

# BIODANZA

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| by Ruth Estevez | Manchester, January 2016

## About the author

Ruth is a writer who spends a lot of time sitting down, so to counteract this, takes as many dance classes as she can. For many years she was a dancer with the Manchester based Juba do Leao who play North Brazilian style rhythms and now takes a mixture of tap, samba, various dances from the movies and cuban salsa classes. She also loves Biodanza because it takes her emotionally to another level and connects her to others without saying a word...

I can't remember how many years I've been part of Biodanza here in Manchester but it doesn't really matter because all that matters is that it's part of my life. There have been months when I haven't been able to make a session and when that happens, I find that in every sense, I miss it.

What do I miss? Apart from the people I feel very connected to now, it is the reminder that the child in me is always there, non-judgemental, playful and uninhibited. Biodanza reminds me in this busy, distracting world, to take time and listen with my senses, to look into another person's eyes long enough to connect with them and for them to see me and not look away. It reminds me how joyful and natural basic touch is. How fun and reassuring and sensual and bonding. How necessary. It allows me to dance by really feeling the music, how it moves me physically, how it makes me feel emotionally, how I respond to the different tracks played and to what they represent.

And the people. I feel I know my fellow Biodanzers on a deep, non-verbal level. I don't need to know where they live or what they do as a job, if they have a job or if they have a pet. It's so simple. We are all in it together. We acknowledge each other as another living being. It could sound airy fairy to some, but it actually feels very grounded and

basic and what would be natural if we took the time to put down phones and stopped the chat and just breathed and looked beyond the surface.

What constantly amazes me is how Biodanza's simple activities work. Who would think that running across a room and yelling as loud as you can could be so empowering and exhilarating? Walking across a room, eyes fixed on the person opposite who is holding open their hands, honouring you, just acknowledging that you are there, could have such a profound effect? Is it because this never happens in our daily lives for most of us but we actually blossom when we are given acceptance that we exist? It makes me try to give people more time, it's what many people really need. I can transfer these exercises into the way I behave every day.

I have laughed so much at Biodanza and cried a lot too. In my daily life, I haven't made dramatic changes but what happens in Biodanza is seeping into my outside world. Of course I'm not 'there' yet, I doubt I will be, it's a journey and I'm appreciating the development, the experiences and openness and showing more humanity than I may have done before.

To someone who has never tried Biodanza, it can sound crazy and too hippyish but letting go is one of the best things we can do for ourselves and in Biodanza we are safe and able to do that. It's like dancing in the waves, in woods, vast fields of grass, in the sky amongst the stars. It can release you from whatever is tying you down. And that's not being a hippy and it's not crazy, it's actually what feels like being a human being is all about. What would be wonderful is if it were free to everyone, by having a place in children's lives all the way up to when we are old. Part of the National Health programme. Now that would be wonderful.