So, did you ever experience emotions and feelings such as fear, humiliation and inadequacy in the ballet class? If so, what happened and how old do you remember being when you had this experience?

Ursula: Yes, I remember clearly, I was er 12, that was my second year in the Paris Opera Ballet School, um and er she was screaming at us, so of course we felt all ... terrible. And er the second one was er my two last years at school I was 15 and 16 and er I couldn't develop, I couldn't go on, because the teacher didn't like me, and erm yeah, and I felt kind of blocked.

Saskia: So, just a quick question in between; feeling inadequate would, as in not liked, not accepted, or, that would –

Ursula: Not good enough

Saskia: Not good enough

Ursula: Not good enough (nods head)

Saskia: that would

Ursula: Not good enough (nods head) I would say more in this way, in that direction

Saskia: that stopped you developing

Ursula: I think yes,

Saskia: Yes

Ursula: I think yes (nods head) Yeah ... it cut my wings ...

Saskia: Ok, ok, ok,ok

Saskia: Did you ever experience emotions and feelings such as joy, affirmation, reassurance and inspiration in the ballet class? If so, what happened and how old do you remember being when you had this experience?

Ursula: Well it did happen sometimes, I had, lets say, good moments, good classes, yeah, I felt good I would say, from 11 till ... 16, it depend, er I had erm, classes with C at the end of the week not in the opera ballet school, outside of the school and I had few really nice moments with her as well and er well otherwise it just came ...

Saskia: Would you say the way she was the way she taught ...

Ursula: helped

Saskia: helped? And also being away from the school, going into another atmosphere?

Ursula: Yes, but I wasnt really being away from school because er a few girls from my class or other classes were there ...

Saskia: Ok ...

Ursula: so it depends ...

Saskia: Ok ...

Ursula: so I think I felt freer when they were not- when yeah? The whole ... yeah.

Saskia: Ok- Just a question in between, what would have, erm, what particular steps, or feelings as in more energy or something, were for you clear when you in this good situation, erm ..

Ursula: you mean, would ... erm?

Saskia: Did pirouettes work better?

Ursula: Ah!

Saskia: ... Or erm...?

Ursula: Yes! Yeah, yeah- then –Yes! The whole, the whole technique I would say- yeah

Saskia: Ok

Ursula: Yes

Saskia: Ok

Ursula: Yes, was er, everything was er, everything was “en faillie” which was easier.

Saskia : Ok

Saskia: Did you sometimes experience as a student or a dancer, mental or/and physical blockages with certain steps, or in certain situations? If so, how did you feel in these situations? How did your body respond?

Ursula: Well yes of course I did and er, my I had really problems to do the combinations or the steps or to go to through it- it was a fight. Mostly with pirouettes, my, the pirouettes were always a bit problematic for me.

Saskia: OK

Ursula: That was it, and through different choreographys and pieces and er, that was my, yeah- that was the problem for me.

Saskia: How did your body feel when you had to, when you knew a pirouette was coming up?

Ursula; Yeah- I wasn't, I wasn't really relaxed! Yeah? And I think also that's the – yeah, part of the problem, because then you know- it's not ... just the demi plié maybe wasn't er, the real one, yeah?

Saskia: Yes- the preparation

Ursula: The good one, the preparation.

Saskia: Ok

Ursula: Yeah- because you tense

Saskia: Yeah

Ursula: so Yeah- and you just go against it ...

Saskia: Ok

Ursula: ... instead of, keep the ... yeah- a clear head and er, and go through it.

Saskia: Ok. Was there a fear of failure there? Or a ...

Ursula: Of course, of course. Oh I remember, yeah, the final er performance at school, my last year. We had some pirouettes to do and I think er ... I didn't make ... no I remember I had problems there.

Saskia Ok, ok, ok.

Saskia: Did you ever sometimes experience as a student or a dancer, greater ease of movement and coordination when performing certain steps or when in certain situations? If so, how did you feel in these situations? How did your body respond?

Ursula: Well it did happen- especially, twice- yeah, I remember I had to jump in for Daphnis and Chloe and the performance was er- I did it in a kind of er- trance- it was wonderful, I was flying- lets say it that way- and er ... the second one, after my second pregnancy when I came back and I decided that nobody could tell me er ... what I had to do and how and I was going to decide - and take it easy-and that's what I did and it was wonderful- and it just worked.

Saskia: So it was this feeling of um ... being able to do what you wanted ...

Ursula: Yes!

Saskia: ... a feeling of empowerment?

Ursula: Exactly! Exactly. A feeling of empowerment.

Saskia: And did you have- would you say this feeling of having power-or control- that this is something that was- that had often been missing?

Ursula: Yes!! Definitely.

Saskia: Ok

Ursula: Oh yeah-

Saskia: Yes?

Ursula: yes. We have been always told; do this, and don't do that ... and yeah- like children even if your ...

Saskia: Ok

Ursula: ... adult

Saskia: Yes

Ursula: Parents, whatever, you are treated, you are dependent, yeah- you are definately expecting, waiting, hoping ...

Saskia: Yes- hoping ...

Ursula: Hoping, yes, always

Saskia: Ok. But I mean, theoreticaly you could just say well I'm going to go and er ... work in a shop.

Ursula: No- because I love dancing and it was my life, I mean it's just, yeah ... it was I could give, I could receive ... I wanted to do it.

Saskia: So would you say erm ... the love of dance ...

Ursula: ... was stronger,

Saskia : ... was stonger ...

Ursula: ..was carrying me

Saskia: ... or carrying you?

Ursula: Yes, helping me, supporting me

Saskia: Yes?

Ursula: Yes, definitely.

Saskia: Would you say this positive, the positivity- this positive thing of loving dance though had- could also make you dependent, or not? If you really love something and it could be taken away from you- perhaps ... or not given to you, does that, is it the love of this thing that could also make you dependent?

Ursula: Aaahh ... in a way maybe yes, yes, but I just wanted to be on stage.

Saskia: Ok

Ursula: I really wanted, yeah, to be on stage and give and enjoy- of course you can't every time- but erm ... even if it doesn't happen er every time, even if you have ONE good performance, for yeah, three or four difficult ones, it's worth it.

Saskia: OK. So what would you have done to get onto stage?

Ursula: ... yeah well ... I did- I did a lot actually- everything, I would say-

Saskia: Really?

Ursula: Yeah, yeah- you give everything. You just go ...

Saskia: And accept? Do you say ...

Ursula: Oh of course you have to accept- yeah, yeah ...

Saskia: Ok- that's a great answer, thank you.

Saskia: Did you ever have reoccurring injuries? Were,-if you did have injuries at all, were these injuries "sudden accidents" or were they more to do with your own personal movement patterns? As in, what I mean by that is, rolling in or whatever, or loosing spiral dynamic in the leg or something um ... so do you think that negative movement patterns cause injury?

Ursula: Yes.

Saskia: And do you think that negative movement patterns can be caused by fear or stress?

Ursula: Of course.

Saskia: Yes- shall I go back to the first one?

Ursula: Yes- the first one- I had two injuries-

Saskia: yes?

Ursula: - in 30 years which isn't a lot, well I broke my foot on stage because I was very sick-

Saskia: yes-

Ursula: -so that was, I would say, my mistake, because I was so weak and ...

Saskia: Yes, but- just what I think of now, quickly is ... you said before you really wanted to be on stage

—

Ursula: yeah

Saskia: you would have done anything to be on stage

Ursula: Yes but that was definitely a mistake

Saskia: Ok

Ursula; -and you know it's funny because my whole family was there, my husband was there, and nobody told me don't go.

Saskia: Ok

Ursula: No but it's interesting because we're just so used to ... yeah?

Saaskia: to functioning ...

Ursula: functioning- yeah thinking I have to- in a way, yeah ...

Saskia: That's interesting of course ...

Ursula: Yeah. And er... well but then I see- well it's private, so well we say it later

Saskia: Ok so wait —

Ursula: No, no- but I see even Baldine she goes with fever she goes and she does her math, mathematic test.

Saskia: Ah-uh.

(Interview and recording break here)

Ursula: and the second one yeah, and the second one - it was , it wasn't a recurring injury- it was just because of a choreography and steps, specific steps we had to repeat and repeat and repeat, I had this er  
chronical, shinbein ...

Saskia: shin splints

Ursula: shinbein yeah inflammation,

Saskia: Yeah, OK

Ursula: but otherwise I was very lucky.

Saskia: Ok, ok, so that's great- um ... Do you think that negative movement patterns –

Ursula: Yes.

Saskia: -cause injury?

Ursula: Yes, yes Oh yes,

Saskia: yes?

Ursula: Definitely, of course.

Saskia: And as a teacher do you see this with students as well?

Ursula: Oh yes- very often

Saskia: Ok, ok

Ursula: yeah, yeah, very often.

Saskia: Ok. Do you think that negative movement patterns can be caused by fear or stress?

Ursula: Oh yes.

Saskia: ok

Ursula: that too yeah.

Saskia: Ok

Ursula: Yeah, yeah, yeah we see it yeah

Saskia: Yeah,

Ursula: we see it every day- yes

Saskia: Ok, so the last question; Do you have any further experiences in connection with bodily responses to emotional training climates that you would like to share?

Ursula: Well ... I told you about this er - was more ... this Daphnis and Chloe er ...

Saskia: Yes ...?

Ursula: ... er experience, going out of my body- kind of, yeah?

Saskia: Empowerment.

Ursula: Empowerment -

Saskia: Ok

Ursula: - yes, yes- I had- it was really ... and the last performance I had, definitely because wanted, I decided I really enjoy, and er decided OK this is going to be my last time on stage ...

Saskia: Yeah, yeah

Ursula: ... and er that was great because I did decide it ... yeah

Saskia: Yeah, so you felt-

Ursula: I felt-elev- elevated?

Saskia: Yes? Yes.

Ursula: Yes!

Saskia: Energized- perhaps?

Ursula: Energized- um ... I would say, everything, really-

Saskia: OK

Ursula: yeah- the whole thing- it was just er- and then I could take my bow and say "Goodbye"- that was very important.

Saskia: that's a very- that's a great way to finish.

Ursula: Yes. Was very important. Yeah, yeah.

Saskia: Ok, thank you very much.

Ursula: You're welcome!

## **Viola**

Saskia: How old were you when you started attending ballet classes?

Viola: I was 4 years old when I started, and I started in South Africa.

Saskia: Ok

Viola: It was actually, um, I went to see the Nutcracker ballet and that's what made me want to start ...

Saskia: Ok

Viola: and I had to persuade my Mum to take me. And um yeah, and I stopped when we moved to the UK

Saskia: OK

Viola: and I started when I was 7 again

Saskia: So ... How old were you when you decided you wanted to become a dancer?

Viola: so that's going back to ...Oh

Saskia: no ...

Viola: ... when I decide

Saskia: Yeah? So probably when you went to your first class?

Viola: Um ... I can't remember ... I remember just always enjoying ballet-

Saskia: Yeah?

Viola: - but I think when, when I was seven, seven-eight, It was always just a thing that was ah, Oh yeah I'm going to be a ballerina, this is what I'm you know ...

Saskia: Ok

Viola: - the main thing that I've always wanted to carry on doing ...

Saskia: Ok

Viola: but really I think when it became apparent that it would a career, or that it could become a career I think I was about 10 or so ...

Saskia: Ok. Did you ever experience emotions and feelings such as fear, humiliation and inadequacy in the ballet class? If so, what happened and how old do you remember being when you had this experience?

Viola: I felt inadequate at quite a young age, I had a teacher who ... even though I was attending things that like um, the Royal Ballet Associate Program or things which made me kind of the top of the class- it was just um ... a local ballet school so most girls would just take it as a hobby and I did have all these things that did put me ahead of them- but my teacher would always have this way in class of comparing me to girls who were just doing it as a hobby, and making me feel like I wasn't up to scratch with them. Umm ... humiliation, I wouldn't say ... maybe ... when I was 13 or 14. Um – a teacher who would just ignore me and just- I remember after one barre I was very emotional I was crying and she just – we only a class of nine girls and, and she just blanked me, didn't – you know ...

Saskia: Had she ... um ... given you corrections that you found very difficult to understand or ...

Viola: She didn't give me any- that was another problem.

Saskia: OK ... Ok ok

Viola: So it was just lack of attention- completely-and I was- ah I was new to the Royal Ballet School. I was 13 so it was later than other people- and we had a change of teacher mid-year-

Saskia: Yes

Viola: um- and so I was just suddenly from A, who was very encouraging , very helpful, and um, you know she realized that I had things to catch up on in compared to the girls who had been vocationally trained for two years longer-

Saskia: Yes

Viola: than I have- to then to this teacher who just, you know, didn't know that I existed

Saskia: Ok

Viola: in a class of nine girls, you know, so it wasn't like we were a big class.

Saskia: And so this was very humiliating just to be ignored in this emotional situation. Ok- and how about fear?

Viola: Fear- um ... probably when every time our director came into the class. We had our artistic director- um X and um also the principal of the school Y. They would come in occasionally and watch class or, and every time our teacher would say, "Oh girls, girls, Miss Y is coming in" or "Miss X is coming in today" you know, can't be seeing this- or can't be seeing that- and it just- they made it feel as if, you know this person comes in and this is our life, you know, in their hands- and- so it was just this not necessarily saying, you know they're this horrible person- it's just that everyone's- um the tension in the class would just raise because this person's watching.

Saskia: Ok hmmm pfff

(both laugh)

Saskia: Ok- so-Did you ever experience emotions and feelings such as joy, affirmation, reassurance and inspiration in the ballet class? If so, what happened, as in maybe a comparison, and how old do you remember being when you had this experience?

Viola: Um so, luckily after the year that I had the teacher who ignored me- um- we got a very lovely teacher W.

Saskia: Ok

Viola: who um, really didn't, she didn't show favoritism towards me or anything in that way, it's just she showed, you know, um, that- she made me feel like I had something to give, or more to give and she paid a lot more attention to me and helped me, and I could always feel that I could ask her a question or talk to her about how I can improve certain things and her reaction would always be very helpful and positive, positive corrections and if I'd improved something she would acknowledge that and it was a lot more relaxed atmosphere.

Saskia: Did you feel she empowered you?

Viola: Yes, definitely and I remember also, because that was around age 15, I became a lot more determined and did extra practice or maybe just extra going to the physio room to do my exercises because I felt that I can do more and that I can, you know, give more.

Saskia: Yes.

Viola: Um- and then also other times when I felt joy in dancing when I went to “Pineapple Dance Studios” or “Dance Works”-

Saskia: Hmhm

Viola: It was- just to be in an atmosphere where it was free and moving and not this stress from school- that just made me enjoy it so much more.

Saskia: OK

Viola: And obviously performances helped a lot.

Saskia: Yes-

Viola: with enjoyment because um- we’d also always get nice comments afterwards or- you know, people, sponsors watching, and coming up to me saying, “we really enjoyed that” and that makes ... it worth while.

Saskia: Ok. It’s very interesting, what’s coming up. So ... did you sometimes experience as a student or a dancer, mental or/and physical blockages with certain steps, or in certain situations? With the situations I mean a certain teacher, a certain room – a certain situation as in the director of the school coming, um ... if so, how did you feel in these situations and how did your body respond?

Viola: Ok ... I ... think the whole time I was at school - I always struggled with kind of tension here, (puts hand on chest) and that was just generally throughout and I think it would get worse if a certain teacher or a director would walk in- and I would, you know, suddenly not be able to do things fluidly because, you know, there’s too much tension, I can’t jump because I’m never going down, I’m just staying up ...

Saskia: the weight goes back ...

Viola: and the weight goes back, exactly and um, also, I did my first, um Young British Dancer Award of the Year and I got to the semi-finals where I had to show my solo- and I did Esmarelda Solo, and I’d, you know, practiced it in the studio so many times, and um my teacher was you know always very positive about it and then it came to the semis and I remember the rehearsal before, and I just couldn’t even do a double pirouette properly, and I mean, in the performance the pirouettes worked Ok but other things- I was just very tense, and even my Mum picked up, you know; “why were you- you looked so nervous and so tense-“ and um my teacher also said to me after, “you know, you looked very nervous and very- a lot more tense than you usually do and that’s why some things didn’t work as well”, and from there, that was when I was 16, 17, sorry-

Saskia: Ok

Viola: Um so I had- since then I really had to work on trying to relax and mentally more than you know - because physically what happened in the studio some days some things work some days things didn’t that’s ...

Saskia: normal

Viola: ... the way it is- but when it came to showing people or dancing in front of others, I had to really mentally ... you know ...

Saskia: Why do you think the situation of dancing in front of others or showing what you can do- why do you think this was- or is- was such um ... a problematic situation?

Viola: I think because in the rehearsals or in classes sometimes ... cause there's a lot of corrections all the time and- and a lot of things to pick on- which is very good and very normal, but I know with my personality I take things very personally and I really take, you know, really want it to be perfect and also I think because students- you get these groups of people- you know that they talk about you, that they talk about people in a certain way or- you just- even though they're probably not- you just have this idea that they're picking on you or, you know, talking about you- that in- "Oh that wasn't very good" or, ... and it's just I take it personally, rather than – oh that was a bad show- whatever- I take it that I am bad- that's what I've had to learn to- still trying to- change.

Saskia: Would you say identity with dance is so closely inter-linked that- bad class- bad person?

Viola: Yeah ...

Saskia: Or bad show- bad person?

Viola: Yeah ...

Saskia: hmm - Ok

Viola: Not necessarily bad person as in I'm a horrible person ...

Saskia: Yes...

Viola: but as in – Oh I don't deserve this – or I don't deserve going out tonight. Or I don't deserve- I just ... which is awful ... Getting better ...

Saskia: Good. I hope so (Both laugh) It shouldn't be like that- but I understand.

Did you sometimes experience as a student or a dancer, greater ease of movement and co-ordination when performing certain steps or when in certain situations? If so, how did you feel in these situations? How did your body respond?

Viola: Ok- um- in my last year at school I had a teacher, N, and she really made us use our bodies a lot more rather than being very stiff and correct, yes, she wanted very clean technique, but she was all about using the body and using weight and I think that gave me a release, you know and also her more positive, very energetic way of teaching made me move more and I think just learning that skill helped me to feel that greater ease of movement- and um, also another time was, um, I was asked to go to ... St Petersburg to perform at the Vaganova's 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala with my friend and we did, um Rhapsody pas de deux, ... and I was SO nervous before- and things- it was one of those times when things didn't work in

rehearsal and um ... we had our teacher with us, A, and she, she sensed I was getting very nervous and she said to, before, she said, “you have this incredible opportunity, don’t let stupid things like technique or trying to be so perfect, or just over thinking things get in the way of what you can do and what-how, she’d seen me do this pas de deux. And so she said, “just go for it, dance for me and dance for your Mum and just forget about everything else”, and that was the most incredible performance I’ve probably experienced.

Saskia: How did it go? How did you feel?

Viola: I- I just think, it was just one of those moments where you- where I came off and I couldn’t remember – you know, if someone said Oh, did that work? Or, how did that feel for you? I just remember it as being a whole and being a whole sentence and just everything flowed – and it was - I enjoyed it and I got to dance this with my best friend and it was just that moment of not thinking and just doing and something that I am now learning to try and put into classes or rehearsals where- or maybe- not always class but rehearsal, or performances- to where you just really need to move and to flow

Saskia: So-Did you ever have reoccurring injuries? Were these injuries, if you had any, “sudden accidents” or were they more to do with your own personal movement patterns? Do you think that negative movement patterns cause injury? Do you think that negative movement patterns can be caused by fear or stress?

Viola: I never had any reoccurring injuries or anything- um- I got one injury but that was due to overstretching and um- tearing a tendon- but that was just, you know, stupid- and um I DO think that negative movement patterns cause injuries, I did have groin strains quite often but ... that also, um- a physio did mention that that was because I was growing a lot and that was with age, but also I think I probably was- wasn’t using my pelvic alignment correctly or- or something- it was a long time ago to specifically know ...

Saskia: yeah. Ok ...

Viola: so ...

Saskia: do you think that the negative movement patterns could be caused by stress and fear?

Viola: Yes.

Saskia: OK

Viola: Definitely. Um because I stress sometimes – or even when I get tired I have my weight back, and obviously there’s a huge impact on your body and in the way you do things so I still constantly have to be aware of keeping my ribs in – or weight forward just to help the rest of my body.

Saskia: Yes, Ok. Last Question: Do you have any further experiences in connection with bodily responses to emotional training climates that you would like to share? As in the emotional training climates, ... the atmosphere that’s being created by the person who is responsible ...ie the teacher or the ballet master ...?

Viola: I could think the best example would probably be that I- that I had an anxiety attack- and um ... it wasn't necessarily due to what happened at that point, but it was a build-up of a teacher who a very um ... er ... kind of ... harsh way of saying things or- of the atmosphere in the class was always very uptight and ... as it was leading up to auditions... um- I just ... lost it- and was hyperventilating and crying a lot and just felt like I didn't have control over anything I did or felt- um and I DO think that was just because of the whole general atmosphere and maybe perhaps not feeling that I could talk to them about anything.

Saskia: Ok

Viola: That was really very terrifying – just to ask advice about something even though they say, “you can ask us anything”, it's extremely terrifying and I know I wasn't the only one that felt that way- and I think that really did have a ... big impact.

Saskia: And so- did you feel that physically you were not able to develop in that kind of atmosphere?

Viola: Yeah-no ... I think just tension the whole time- cause sometimes you do have to relax your body to achieve certain movements – and that just never happened.

Saskia: Ok,ok thank you very much.

## **Isabel**

Saskia: How old were you when you started attending ballet classes?

Isabel: I was 6 years old.

Saskia: OK. How old were you when you decided you wanted to become a dancer?

Isabel: Actually, already with 6 er I wanted to become a dancer but then ... the first- the real decision I got it with 16 but my family was against me so I could apply for a professional dance school just with 19.

Saskia: Ok. So, did you ever experience emotions and feelings such as fear, humiliation and inadequacy in the ballet class? If so, what happened and how old do you remember being when you had this, or these, experiences?

Isabel: I think I was something like 14 years old-I never had a beautiful turn, I had a great balance but not a beautiful pirouette. They always say - “Isabel, you have to work more, why you don't manage to turn at least 3 or 4 pirouette?”- and I don't know, I had a bit of sway legs and I think it's a lot is because of this- because I er they teach me, “Ahh you have such beautiful leg you have to use it”. So I work with the X-bein, the X-legs, and it was hard for me to find the balance and it was hard for me to get on pointe and during that, spot and turn a pirouette. And for me it was really a humiliation because they say- “Oh but with your balance you should be able to turn at least four pirouettes- and it's just because you don't want to move your head!”

Saskia: So it was kind of YOUR fault-cause you couldn't do anything, you had all the possibilities but- the made you feel that it was your fault.

Isabel: Exactly, but actually right now I realize that just a couple of months ago that my head is turned on my atlas, a couple of degrees, so I am not really able to spot for example on the right side- which is actually MY side because I feel more comfortable on the left leg. So it's different anatomical problems er ... that I didn't knew maybe at the time or maybe with the sway like this, simple actually- but often they push you- "ja, stretch your knee, go on pointe, make your leg- you should do that!"

Saskia: So they make you feel responsible for the fault that you were not really able to ...

Isabel: Exactly- I was not really able to turn.

Saskia: Ahhmm, Did you ever experience emotions and feelings such as joy, affirmation, ummm ... reassurance and inspiration in the ballet class? If so, what happened and how old do you remember being when you had this experience?

Isabel: umm.. actually I did it pretty late because I- since I'm not really a good turner-I cannot really turn, I'm not good on pirouette, um I got the possibility to jump in the role of a man and that was when I was er ... 27. Er because erm, finally I was happy to be small and finally I was happy to be a good jumper, because I got this male role-although- as a man- although I'm a woman- but I was so happy because it's something I enjoy a lot. I say, "Ahh, is something that I can do and ... cool I'm small and finally I can get something because I was always as a young student, "ja you have to move bigger and bigger, because you are so small and no one will see you on stage!" And finally I was so happy to be tiny, small because I got lifted a lot and I had to jump and be really quick- which is easier if you are small and I thought, "Ahh cool, to be small and to be so ...

Saskia: So ... you felt accepted-

Isabel: Exactly! For what I have, for what I am- for what my body is ..

Saskia: ... and it felt right for being in that ...

Isabel: Exactly!

Saskia: Would you say that umm ..., in class umm ... can you remember being inspired and having joy in class? And if you do would you say it was dependent on music..., teacher ...; atmosphere ..., aahh ...

Isabel: I remember I was once in Barcelona, actually in vacation, and it was a center, where they were giving open classes. It was a really beautiful ballet teacher. And she gave such a BEAUTIFUL ballet class and I felt sooooo long and I felt sooo light and I felt soo free to move

Saskia: Why was the class beautiful?

Isabel: Because she didn't force any pictures- so- "the attitude has to look like this"- "your leg has to look like this" but you felt so warm from inside. Then finally you had a beautiful attitude, it doesn't look like

the Russian books- I don't know that, but you felt right in the position, you felt long and you felt you could stay and turn a pirouette.

Saskia: So she made you feel ac ... to accept yourself ..

Isabel: Exactly.

Saskia: ... and work with yourself

Isabel: and work with your body, for what YOU have.

Saskia: Did you have- just as an extra question, did you feel that other people in the class also felt this atmosphere from her?

Isabel: I mean, maybe it was because it was Barcelona and there were many Spanish peoples, so really more quiet people and more light people and more funny people- I did realize it was- we were laughing so much ... and not laughing ... because we were laughing at someone, we was just laughing because was a joy. She use also a CD, there was no pianist there, but she use the music with intelligence. It was a classical ballet music, ja, piano, but it was not, D-DUNG, D-DUNG, D- DUNG - that put you DOWN. It was a light, nice music and she use it like in a play.

Saskia: So this class was good really because of HER?

Isabel: Because of her, I think it was because of her. Yep! I mean she was beautiful, she was moving beautiful, she show the exercise beautifully umm ...and she was also pretty young, she was 40, 45, so she could really us everything and you got so inspired because she was having high leg, er beautiful feet and she was really long, with such a long hair- and I don't know, but I think it was a lot because of her.

Saskia: Ok great. Um ..., did you sometimes experience as a student or a dancer, mental or/and physical blockages with certain steps, in certain situations? If so, how did you feel in these situations? How did your body respond?

Isabel: Ahh yeah, I think do have my problems with pirouettes, because I think it comes from my- how I grew up. The pirouette was always my problem. And was a time ermm .. that I got a lot of correction which I ask because I also wanted to understand- is really me? That I'm not working enough? That I'm, I'm really so lazy? That I don't, I cannot turn? And I ask one of my colleges that, that she could turn so beautifully, without, five pirouettes, without no problem. And I said, "please, while I'm doing the exercise, could you please look at me, what I'm doing, please help me. But I felt because I always um, I felt that she was always looking at me- but I ASK her to do that- that I couldn't. So you know, I was going in this demi plié and I felt it my demi plié was "UHHGGGH",

Saskia. Hmhm

Isabel: .. and not a- I know, I should be fluent and should be erm released and should be really both heels on the floor-

Saskia: Yes

Isabel: but I felt like, “KRUNK”- you know, a bit like a Pinnochio.

Saskia: Yeah

Isabel: And it didn't, it didnt work not at all.

Saskia: Ok.

Isabel: Although I was asking-

Saskia: Yes

Isabel: but I felt so much pressure on me.

Saskia: Yes ...

Isabel: That's I think was my ...

Saskia: Yes, Ok. Yes, oh you poor thing. Umm... Did you sometimes experience as a student or a dancer, greater ease of movement and co-ordination when performing certain steps or when in certain situations? If so, how did you feel in these situations? How did your body respond?

Isabel: Ermm ... there was a moment that I ... I did a project with children- with and for childrens.

Saskia: Hmhm.

Isabel: Erm ... I don't know why I did the audition with this choreographer she was looking for just one woman, and er, I got the job um and she told me “yeah- because you look, you look, still look so young and you're so small” and again, I'm small and young. Erm ... it's followed me my whole carear long, but it's Ok, and ... and then I don't know, I arrive, we rehearse a lot, and we were 60 kids on stage with really a lot of problem – from er difficult family, difficulty because they were sick and whatever, and ...then this performance I felt so free because I learned so much from the children. I don't want to say from the choreographer or from colleges, they were me, I learnt to be free from the children, and I got so much joy from them that I felt, that's why I'm dancing. Because I want to reach the heart of the public, I want to reach the heart of the small thing, and not turning five pirouettes, that is not the point.

Saskia: Yes

Isabel: And I felt in that moment- was my body so free that during the performance I could turn and never happens again- two pirouettes, en dehors, and attitude.

Saskia: Yes, yes, attitude en dehors

Isabel: Which I never manages to do that again

Saskia: Attitude, yes, a horrible attitude pirouette ...

Isabel: and I did it- because it was so play ... it was a solo that I had and then I had all my childrens around and such a smile from right to left.

Saskia: Yes

Saskia: Did you ever have reoccurring injuries? Were these injuries “sudden accidents” or were they more to do with your own personal movement patterns? Do you think, do you think that negative movement patterns cause injury? Do you think that negative movement patterns can be caused by fear or stress?

Isabel: Yes of course. I´m positive, I think that negative patterns can provoke injuries and can get caused from fear from everything.

Saskia: Ok, what do you think could actually cause the negative um ... reactions, the negative feelings?

Isabel: Schlecht-Bad. A really bad atmosphere in the room. The pressure that you get from outside you have to look like this, you have to do this in this direction, because that is the only way and not try to find yourself in what you are doing which is your soul and which is your, your power what you have in your body- what I can do with my body.

Saskia: Ok, great, thank you.