

# The StarFire Method of Dance Kinesiology Body-Centered Self-Development Research on the Use of the Somatic Integration Process™ for Personal Growth

by David Fuerstenau and Patti Steurer

## *Abstract*

Report on research in the StarFire Method of Dance Kinesiology, the specific application of Specialized Kinesiology/TFHS combined with movement and dance to personal growth in group workshop format. Specific results gained from adding movement exploration and dance to a basic balance format, and from working in community in addressing the issue of shame. An example of using the Somatic Integration Process™ for the defusion of stress on the topic of creative self-expression.

The StarFire Method of Dance Kinesiology is different from most other branches of the TFH Synthesis. We are a specific application of TFHS techniques that already exist to the field of personal growth. We have not created more than two or three unique techniques to add to the other techniques from muscle testing to create breakthroughs. Two essential components that deepen the results of this balance format are the element of dance, which combines use of the right brain, left brain, the conscious mind and the unconscious mind, and the element of non-verbal exploration.

The Somatic Integration Process™ has four basic steps:

- **Explore** through the metaphor of movement and the medium of dance.
- **An Integration Ritual** to defuse the stress that accompanies the issue explored.
- **Further Exploration** to see and experience what has changed since releasing the stress to anchor the integration.
- **Celebrate** these changes and the new choices available.

These four steps will look familiar to everyone who does some form of Specialized Kinesiology, and in fact to anyone who is doing any kind of therapy, treatment or research. All of learning seems to follow these simple steps. The StarFire addition is the movement and dance, which brings additional input into the learning process. We also are very interested in the celebration step, because

we work in the arena of personal growth very intentionally, and with the issue of shame as a core subject. The release of shame, which we think is not an inherent feeling in humans, but a learned one, benefits from two things. The first is working in community, which is why we prefer to work in groups in workshops. Since we think shame is a learned experience, that means it was learned from someone. Thus, being in the presence of others while working on this issue brings the body/mind/heart field fully on line for this aspect of shame. Second, when releasing shame, it is very helpful to be in the presence of others, to experience their witnessing of my shame, that they are judging, i.e. shaming me, but instead being with me and accepting me the way I am. I learn from this totally reframed experience that instead of being judged by others they celebrate me just the way I am. I have nothing to feel ashamed of in my own uniqueness, wholeness and perfectness.

The medium of movement provides metaphors for movement in life, career, relationship, etc. It is possible to explore any issue using the metaphor of movement, putting the body into action to symbolize a belief pattern or feeling. The medium of dance adds an expressive, creative element that activates the right brain in a way that simple verbal exploration, even through muscle testing, can avoid or miss. The non-verbal exploration through movement and dance activates cellular response throughout the entire body/mind/heart field, to bring both conscious and unconscious beliefs, memories, patterns, thinking and feeling on line. When my whole body is moving, and

each cell is active, all of my intelligence and experience is involved, and the whole body/mind/heart field is a gestalt "muscle-test" My intuition, my feelings, my thoughts all feed-back to me what stress I experience in my movement/dance exploration. The muscle test is possibly merely the simplest of these feedback elements.

An example of a possible movement exploration: if a person feels blocked in being creative, s/he will probably also be blocked in moving their body creatively. Defuse stress for creatively moving the body and "creativity" can probably also be freed. Not only that, but the person often becomes "inspired" in choice coming to them. Every cell and the intelligence in each cell, conscious or not, is activated and then becomes available without stress for new choices after the defusion. In our experience, people usually become aware of a specific feeling, belief or physical symptom during or after the exploration, even if they had no conscious understanding before the defusion. It seems that using movement and dance allows the mind/heart/body intelligence to choose its own needs for defusion, without necessarily being consciously aware of what it is attending to as it goes.

An enlightened man of India was shown a demonstration of Touch for Health by a chiropractor we know. When the balance was over, the demonstration client told the enlightened man what he experienced. Then the chiropractor asked the enlightened man what his opinion was of the work. The enlightened man said "if the patient feels better, then it must be good." This could very well serve as a guideline for what we do in kinesiology, and about what is important in what we do in kinesiology. It's not so much about how we help someone feel better, but about the result that the patient feels better.

Gordon Stokes' column in the IASK and TFHA newsletters titled, *What We Do and What We Don't Do*, included a short list of distinctions between our view and the view of allopathic medicine. Several points in it were very intriguing to us, and we want to highlight them. Gordon wrote the following points, among others:

- We study symptoms to determine uniqueness of the individual.
- We work subjectively.
- Doctor's work objectively.

- We feel an individual is energetic and has a spiritual dimension.
- We believe that our client is the authority.

In the StarFire Method or Dance Kinesiology, we feel that the spiritual expression of human beings is one of their most basic and important experiences. This means to us that a spiritual expression through a spiritual practice, or whatever style or content, is essential to the self-satisfaction of human beings. Humans seek to know god/dess, and find inspiration and peace for their lives through their spiritual practices. The experience or god/dess is usually a subjective one or faith and feeling, surrounded by attempts to objectify what they experience at the bottom, even if they can name objective measurements that would bring satisfaction. Satisfaction is a feeling, it's subjective. "If the patient *feels* better."

We also feel that the uniqueness of individuals requires that they be regarded as the authority in their wellness and self-satisfaction. The unique intelligence of their cells, their body/mind/heart field, can only be subjectively experienced by themselves. The unique intelligence of their body/mind/heart field guides them in their growth, personal expression of wholeness and wellness, and in their spiritual experience.

StarFire works in group format during a workshop, making group explorations and doing the integration ritual together, using one person's arm as a representative indicator while testing the group as it holds hands in a circle. This adds a benefit for the participants of being present to each other in the exploration of the shame that was passed on to them. In this particular Somatic Integration Process the exploration is about freedom in moving one's hips and shoulders, one's creativity and expression. The following process is written as it would be done with an individual.

### ***Hips and Shoulders A Somatic Integration Process for Creativity and Expressivity***

We receive many messages from our culture, family, friends, school teachers, etc., that moving our hips is not a "nice" thing to do. Often we learn that this part of our body is "bad" or "dirty". In actuality, this part of our body holds the source of our creative energy. Many cultures acknowledge this, for example, in India it is in the base of the spine that the "kundalini" energy is stored and

released. When this happens it is the awakening of the entire body/mind/heart field. To restrict the movement of this part of our body can have the effect of reducing the flow of creativity in our lives. In Life Dancing 101 we take the opportunity to defuse stress for moving our hips. With this integration we release shame, love our bodies just the way they are and allow our creativity to flow.

Having freedom of movement in our neck, shoulders and arms allows our self-expression to be free flowing. This is one of the most expressive parts of our bodies, and holds the most obvious organs for expression, the voice. It is often the part of our body where we hold stress and tension. When this area is tight and not moving then our self-expression is often also held back. We may think our self-expression is not welcome, or too powerful, or not worth much. Defusing stress for free movement of the neck, shoulders, and arms create an opening for freedom in self-expression.

This is a fun and challenging Somatic Integration Process. Defusing stress for Hips and shoulders acts to dissolve shame toward our body and our movement. You may find it valuable to talk about shame and how it influences our lives. This is not necessary, but may come up naturally during this Somatic Integration Process. Whether you discuss shame or not does not influence the fact that this integration process dissolves shame.

### **1. Exploration:**

- a. Person moves only their hips and notice how this feels. After 10 – 15 seconds ask them what thoughts go through their head or what feelings they feel in their bodies while moving their hips. Discuss how we are told not to move this part of the body. We also get very clear non-verbal messages that we should not move this part of our body too much. Listen to lively music, dance and move together, exploring how free the hip area is for moving. Test a muscle to determine if stress is present.
- b. Person moves only their shoulders and arms. Ask them to notice how this feels. Tell them that moving our shoulders and arms is connected with self-expression. Ask them what messages they received about their how to express themselves. With music in the background person moves their shoulders and arms in as many ways as

possible. Test a muscle to determine if stress is present.

- c. Next ask the person to move their hips and shoulders at the same time . Encourage them to move around the room. Ask them also to explore how well connected their hips and shoulders feel. After a few minutes, stop the moving and ask them how they feel. Test a muscle to determine if stress is present.

**Note:** If there is no stress response then there is either no Somatic Integration Process to do, or you can ask the person to tell you what aspect of creativity or expression is challenging to them. Then ask them to dance how that challenge looks or feels to them. Then re-test. It would be very unusual for no stress to be present. If, however, there is no stress, it could mean that integration and defusion of stress came in the process of exploring the movements, which happens during exploration with movement sometimes. If no stress is present, go to step 4.. Take time to celebrate by dancing with some fun music for a while.

### **2. Integration Ritual:**

- a. If stress is present, defuse the stress using techniques from your repertoire, finding the best technique to defuse by muscle testing. Do as many activities as needed to defuse the stress.
- b. When the integration ritual is complete, invite the person to move their hips and shoulders separately and together once again (1.a,b,c) Muscle test each activity. If they talked about a specific challenge, they re-express that in a dance. At this time the muscle test will indicate that stress has been defused.

**3. Explore again** to anchor the defusion of stress and changes that have occurred. Play some music and invite the person to dance, moving their hips and shoulders. Give them a long time to explore their new body and how they can now move in a different way than they did before the integration.

**4. Celebrate** the changes the person feels by asking them to tell you what they feel now, using as many descriptive words and gestures as they can.