



spirit' of the Sun, Moon and various animal and plant life. Through these dance rituals they believed that the spirits within nature could empower them with abilities such as courage and compassion, as well as reveal insights into the future.

For thousands of years, spiritual dancing remained an integral part of how we maintained and enhanced our relationship to the Earth. To 'dance like nature' was to vibrate at the same rate as the creator, much the same as any newborn child will mimic its environment out of love and appreciation for its existence. Dance was synonymous with what we would call prayer, a demonstration of reverence, and to dance regularly promoted spiritual and physical health and vitality. In addition, dance was a doorway to the soul or spirit within, and to dance oneself into a state of trance was to connect completely to the healing powers of spirit. It is from these shamanic perspectives that we approach Trance Dance.

"By dancing within the seclusion of darkness, we discover parallel realities where solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems are possible."
(Wilbert Alix)

Wilbert Alix has pioneered the professional application of Trance Dance and other shamanic techniques as legitimate healing and therapeutic tools. He conducts workshops and trains professionals throughout the USA, Europe, Canada, Mexico, Australia and South America. He frequently appears at professional conferences and expos, as well as teaching educational mind/body science programmes to individuals and corporations.

My personal experience with Trance Dance has been transforming. I travelled to Hawaii to attend Wilbert Alix's workshop on learning how to facilitate Trance Dance; the training was experiential as well as theory. I had no idea on my first day, the journey I would go on during our training, and that I would come out the other end feeling like a very different person.

For more information about Trance Dance –
Website: www.TranceDance.com
For more information about current workshops in New Zealand –
Website: www.integratedevents.org

Trance Dance is a new form of meditation that is rapidly gaining popularity. Like meditation, trance is a vehicle to move you to the state of 'no mind'.

When you meditate, you sit in silence for extended periods of time until the mind empties out and you become an empty vessel so your spirit can surface. Trance has the same effect, except the doorway is different; it's done through catharsis, rhythm, sound and movement of the body. What occurs, either in that movement or at the end of that movement, is trance, a very deep meditational state. In shamanic cultures, they used trance and in the East they used contemplation and meditation.

Trance Dance employs these traditional approaches to healing along with some unique contemporary techniques. One of the most powerful of these contemporary tools is the use of a blindfold or bandana. In more ancient times trance dance rituals were done primarily at night because darkness was a necessary context for participants to focus on their inner experience or visions. Darkness creates a state of suspension or 'stopping time', an altered state or trance state where there is no-one but one's self. It is within this inner journey that we connect with spirit and the truths it reveals. The bandana therefore becomes a spiritual tool allowing each participant to block out all distraction and to become a witness to the richness of his or her own experience.

Traditionally, trance dance has always been accompanied by the rhythms of drumming. Why the drum? Instinctively, we know www.rainbownews.co.nz

that sound. It is the beating of our heart. That constant beating sound is a meditative sound. When we are quiet, we hear it in our bodies. The beat moves us into a trance state when the rhythm is unbroken and constant. At some point, the brain stops listening to it and trusts that it's there.

If you listen to the rhythm – eyes shielded by a bandana, breath flowing in patterns – and move, a gradual dissociation with your ego will take place. It's not permanent. It's a temporary place that you go, but it does have lasting effect. When you come back out of trance, less of your ego is there and more of your higher self is present – more of your intelligent self, your wisdom. People who dance over extended periods of time notice a marked increase in frequency of insight and revelation.

From the beginnings of recorded history we find evidence of dance. It seems that our original relationship to dancing was for the purpose of worship and healing. In this ancient time our ancestors viewed nature and all of its elements as an expression of God. To duplicate or mimic nature through movement and sounds was their first and highest way to connect with spirit, and was the origin of dance.

Spiritual dancing is a cross-cultural phenomenon, a testament to its power and authenticity. Cultures from every continent on this planet simultaneously embraced unique dance forms based on the animals and elements of nature present within their domain. Their purpose in dancing was to 'enter the consciousness' or 'become the