

Long Distance Mover/Witness

Between Belarus and USA

Spring 2009

This project is being formed by each of you who are curious and willing to invest a period of time and practice to learn from one another about long distance moving/witnessing between a collective of movers, one in Belarus and the other in the United States. Paula Sager and Lizbeth Hamlin, long-time authentic movement practitioners in the USA, have been developing a practice that grows out of our experience in writing and publishing 'red thread, two women.' (see: <http://www.charleshobson.com/books/redthread.html>)

One of our hopes is to strengthen the possibilities of a worldwide connection of movers and witnesses writing to one another. The Belarus/USA 'experiential lab' will be the first formal opportunity to explore the possibilities of relationship between groups of movers/witnesses in different countries.

Our intention is to give enough structure to enter a dialogue between individual and collective bodies through the use of Authentic Movement and language. This format is designed with input from Alexey Konstantinov in Belarus in conjunction with the second annual gathering of the International Laboratory of Authentic Movement to be held near Minsk, Belarus from April 29 – May 3.

What follows is a simple format that we have designed to begin our process of exploration. We know that there will be times when we do not know the outcome of our journey and we hope that with sensitivity and focus we will meet one another in some remarkable ways.

We imagine that there will be 5 – 10 participating individuals in each of the two collective groups (Group A: Belarus/Group B: USA). Each individual is free to follow the basic sequence in his or her own way, for example, alone or in a group context. However, we all intend to follow the score as described below, in three separate moving sessions over the course of the gathering from 4/29 – 5/3 (use your own local time).

MOVEMENT SEQUENCE

SESSION ONE

- Self: First establish relationship to yourself. Move with awareness of your own body, your own self, and then, in your own timing, open your awareness to include the other individuals in your group (even if your group/collective is not physically present with you).

After moving, take some time to write.

Later, if you have access to a computer/internet, post a short passage from the writing.

SESSION TWO

- Other: After establishing relationship within yourself and then your group, begin to open your awareness to include relationship to the collective group across the ocean. See if you can have a sense of witnessing the other group. Follow your own inner impulse in relationship to your awareness of the group of "others."

After moving, take some time to write.

Later, if you have access to a computer/internet, post a short passage from the writing.

SESSION THREE

- Global Connection: First establish relationship or awareness within yourself, your group, and then the distant group. Follow your own inner impulse in relationship to this awareness of this larger collective, inclusive of your own group and the distant others.

After moving, take some time to write.

Later, if you have access to a computer/internet, post a short passage from the writing.

Here are some guidelines that may be helpful:

- Agree on who will be in your collective for this period of time. Being together is not essential yet establishing awareness of those with whom you are participating can intensify and support the container and practice in a firm manner.
- It may be helpful to light a candle, as this can be a means of focusing –we have found that the flame can serve as a mirror for witness consciousness.
- After each of the three rounds of movement we suggest you write. You may want to use first person, present tense language in order to stay close to the direct movement experience. If you can post a passage of your writing from each session on the *red thread* site (more on this as we clarify where that will be), it will enhance the reaching out and engaging with one another.
- Sharing: If you are physically present with all or some of your group, take time at the end of the three sessions to share some of your thoughts or experience of this process. It would be great if someone can take notes so that these reflections may also be exchanged on the site.

Re Posting on an internet site: We are working on this and hope to have this information very soon.

We know that this is all in creative formation and please feel free to make contact with either of us. Paula at: paulasager@cox.net and Lizbeth at: lizabeth.hamlin@mac.com

Belarussian part

During the [Second International Laboratory](#) of Authentic Movement

On the first day of the laboratory we discussed and planned preliminary list of themes, formats and processes. Next day we gathered into a group of those interested in the long-distance format to clarify the proposed format. We discussed how we would organize and schedule our processes and agreed to meet next morning at 8 a.m. (1.5 hour before breakfast) for the first session. We agreed to experience this one and then decide how to go on. And we also read the first portion of letters from movers over the ocean.

Session one.

Format: long circle 25min, 12min for transition, 15min for group sharing.

Statements from sharing:

From time to time while witnessing I felt creepy all over the spine. It was difficult to bear such amount of group focus and ritual.

It was a significant support to everybody when witnesses opened a circle each time a mover became a witness.

A clear feeling of group and commonality was experienced by everybody, both in a witness and mover roles.

It was a vivid experience of ritual and symbolism with a high intensity of images arriving at every movement.

It was like Indian patronal dance.

Our experience seemed to be conditioned to a large extent by the session preface. It was as if we are connected through common breathing, we breathe the same air. We are all – a single family with connections to other people.

It was the first time I was dancing during AM process. I danced through a variety of styles and unwonted movements. It was incredibly interesting. There was a pure joy during the whole process and surprisingly open and flowing voice.

There was a very distinct feeling of a group.

We started in a common and open circle focusing on a candle. I recalled Karl Jung's dream about a candle. Experiencing joy, commonality and awe I felt a necessity to take care of this light.

It was a unique experience of emptiness and integrity of time, consciousness and space.

Session two.

We discussed and agreed not to combine this format with the rest of the laboratory's sessions and the whole group yet. So we gathered in the evening to read another portion of letters and scheduled the second session to next morning at 8.00 a.m. Participants also submitted their reports to Alexey and Tasya to translate and send.

Format: long circle 30min, 10min transition, 30min group sharing.

After the session there was a strong desire to spend these 30 minutes on formal group sharing without discussion the format itself. So we did.

Session three.

Considering the laboratories' intensity and dynamic we again agreed not to combine with other laboratory's sessions and the whole group. Again we met in the evening to read letters and replies and set time for next morning.

Format: long circle in a circle of candles, starting with a whole group in a mover role. 30min process, 15min for transition, 20min for group sharing and 25min for conclusion discussion.

Concluding discussion of the format.

The final group sharing was astonishing. It seemed like everybody speaks and witnesses the same thing, the same process. It is as if personal boundaries are diffuse and there is no difference between my process and the other's, between my words and the other's.

During the last process most of us experiences a theme of traveling in some way or another (by air as superman, by sea or even walking on the Earth) to the distant but already dear group.

It is incredible how valuable and meaningful everything – a movement, a word, a pause, a silence, a glance.

Is it totally due to this particular format – a long-distance witnessing? Partially yes. However this is also our merit, our efforts to focus and share, our presence. Is it possible to preserve this focus and bring it into different formats?

The state of witnessing, meaningfulness and depth resembles to a great extent a state after format with a meditative preface.

It was a good idea to carry the format out in the mornings, before the rest laboratory's work. It provided a strong and fresh attention, enough resources and additional container to handle experience, a special level of ritualization.

It seems essential that everybody shares the very precise common focus and put enough efforts to maintain it.

In general it is easy as a Mover to have in mind and correlate with the distant group. But it is not clear how to arrange this group in correlation to an inner witness as a Witness. Some participants placed the distant group somewhere above all, the others – behind a witness circle.

While writing reports for the distant group most of us took a recipient as God. It was a kind of "letters to God". A children's desire to write a letter to Santa could eventually realize here, especially we knew for certain "he" would get and read the letters!