

The Body Intelligence Summit™

The Shamanic Mandala of Movement Medicine

Ya'Acov Darling Kahn

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Mark:

Hello and welcome to another session of The Body Intelligence Summit. I'm your host, Mark Metz. Today's guest is Ya'Acov Darling Kahn, co-founder and director of Movement Medicine, one of the global offshoots of 5Rhythms that's really making transformative waves around the world. We're going to learn about the shamanic model and roots of Movement Medicine and how you can apply the keys to it in your life so I'm really excited to have you with us here today, Ya'Acov. Why don't you launch right in and let us know about Movement Medicine and your work?

Ya'Acov:

Well, thank you very much, Mark. First thing I want to say is thank you very much for the opportunity to communicate with your community that I know you've spent many years getting together and creating a space where all these different conscious dance practices can have a forum and a way of networking. I really want to thank you for the work you've done and the opportunity that that gives me to speak to your community and tell them a little bit about what we – myself and my wife, Susannah – have been developing over the past 30 years of traveling around the world and dancing. Yeah. I'm really very blessed, I'm very happy to be coming back to the United States for the first time in many years in just a few weeks' time.

Movement Medicine is the subject and maybe just something a little bit about where it's come from. I think, given the context, really useful and correct in a way for me to share with you the different roots and lineages of Movement Medicine –

Mark:

Please do.

Ya'Acov:

-- where Movement Medicine has come from. Like any conscious dance practice, it stands on the shoulders of many pioneers before us, people who've been developing this kind of way of working with the creative being inside us as a way of healing which is relatively recent in the modern world and used to be very everyday in the ancient world. In a way, we lost the sense of theater and community and healing and story-telling and ecstatic communion, all being really one thing. We've boxed it off in the way that we had boxed off so many things.

First of all, I have to admit that it's one of life's kind of ironies that I ended up teaching movement because movement, I can promise you, is not my thing. I

mean, I played soccer. I played hockey. But I was not a dancer in any way, shape, or form. The only way you'd get me dancing would be if you'd put me – hand me a couple of vodkas and then played one particular track. That was the only way you'd get me onto the dance floor. I wasn't looking for dance. At least, I didn't think I was. Shows how much I knew. I didn't think I was looking for dance. I was really looking for ways of practicing shamanism and making sense of the world view that I had in my own experience that was different to the culture in which I was growing up in.

I was very much into the mystery as a little boy. I just loved the mystery. Every night, I would do this meditation. Of course, I had no idea it was a meditation but I would lie in the bed and I'd feel my body and I'd feel the bed and I'd slowly expand through all the layers until I got to the point where it felt like my thumbs could tickle the stars. At that point, I'd have this question which was, well, I'm told that some being called "God" created all of this, what I want to know is, great, what created God? Where did God come from? That question was – it tickled the funny bone inside me. It was a question I loved then and I still love because it's a question without answer so it points to the mystery of life. The basic answer that I come to when I ask any question for long enough is: I basically don't know. I basically don't know. Life's a mystery.

I've had many, many really great teachers along the way. One of my teachers, a man called Batty Thunder Bear who was a beautiful Austrian medicine man, had a big, shaggy head of hair unlike me, and sat there teaching smoking Jakarta cigarettes all day. Amazing, very funny, very wise. Lovely man.

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One of the things he told me, which made sense to me, was the way we see it is that there's no inherent universal meaning in life whatsoever. There's no one meaning that everyone could say, "Yes. I sign up for that." Life's mysterious. There's a million, million, infinite amounts of viewpoints to see what's happening here. So since we don't know and since you're a human being and human beings are storytellers, we're going to make a story that gives our life meaning, you may as well choose a story which makes you smile when you wake up in the morning, that gives you a reason to do things, to be motivated, to have dignity, to have a sense of purpose. I love that because it spoke to both the mystery and responsibility as human beings to make choices about what we give our life energy to. He was a great teacher.

I was studying shamanism. When I was 21, I got hit by lightning on a golf course. That was quite a wake-up because during my teenage years I had really put away that sense of mystery. Like most teenagers, I wanted to be cool, I wanted to fit in, and I wanted to have a girlfriend, and I wanted to be part of the sea. I didn't want to be this weird guy who was into the mystery so I put it all to one side.

Then the lightning strike brought it all back really in an instant. I felt like this awakening in me to remember the things that really mattered and to give my attention to that. Obviously, being hit by lightning, it's a kind of encounter with your mortality. I really felt that. It made me view life in a different way so, at that point, I really got disciplined about seeking out people who could help me to understand the kinds of experiences I'd had as a child.

That road led me to somebody who I'm sure most of your community – no, all of your community – will know about, who is the magnificent being that was Gabrielle Roth.

Mark: Yeah.

Ya'Acov: I met her in 1988 on a weekend workshop. I hadn't really even given any thought to the fact that it was a dance workshop. I saw shamanic practice. I saw healing. I saw creativity. I didn't see dance. I kind of put that to one side. When I walked into this dojo in London and there were all these people in leotards stretching and doing their thing, I was like, oh my God, I've come to a dance workshop. I'm going to have to survive for three days in here. I was kind of hiding in the corner, trying to do my little dance. I had no idea what to do. It felt like a fish out of water.

I remember there was a Toni Childs song play where at some point she sings these words: "The power." This song was going on and at some point this woman waltzed into the room wearing a full-length black leather coat and long black hair, dark sunglasses on. I was like, what is that? She kind of waltzed around the room. She was just a force. As she came past me, she lifted up her glasses and sang "the power," right? Right at me. I was like, "Oh, my God! This better look good." But within 15 or 20 minutes of being in her workshop, she was such an amazing seductress. I don't mean sexually. She was a seductress really into the soul. She just opened the road very quickly to my sense of: it's okay for this body to move. It's okay for this body to dance.

Myself and my wife, Susannah, we just threw ourselves into the 5Rhythms and we had an 18-year apprenticeship with her. We were with her and eventually we ran her school in the UK and across Europe. About 80% of the people who came to train with Gabrielle at the time we were there were long-term students, and we had a very strong and beautiful relationship. But during those years of course I was going on studying other things. Myself and my wife have this commitment every year to do something as a beginner, something that we've never done before just to remember that feeling of what it was like for me when I walked into that dojo so that stays fresh in my memory.

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I know that people who come and work with us, they're not all people who love to dance. Some of them are there because their partner said, "You must go and do this" or because they're desperate for something, they're really in need of something and they're willing even to dance to get it. I know that there's a lot of people who come for whom dance is not their primary language of expression. Of course, there are many who come who are really embodied already in many years of practice, especially these days, but when we began it really wasn't like that. There was very little conscious dance practice around.

When we began teaching, which was quite soon after we met Gabrielle, we had very small events and usually had to pay for the pleasure of teaching. If we got three or four people in the room, we were happy. That didn't last a very long time, thank goodness, because otherwise, we'd have been in trouble. But slowly things grew. We were very young. I was only 25 years old and my wife too. We have a lot of energy and we were very passionate about this simple and strong practice that we've discovered. Alongside that, I was studying with other medicine people. I had several other shorter apprenticeships along the way, particularly with people who taught about shamanic dream practice. I still have a teacher, more of a mentor I would say really, who lives up in the Arctic Circle as a Sami teacher.

Mark: I was hoping you'd tell us the story. I know what this is leading into I think. I'm really, really excited for you to share --

Ya'Acov: Oh, great.

Mark: -- this bit about your arctic connection.

Ya'Acov: Yeah.

Mark: And the serendipity about how it all came about. That's amazing.

Ya'Acov: Truly. Yeah. It really is.

Mark: By all means, let's hear it.

Ya'Acov: Yeah. My mind was already pretty blown by that time but this event that I'm about to tell you thoroughly blew my circuits.

I was working with a woman called Marilyn who'd studied with Carlos Castaneda's teacher. She wrote a few books as well. Very interesting woman. Amazing, consummate lucid dreamer and dream teacher.

I had a series of events that led me to being in London looking for her after I'd been working with her, and finding her in a restaurant in the West End of London really, in a way, by chance but in a way by something that I still don't understand this mystery. I walked into the restaurant and I was like, "Marilyn."

"Yes, Ya'Acov. I just ordered dinner for both of us."

I was like, "What?"

"Yeah. I just ordered dinner for both of us." I was very surprised and she said, "Ya'Acov."

I said, "What? What?"

She said, "Don't act surprised."

I said, "Why? This is really surprising. I found you in a restaurant in London."

She said, "Don't act surprised or the spirits, they'll give you something to be really surprised about."

I was like, "Okay. All right. This is normal. This is every day. Let's calm down, drink some water, take some deep breath."

We had a long conversation. Part of the conversation was her asking, "Who are your guides? Who are your spirit guides, the people, the energies that you work with?" We talked about this for several hours and then I told her about the main guide that I had at that time who I just used to call the Old Man of the North. I've met him many times in dreams and whenever I was working I always used to call him. It's part of my personal preparation time for holding space for other people. I just call him and I'd visualize him. I'd see him in his home and in his landscape in this very arctic place. I just knew him as the Old Man of the North and he never let me down. I always got really simple and practical advice from him about what I needed to look out for or work with.

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I told her about him. I told Marilyn and she said, "Oh. Right. So you've been dreaming about this man."

I said yes. She said, "Well, he's calling you."

I said, "What do you mean he's calling? He's in my dreams."

She's like, "No, no, no. He's a human being and he's calling you."

When she said that, it was a bit like the feeling of being hit by lightning again, that kind of electricity up my spine let go. Oh, my God. He's a real human being. I was like, well, okay, how am I going to find him?

She said, "Well, dream. Use your dreaming."

I didn't really do much about it. I was just open to the possibility that somehow something might happen.

I was teaching in Norway about a year later and there was a Sami woman, a shaman, a practicing shaman on the workshop. She came to dance for five days and she was amazing. She was very strong, very powerful woman, very large woman and really deep dancer. We didn't talk during the workshop but at the end she came to say thank you. Then she just said to me, she looked into my eyes and she said, "Ya'Acov, don't you have a story to tell?"

I said, "Well, yeah, okay, I do. I'm looking for this man. I called him the Old Man of the North."

She said, "Oh. Okay. What does he look like?"

So I described him. I'd seen him so many times. He was like a dear friend in a sense.

She said, "What's the landscape? Where does he live?" I described the landscape.

She just very matter-of-factly said, "Yeah, yeah. I know him. I'll take you to him."

I was like, "Would you be willing?"

"Yeah, yeah. I know. I know him. I'll take you to him but I warn you, you can go all that way and he may not see you. He may not want to see you."

I said, "Well, that's a risk worth taking and that's for sure."

Six months later, I was up, right up at the north of Norway in the Arctic Circle with this woman. We spent two or three days in the area. She said, "You need to get the city off you." She introduced me to some of her community. She was doing some healings. I helped her. I was assisting her in some way.

After two or three days – and I had been dreaming about this guy every night – she said, "Okay. It's time to call him up." She picked up the phone. He doesn't speak English. He doesn't speak any English. The only two things he can say in

English are "okay" and "good mor" which means good morning. That's his English.

She called him up and there's this guy shouting, and I was like, oh my God, what's going on? I said, "What's he saying?"

She said, "Who is this young man? I'm sick of all these young men coming here and asking me stupid questions. Send him home. Send him home."

I was kind of laughing because I felt like he was just, in a way, pushing my buttons, having a little poke around to see what was going on. I just said, "Could you please tell him we'll see him tomorrow at lunchtime."

She told him. She translated. I heard this kind of, "Ho, ho, ho, ho" in the background.

Then she said, "Okay. We'll go there tomorrow."

The next day, we went. We were driving into this landscape that I just knew like the back of my hand. I've been dreaming about this guy for 12 years. We got to his house and I was like, "Oh, my God. We're here," and walked up the steps. He's sitting on the decking and he stands up and turns around. I'm like, "Oh, my God. It's you."

He was laughing and he took my hand and we sat down. We didn't say anything for three hours. We just sat quietly, sitting and with the river going past and amazing arctic light.

The woman who I was with who I'm very grateful to for bringing me to him, she said, "Do you want me to translate?"

He said, "No need to translate. We've been communicating a long time already without translation."

Mark: Wow.

Ya'Acov: This guy, he's never sat me down and directly taught me anything. It's a very traditional in a way relationship but he just shares. He's been an elder for me.

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I think the reason that he opened up to me was because I never asked him for anything. The reason I went to see him was because I was already so grateful. I just wanted to say thank you to the guy for what I'd received from his guidance.

So, yeah, I'm going to see him again in April. I'm very, very happy. Last year, he gave me his drum which is an amazing honor. The drum for the Sami is like the heart and soul of the culture. Like most indigenous people, the Sami were brutally attacked by mainstream religion. In fact, up until about 70 years ago, the punishment for owning or playing or making a drum could be death. Their culture was severely attacked.

He's an amazing man. He's one of life's genuine wise elders. I'm very grateful to know him. He's helped me a lot along the way.

Susannah and I were working for many, many years traveling and teaching and meeting the different shamanic practices along the way and finding different ways of understanding the work we were doing and it was deepening inside us. Susannah, my wife, had this dream a few years ago where it was like one of those command dreams. It sounds kind of funny but with these kinds of dreams we've learned best follow them really. You don't follow them, they knock louder.

She had this dream and basically she was told, "Your work is to be called Movement Medicine." We were like, well, right, that sounds lovely but we're doing this thing at the moment. We taught a workshop. Susannah taught a workshop called Movement Medicine, and then I taught the same workshop and we taught it together. At a similar time, I'd had a dream to do with a long-term project I've got which is going to be happening in 2018 in the town of Auschwitz in Poland which is to bring together people from Palestine and from Israel and German and Polish people and people from other places where there's been genocide to work for ten days to tell our stories from all these different perspectives through Movement Medicine, through other conscious dance practices, through Family Constellation work, through Theater of the Oppressed from Augusto Boal and different modalities for sharing these stories and, from that, to create a performance. It's called the Phoenix Project because it celebrates all human beings' capacity to rise from the ashes of deep suffering and create a new story. That's really the essence of Movement Medicine.

I'd received really an order if you like from one of my teachers that I should go to Auschwitz many years ago after a dream I'd had about dying there. It took me 13 years to prepare myself to go there because it was a big thing for me. I was terrified basically. Eventually, I went and I had a very deep and profound experience there which I'm writing about in my new book that I'm writing at the moment. The result of that was I thought I'd been there, I'd had the experience there, I've done what I'd promised to do, I had kept my pledges and I was like: thank God I'm done with the place. It's heavy. It's not a pleasant place really.

That night, I had a dream and I saw this mandala in this dream. It was hanging around this whole event that I was walking around called the Phoenix Festival. I

was walking around and then I went to the information desk in my dream and I said, "What is this? What's the Phoenix Festival?"

The guy looked at me and said, "Are you crazy? This is your dream."

I was like, "My dream" and then I woke up. I remembered this mandala very strongly and I got an artist draw it for me. It was very, very strong image and I didn't really know what it was for except that it was connected to this thing called the Phoenix Festival that seemingly it was my dream to bring about.

At that time, I started working in Israel and Palestine and doing a lot of work in Germany too. We have been doing this work for 27 years and it's taken this amount of time for me to feel ready to do this project and it will happen now in 2018.

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This mandala then appeared to us. We were then in the Amazon doing a traditional apprenticeship with two shamans in the Amazon. This is about ten years ago. In one of the deep meditations we were having with the shaman there, this mandala appeared again. I saw it very deeply. We were told, "This mandala contains all the teachings of your work. It's called Movement Medicine. Go work it out." We were like, great, I love those kind of visions. There's no instruction booklet. There's just like this promise of something amazing if you're willing to do the work -- get you, shovel up and get on with it.

We got to work and there was a strong feeling that there was going to be a need for us to individuate from Gabrielle and her work after 18 years of being with her. There was a strong sense between all of us actually. It didn't just happen in us. It was a real understanding we all arrived at. It was agreed upon thing on the soul level.

Unfortunately, the egos came into it after. We had a difficult time interacting with Gabrielle which we really regret because we honor that woman very deeply and we always have and always will. It was a source of sadness for us that we were not -- there was not ever a time where we were able to make peace. But we feel a sense of deep peace with her these days. We feel that she's very much part of our lineage and she has an honored place at our table as one of our central teachers.

The gift that Gabrielle brought to this world of really recognizing the wound of the separation between spirit and body, particularly those two; and dance, an ecstatic dance was the way to heal that wound and bring them back together. She was radical and so creative. I'm so grateful to have had the extraordinary teachings we had both in the light and in the shadow that we had with her. That's a great teacher.

Mark: Right. I see this happen many times over the years with many things where in order for things to grow there has to be a split and an evolution. That's how the movement grows. It's really wonderful to see. I just am amazed by your story of how the dream informs your overall movement metaphor of the mandala. I mean, many of these practices have sort of an overarching map or metaphor or framework or structure so –

Ya'Acov: Yeah.

Mark: The dream download, this is amazing. Roughly, what years was that when really the Movement Medicine download came in and you had moved off?

Ya'Acov: That was around – it was probably about 12 years ago now that that dream happened. But Movement Medicine as a practice came into being in January 2007 and then we had been teaching that ever since and running apprenticeships and professional training.

Movement Medicine has a very simple thing. I mean, it has at the center of that mandala is the phoenix which is this invocation as I mentioned before of every human being's capacity to rise from the ashes of their suffering --

Mark: Right.

Ya'Acov: -- and create. Create. Not just with self but create together. Create as community. Create with awareness of not just the community that's in the room but like all shamanic practice with an awareness of the wider community, the web of life that we're part of.

I mentioned earlier tomorrow I'm off back to the Amazon in Ecuador with my wife. We work with an organization called The Pachamama Alliance that came into being at the invitation of the indigenous people. We're going back to see our friends and family there in the Amazon amongst the Achuar, Sapara people whose land is really severely threatened at this very moment -- the mineral rights from the oil under the ground that the Sapara has recently sold to a Chinese oil company.

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The Sapara heritage, there's only 750 Sapara people left. They're a World UNESCO Heritage. Their culture is recognized as such. I mean, way apart from all that, they are people with the knowledge and beautiful people. Not perfect people – no such thing – but beautiful people with something really to give.

We love these people and part of our work is standing alongside them and bringing people back to them who are willing to stand alongside them and share

their story back in their own culture in order to try to protect their land and culture, not just for them because both the Achuar and the Sapara people recognize deeply that the Amazon, it's the lungs of the earth and if that goes, we're all in trouble. This is not just about their culture. It's about our collective future.

Shamanism as a practice, often I see this missed in modern shamanism. It becomes more about having a great vision and a spiritual experience and less about the concrete action of reciprocity that if I receive then I must give back. We humans receive a lot and part of the essence of Movement Medicine is be who you are, yes, really be the one you are. That's half of the story. The other half of the story is give what you've got. Give what you came here to give and find the heart of what you're here to do. That's the essence of all the practice that we do is that little thing: be who you are and give what you've got. It happens through this extraordinary capacity that human beings have to be moved by rhythm on all levels, to prove being moved by rhythm and recognize the rhythm of their own heart and the truth of who they are.

Practice. The dance floor is a place of practicing. The capacity we have not just to feel but to embody a new dream, a new story, to recognize this sense of myself, this is not who I am anymore. There's something new like I'm shedding a skin. I'm growing like a tree branch and I'm expanding and something new is coming through.

The dance floor and the way that we move together and we walk together, we say yes to this brilliance that's in everybody. That's what the dance floor is for for me. It's like a holy place in a very down-to-earth, physical, sweaty way. It's a place where we can learn really deeply about life through giving this physical body back to the intelligence that lives in us.

Mark: Wow. Yeah. That's amazing that you've been doing this work in the Amazon with the indigenous folks down there for quite some time too. Now you're on your way. You're about to head down there right now for a couple of weeks' retreat or...

Ya'Acov: That's right. We visit four different villages where there're families and people that we know over the years. We have a godson there who's a four-year-old shaman. He's obviously a very young shaman but the tribe recognize him as a shaman-to-be. They asked us to godparent him which is a great honor and a great responsibility as well. We love him and his family and we feel them really as our friend. It's an honor to go there, to bring people there.

Manari, who's the leader of the Sapara people, he also came to a long dance ceremony in Europe for the summer. He came. The leader of this Amazonian

tribe came and took part in a Long Dance. It was a 72-hour dance ceremony we'd share. We sleep for four hours a night and we dance for 20 hours a day without food and some people even without water and of course without any plant medicine, just through the power of the beat and your will to meet spirit and to give back to life. It also raises a lot of money for The Pachamama Alliance. It's raised over \$500,000 so far for so many different projects around the world. Again, it's like those two arms of shamanism, yes, have the experience that make it concrete as well.

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Mark: Mmm. Well, I love what you said about giving back because, really, that's so much the essence of so much of this work is discovering where you can be in a place of service that's harmonious and in alignment with who you really are. I think sometimes people really struggle when they're just kind of drifting through life and not serving anything or not really discovering where their place of service can be.

Ya'Acov: That's beautifully put. Really beautifully put, Mark. I agree with you wholeheartedly. Yes. There's such a deep loneliness in the industrialized culture these days, so many people who just do with any kind of held space to remember a little bit of soul. That's really what drives us to do professional training as well is to train other people to bring this work to places that we can't possibly reach, just the two of us. We're really proud of the people who we train; good, good honest people from many cultures around the world who are finding their way of serving like the many other conscious dance practices that are inviting that. Yeah, we're pleased and honored to be part of this conscious dance community world.

Mark: That's great. It's like a methodology of permission. Sometimes I'll talk about this because I was one of those kids who never needed permission. I was like I'm going to dive in the middle and make trouble from the start but I always knew I was one of the rare ones because so many of the majority are always the people that are kind of like, "Oh, well, I don't dance" or "Maybe if I have a drink." They're like people need some permission. As we grow up and mature and spiral up or however you want to look at it, permission can take many different forms. Training people in the art of holding that space, having the container, and really letting people feel safe enough to be vulnerable and expand, it's key.

Ya'Acov: Yeah.

Mark: Well, I just want to acknowledge how, since you've been with dance first, I've seen how many workshops you guys are leading and sometimes you're teaching together and sometimes you're in different countries on the same weekends. You've got to be some of the busiest teacher or facilitators out there.

Ya'Acov: Well, it's like we're doing it while we can.

Mark: Yeah. Yeah. Well, your passion shows. Your calendar is packed.

Ya'Acov: Yeah, it is. The only way that we are able to do that is we also are very religious. The one thing we are utterly religious about is that in the summertime we take an eight-week period where we stop completely – no meetings, no email, no talking about Movement Medicine, no teaching, just being on our lands, mowing the grass, cutting the hedges, just looking after a bit of land and each other.

And also that we have each other. I think that's one of the great blessings of our work. We have been working together – this is our 30th year of relationship. I think the thing that really sustains me most is the fact that we share our passion together and we share the love of each other. That's the deep well work that enables us to be as busy as we are and give what we feel like we came here to give. It won't last forever. We're very aware of that. While we can, while the heartbeat's strong, let's do it.

Mark: Wow. Well, I just want to appreciate that. If you're writing the story of your life and you've written it so that you have an eight-week rig in the summer with your land, I'd say you're arranging things in a way that really serves you. That's really excellent.

Ya'Acov: I think creativity and having a dream and making it happen, the most important ingredient is to be willing to work hard. I don't mean a work ethic like some kind of –

Mark: Yeah.

Ya'Acov: -- in order to be a good person, you must work. I just mean being willing to put your effort behind what you believe in. That's really the key. People sometimes say that, "Well, what made your work successful?" That's the basic answer is we love it and we love it enough to work at it. It just keeps showing up.

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Mark: Tell us a little more about how the trainings work. If someone wants to start with Movement Medicine now, are there prerequisites or is there an introductory course? Let's just say someone watching this or hearing the podcast goes, "You know, I want to start out with this from scratch."

Ya'Acov: Okay. Well –

Mark: What's that look like?

Ya'Acov: Yeah. Thank you for that opportunity to share that. Right at the very beginning, I mean, wherever you are, we do a monthly online movement class. Wherever you are, if you're online, it's very cheap. It's like \$50 for ten sessions or something. If you do the first one and don't like it, we'll even give you a refund. That's just a way to check in and kind of have a feeling in your own living rooms. You don't even have to go out of your own house in order to dip your toes in.

We call that bringing the dance back home because we started it, because we wanted to create a sense of people being able to practice together. It's amazing. We have people from 25 countries at these classes online and there's a palpable feeling of sharing our practice with people in different countries. Beautiful. I love it.

From that, we do weekends. We do evening workshops. We have a full program of introductory workshops. We also have a faculty of nine teachers who are traveling out on behalf of the School of Movement Medicine, and there's the Movement Medicine Association which is the independent association where you can find all the teachers worldwide who are offering Movement Medicine in many places. So there're many ways in.

If you really wanted to take the path, there's a certain amount of hours you must do. We certainly honor people's experience with other conscious dance practices as part of those prerequisites because, obviously, if somebody's practicing some form of conscious dance, they're likely to have some sense of embodiment already so we honor that work.

We run an Apprenticeship Programme. That's the way in. The Apprenticeship Programme is a rolling programme where you basically pay upfront for three ten-day modules which includes a Summer Long Dance and a Winter Dream Dance. These are 48- and 72-hour ceremonies. It includes one-to-one mentoring. It includes also two electives, two choices from a range, like a menu of possibilities that's just open for apprentices.

In order to get there, you need to do a certain amount of hours and do two prerequisite workshops, one called Initiation, which is the journey through the nine life cycles from conception to death; and the Phoenix Retreat which is not the Phoenix Festival. Phoenix Retreat, it's really the way that we help people to get a handle on the difference between what we call the understudies, the learned responses and patterns of survival that we'd learned and the true star of the show, the soul basically, and to know the difference and to have compassion for these patterns of protection that we all have and to have kindness and have a way of working with those and understanding their roots and doing soul retrieval work, so very deep work. So those two are the prerequisites along with a certain amount of hours.

Then this, the Apprenticeship Programme and the Apprenticeship Programme is the road for people who would want to train professionally. It's not just for people who want to train professionally because we wanted to offer the deepest work that we do for people who want to integrate Movement Medicine just for the practice in their life. That's already a lot but we insist that people do that apprenticeship if they want to train because our understanding is you need to be held deeply by a practice if you want to hold other people in it.

Mark: Well said.

Ya'Acov: All of those details we have on our website which you can find, www.schoolofmovementmedicine.com. If you look at what we do, you can find the Apprenticeship Programme and training there and all the prerequisites, the dates and costs and all of that. It's all up there in quite some detail.

The great thing, one last thing about the Apprenticeship Programme that we've changed recently is to make it more flexible because we've recognized that things happen. People get pregnant. Their work changes. Things happen and so you have a period of a couple of years over which you can do these five modules.

[0:45:04]

Also, you can continue if you want to. You can do a module at a time or any other elective at a 50% discount after that. This is a deep study community, apprenticeship community that's ongoing for people who really want to take that journey.

Mark: Wow. That's great. That's really good to get an understanding of how your process works. I'm sure a lot of people that are going to hear this podcast or watch on YouTube are going to be interested in finding out more and experiencing some of this great work.

Before we sign off, I want to also ask just you mentioned this Phoenix Festival but what else is on the horizon? What's out there in the long term in the early dreaming stage that we might be talking about years down the road?

Ya'Acov: I've just had an agreement from Hay House to publish my book that I'm writing which is called *A Shaman's Song*. The subtitle is: *The 21st Century Initiation of an Everyday Shaman*.

Mark: Excellent.

Ya'Acov: That's really quite a process for me to write that.

Mark: Hay House is a very big, respectable publisher so congratulations.

Ya'Acov: Thank you. They did our first book which is also available. It's called *Movement Medicine*. That's more like a how-to book which is beautiful. We love that book. There're lots of exercises and possibilities of doing the work in your own way through that. We also have CDs. My wife is really a beautiful musician and song writer. She's written several songs that we use in ceremonies.

Mark: Uh-hmm.

Ya'Acov: We've got plans to do a new shamanic drumming CD which will come out hopefully sometime next year. We're going back to Japan to work and we're going next year to – we've already worked in South Africa but we'll be working in Zimbabwe and Kenya also which is a really beautiful thing to take the work back to Mama Africa and have the opportunity to work in different contexts and communities there.

So there's a lot coming down the pike. In the next couple of weeks, I'll be coming back to the States to teach which is wonderful. I've not been teaching in the States since I taught many years ago when I was still teaching the 5Rhythms.

Mark: That's great. Madrona MindBody and some other dates on the West Coast. Tell us a little bit about that.

Ya'Acov: Yeah. I'm coming to, first of all, Burlington in Vermont on the East Coast, 27th and 28th, to do a workshop called *Dare to Dream*.

Mark: Uh-hmm.

Ya'Acov: Then I'm going from there to San Diego. I'm doing an evening and day workshop called *Sacred Space*, then I'll be doing a five-day workshop at Esalen which is a pretty deep dive called *Re-Creation*. It's sharing one of the shamanic practices I developed for soul retrieval called the SEER process which stands for Systemic Essential Energy Retrieval. That's a very deep dive into the work.

I'll be ending my tour with a weekend, as you said, at the Madrona MindBody Institute on the 12th and 13th of March, doing a workshop called *The Way of the Dancing Warrior* which is a real invocation of the discipline of practice and the joy of that discipline. It's about really changing our relationship, discipline being something harsh to being something really loving for bringing the soul into being.

Mark: I love it.

Ya'Acov: Yeah. I'm looking forward to that very much.

Mark: Wow. Well, it's really fabulous. I'm just thrilled to have you on the show with us here and share your work with a wider audience. Of course, the great thing about these podcasts and YouTube channels is it will just stay up and be evergreen, people can dip into this and hear your story any time they like. It's just great.

Ya'Acov: Thank you, Mark. It's a wonderful opportunity. As I said at the beginning, really a deep thank you for your work and the effort that you put into really creating this community of conscious dance practices. A pleasure to meet you and I'd loved hearing your insight as well.

Mark: Well, I look forward to having more of a chance to connect with you and hopefully on the dance floor somewhere before long, somewhere out in the world. But even here online, it's just really great to have you part of the community.

Ya'Acov: You'd be very welcome, my friend. Very welcome. I assure that your community will be a warm welcome. If we should get to meet, great! Come and say hi.

[0:50:08]

Mark: Excellent. Thank you so much, Ya'Acov.

Ya'Acov: Thank you, man.

Mark: Until the dance floor brings us together? Or the wires happen again. Well, talk to you later. Thanks a lot.

Ya'Acov: Yeah.

[0:50:21] End of Audio

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