



SCHOOL OF MOVEMENT MEDICINE

MOVEMENT MEDICINE works with four Elements, 5 Dimensions of Awareness, 9 Gateways to the soul, and the silence at the centre of all things, which we call the 5th element. In our work, this is represented by the dynamic relationship between the transformative power of the Phoenix and the Tree of Life.

WHAT ARE THE FOUR ELEMENTS?

The 4 four elements which make up the Movement Medicine medicine wheel are: Earth in the South, Fire in the East, Water in the West and Air in the North. This wheel is born from our sigil. The tree of life has its roots in the soil. For us as Europeans the great water of the Atlantic lies to the west, the sun rises in the east, and the great Tree of Life tree reaches its branches to the great sky in the north.

We connect to the elements through movement and imagination because in their purity, we have found them to be great allies. This is true both in terms of their actual physical essence inside and outside us and because they offer us a rich and varied language of metaphor in terms of our movement practice.

Earth

We think of the spirit of the earth as a living being who treats us with enormous generosity and patience. The Earth is seen as 'The Great Mother' in indigenous cultures around the world. The benefits of making a direct connection with this living source of life are many. We make contact with the earth of our own bodies, with the earth under our feet, and come into awareness of the earth as a great being of which we are part. This is reflected in the Latin 'mater', which is the both the root of the word 'material' and the word 'mother'. Connecting with the territory of our being which is our own physical body, gives us the sense of space we often feel we lack. We sometimes think of our bodies as our personal piece of land, our "allotment" so to speak, to tend and inhabit. When we can do this, and feel the connection with the wider earth, we are supported and connected.

Fire

The spirit of the fire is vital for our wellbeing, health and existence. In our bodies, the "fire" is the energy for life being created by the mitochondria in our cells as they metabolise the energy of glucose (matter) into the energy for all our life processes. We speak literally and accurately of "burning off our food." The heat which is created by this is familiar to us all. The faster our metabolic rate, the warmer we are. As with all things, we need a balance for life to continue. Fire is a powerful energy of transformation. Our firepower is a necessary and potent source of change, growth and transformation. It also holds a fierce potential for destruction. The fire that warms us in the winter is the same element as the fire that that we have harnessed to impose our will on peoples and nations who we disagree with. Each of us has 'firepower' and we either learn to use it responsibly or it will become the source of destruction in our lives. As we awaken our firepower it is important to bring it into the guidance system of our consciousness and our deep purpose.

Water

We can live without food for many weeks if we have to, but without clean water, we would die very soon. Water can take many shapes and we sometimes call it the master or the mistress of change. To dance the water element is to enter the world of shape-shifting in which we learn to surrender our attachment to one form and receive the gift of purification. Water covers 80% of the earth's surface and 80% of our body is water. And like fire, water also needs to be in balance with the other elements. Too much and we will drown, too little and we will dehydrate. Water is the element in which creation or fusion happens. It is the element in which the feminine energy of the earth and the masculine energy of the fire meet. The origins of life on earth began in the water just as our own lives did. Turning our attention to this process in the dance is both healing and catalytic as we invite the dancer within us to work with the creative and purifying power of this meeting.

Air

When we return to our little country home from working in the city, the first thing we notice is the quality of the air. Air gives us the breath of life. The English word spirit is rooted in the Latin 'spiritus' which means breath, from 'spirare' to breathe.

The deeper we breathe, the more our energy will come to life. Different ways of breathing create different states, but being aware of our breath tunes us into life like nothing else, and is the basis of most meditation practices. In the dance, as well as the obvious connection between breath and movement, we connect the element of air with the 'ecstatic flight' of trance states that are achieved through sustained and focused movement practice. Movement Medicine helps us to develop the roots and the strength to be able to go into trance safely. Trance is the playground of our creativity. We work with what we call 'patterns of presence' in order to align the physical, emotional and mental aspects of our dreams and bring them through the dance into being.

A deep relationship with these four elements will bring us deeply into relationship with our own nature as well as nature around us. Each element has many different qualities and through working with them in movement, we will greatly increase the vocabulary of possibility that we have at our disposal.

WHAT ARE THE 9 GATEWAYS?

**Body . Heart . Mind .
Past . Present . Future .
Fulfillment . Interconnection . Realisation .**

In Movement Medicine we work with 9 Gateways. Each of these Gateways reflects an aspect of life that we each have to deal with, whether or not we are conscious of it. The 9 Gateways path brings these aspects into consciousness and gives us keys to awaken the power of the soul.

The 9 Gateways are divided into three journeys with each journey containing three gateways. Each gateway has 4 qualities associated with it that we work to develop through our practice. We see each gateway as a tree and these four qualities represent the roots and branches.

There are gateways and qualities where we are at home and have strong roots, and others where our connection is weak, or "thin." As our practise deepens, we can identify these strengths and weaknesses, and we then have the exciting opportunity to explore them, to grow, and to develop more balance.

The 1st Journey: The Journey of Personal Power

This journey takes us through the first three gateways which are Body, Heart and Mind. It is the alignment of body, heart and mind that creates the presence and personal power from which strong intention emerges.

The 2nd Journey: The Journey of Responsibility takes us through the second three gateways which are Past, Present and Future. Honouring the past and taking full responsibility for our lives in the present helps us to co-create and envision and take care of the future.

The 3rd Journey: Living the Dream takes us through the final trilogy of gateways which are Fulfillment, Interconnection and Realisation. Fulfillment means to bring the gifts we each have into full manifestation. The direct experience of the interconnection of all of life results in the overwhelming wish to contribute everything we have in gratitude for the life we are being given. And the realisation of our true natures as human beings as manifestations of Divine Love is perhaps the deepest fulfilment a human being can find.

You can dance through the layers of impossibility, fixed patterns and ideas of who and what you are. Whoever you are, you can emerge, fresh, strengthened and renewed in the direct experience of the infinite possibility that is within you. Far from being this being a self-indulgent belly-button staring pastime, it is the ground from which you get to participate in creation, knowing who you are and what you are here to give.

WHAT ARE THE 5 DIMENSIONS OF AWARENESS?

The 5 dimensions map is an expanding view of consciousness. It moves between micro and macro, individual and global dimensions. Someone who is awake across all 5 dimensions has a fluidity and ease of movement between awareness of 'self' and being aware of what's going on outside. Each dimension has its challenges and its rewards. Again, each of us will have aspects which are naturally stronger and weaker. Developing across all the dimensions creates the possibility of a being a fully resourced and potent human being.

The Five Dimensions are:

Self: self-respect, self-love, self-care. I know who I am and what I need and I do what is necessary to take care of myself. This includes my body, heart, mind and soul. I love myself and honour the life that flows through me.

Relational: I am able to look beyond my own needs and recognise the needs of the people around me. I am able to hold my own view and express it clearly whilst being equally able to hear and respond to different points of view. Essentially, this level is about clear communication involving clear expression and active listening.

Community and Environment: I now see my life in relationship to my local and global environment and all that is in it. My sense of family includes the natural world. The earth is my mother, the sun is my father, and the trees and the beings in the forest are my relatives. I realise that I am connected with all living beings, and, in the shamanic paradigm, to many spirit beings too. Therefore, the choices that I make will include the deep love and sense of connection I have with the whole web of life of which I am a part.

Ancestral: My view is expanding and I become conscious of the patterns, stories, wounds and expectations that I am carrying from my ancestors and from the culture I have grown up in. This dimension invites us to learn from and honour our ancestors whilst being able to discern unresolved ancestral stories or outmoded ideas and beliefs that we are carrying. This awareness allows us to release what no longer serves life whilst maintaining and even strengthening the connection we have with our ancestors. We are living our lives in a wider context where we realise that all our actions have consequences for the generations that will follow and the human and non-human world around us. The question here is: "What kind of ancestor do I choose to become?"

Divine Source: We realise the spiritual nature of our existence and make our own connection to the divine grace through which we live. When we recognise that there is 'that of God in each of us,' and that this is our truest nature, our experience of life and the perspective through which we live expands. Our lives then become a prayer, a passionate expression of the deepest purpose we are here to live.

We have seen in ourselves and in others the dangers of becoming over-identified with any one level of awareness. For example, someone who is over-identified with first dimension will become totally self-obsessed to the exclusion of everything and everyone else. We call this 'Me-itis,' or 'me, myself, my royal I-ness.' On the other hand someone who is over-identified with dimension two may be a brilliant carer for other human beings whilst forgetting to take care of their own self. This can work in the short term, but ultimately we pay the price for our imbalance. Someone who is over-identified with the fifth Dimension may try to lose themselves before they have found themselves, and may find themselves living a saccharine version of compassion which has no roots. Or they may mistake concept for experience, and live in a world of spiritual ideas and ideals which are not embodied or practical and do not connect with life itself.

The invitation of Movement Medicine work is to become fluid enough to move easily and effortlessly through all five dimensions and to learn to recognise our strengths and challenges. Each of us will tend to have particular dimensions where we are naturally at home and others which, if we are to develop them, need conscious work. When we have done this work and become fluid with our attention, we find ourselves surfing through the levels moment-to-moment, day-to-day, and era-to-era. This is a dynamic balancing act. In Movement Medicine we practice this shifting of dimensions of awareness through and within the dance. The experience is immediate and embodied. All of this takes time. Wisdom grows through experience and wherever we are in this dance, it is important to give time to the natural process of awakening through the 5 dimensions. As a friend who is an inspired community artist used to say to us: "You can't stretch a leaf, it's a growing thing."

What is the 5th Element?

At the centre of our medicine wheel sits the Phoenix and the 5th Element. Movement Medicine works with the transformational medicine of the Phoenix because we have experienced and have faith in the power that anybody and everybody has to transform their suffering into wisdom, creativity, light and possibility. This is not an abstract new age philosophy. We have worked with people from all five continents from a massive variety of situations. We have worked with people who have been tortured, raped and abused as well as people who have had to deal with the more mundane or hidden challenges of growing up as part of the human race. We have found that our work has

enabled thousands of people to come to terms with the past, arrive in the present and wake up their passion to create the future. Movement Medicine is one of the many possible ways to take the initiatory journey through the flames of transformation towards being a responsible, articulate, passionate, creative and imaginative human being.

The fifth element is often referred to as ether or the very rarefied substance that archaic physicists used to believe permeated all of space. We talk about the 5th Element as being the force of attraction between opposites that creates the conditions for and the actualisation of life in this universe. For that reason, we sometimes call it love. The 5th element is also the silence, the void and the emptiness from which all manifestation arises and to which it returns. It is the place of digestion, rest and all potential. It is spirit. It is God and the ten thousand other names we have for the ineffable presence of the divine.

To choose to embark on a journey to become who we are and to give all we've got is both testing and a privilege, and takes courage and a big dose of humour. We have certainly fallen down as many times as we have stood up when what we call the Great Choreographer has presented us with a few well-designed obstacles. The 4 elements, 9 Gateways, and 5 Dimensions of Movement Medicine are our description of how to further unleash the infinite possibilities that you hold inside you so that you can wake up each morning as we do and have the joy of giving thanks for this remarkable life.