

KLEIN TECHNIQUE™
SUSAN KLEIN SCHOOL OF MOVEMENT AND DANCE



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DANCING FROM THE SPIRIT
By Susan T. Klein

As dancers, the body is, in a very real and certain sense, the most important aspect of our being. The body is our tool, our means of expression, our vehicle of art. However, in the greater scheme, the body is the most superficial level of our being, acting mainly as a vessel which carries the deeper levels, the mind and the spirit, out into the world. The focus of my work, Klein Technique™, is the body teaching people how to use their bodies in a connected, coordinated and efficient way. I have taught daily classes at studio in New York City since 1975, offering a process through which the body is explored analyzed and understood. Our concern is to help people get the most out of their physical structure in order to reach the fullness of their potential as dancers, movers and human beings. We work on the level of the body, knowing full well that as dancers it is through the body that we access the deeper levels of our being.

In dance, it is the spirit, when expressed in synergy with the body and the mind that becomes art. Spirit is unmanifest, unseen, beyond our tangible hold. We can list qualities of the spirit such as consciousness, hope, forgiveness, will power, inspiration, ideation, and we cannot actually define it. We can talk about it, we can talk around it, and we cannot pin it down. We know the spirit is the deepest level of who we are. In order to contact the spirit, in dance - through the body - and to move from this deepest level of our being, we must contact the deepest resources and reservoir of our physical structure. In my work this is the level of the bone.

Bone is the deepest, densest tissue of the body and thus it conducts the greatest currents of energy. Bone is at the core of who we are and through it we know the essence of our being. When all else is gone, as a tree stripped bare in the season of winter, we can read its code; we can see its essential nature and know what was, through reading the bone. Bone does not yield to gravity, but acts as a conductor, conducting energy, and connecting us to the system of nature, to the greater whole. It is through the bone that we stand as a ridgepole, "the tai chi", between heaven and earth. When all else is gone, it is the bone that remains. It is bone, which holds our self-identity, our essential selves and our will power. Dropping away from the superficial and deceptive strength of the muscles we access strength from coordination; we access

power connected to the knowledge of self-identity and the spirit of will available in the bone. Our power and identity come from working at our deepest physical level - the bone.

I believe the spirit level of the body is accessed through making and understanding the deep energetic as well as structural connections of the body. It is through these connections - the transfer of energy and force at the joints of the body through the bone - that the energetic whole of the body comes alive. Energy, like spirit, is unmanifest, unseen, and beyond our tangible hold. We know it to be true, and we cannot pin it down in any one definitive way. There are no ways to define it and many ways to define it. Energy is vibration. Energy is movement. It is experienced and felt.

Energy, along with spirit, is often defined as breath, the gift of the heavenly Qi. It is in this context, in this relationship to the flux of life as felt and known to our bodies - the taking in and the letting go of breath - that we all have a common experience of spirit and energy. We know and understand them, not as absolutes, but only through our experience, only through the relationships they create. For without relationship there is no energy.

In unity, at the point of one, all movement stops and we have stillness. It is only at the creation of the two, of duality, that we start to have the vibration, the dynamic tension between the two aspects of the one that is energy. Here, in duality, we can begin to see the nature of energy. We can see how energy relies on relationship, the connection of the two to each other, and the connection of the many in forming the greater whole.

When parts, the parts of the body, for example, are taken out of relationship, there is no energetic movement, no life and no expression. Dance, the art form of expression through the body, can only exist and be significant when there is a relationship, a connection of the body parts to each other in order to become a greater whole. Moving from individual parts, out of relationship, out of connection, has nothing to do with expression. It will at best be movement from the superficial level of the disembodied body. This will never be art. It will never communicate, being out of relationship to itself. It will never be able to bridge the gap to communicate or to form a relationship with the other. This is profoundly true of life in all its aspects: for without energetic movement within our structure there would be no life and no expression.

In Klein Technique, it is the relationships - the clear and conscious structural connection of the bones of the body to each other - that make the greater whole. The whole indeed becomes greater than the sum of its parts. Not only is this a principle of Gestalt, but it is an energetic principle as well. In the case of the body, the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts, because the energetic connections allow the spirit to soar. We can then see the expression of the deepest level of a person through a beautifully connected moving body.

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