



# Dance/Movement as Resilience, Unity and Community in Rwanda: Shared Experience over Difference

Susan Carey Orkand<sup>1</sup>

Published online: 22 April 2020  
© American Dance Therapy Association 2020

## Abstract

Growing together toward a more socially just experience of humanity is of profound concern within communities across the nation, and is of essential relevance within the dance/movement therapy community, in particular. Acknowledging individual difference is pervasive. However, rationale for shifting the focus to “shared experience” and its benefits is highlighted in this paper. Dance in Rwanda, and its cultural relevance to resilience and connection before and after the 1994 genocide, illustrates the invaluable healing impact of this relationally based approach. A service project that encompasses dance/movement therapy and other body mind strategies for widows of genocide will be described as a salient example of the efficacy for developing resilience, unity, and connection.

**Keywords** Social justice · Rwanda · Dance · Dance/movement therapy · Body-mind strategies · Resilience

The concept and power of utilizing dance/movement within the process of building human relationships, healing rituals, and life passages within communities far precedes the establishment and development of the field of dance/movement therapy (DMT) as a professional therapeutic modality and discipline. Dance has long been a vehicle to join together body, mind, and soul, to pursue amelioration of suffering and to unify societies from generation-to-generation since the beginning of time (Lewis, 1996). This process stems from the broadest conceptualization of dance and movement forms that expand the globe.

Recognizing the positionality of dance/movement therapy within these important earlier contexts is of ongoing importance; both as individual therapists and practitioners, as well as for the larger professional community. The role of privilege must be carefully and dynamically examined in the context of building partnerships in

---

✉ Susan Carey Orkand  
sorkand@sarahlawrence.edu

<sup>1</sup> Clinical Education Coordinator/Faculty, Dance/Movement Therapy Graduate Department, Sarah Lawrence College, 1 Mead Way, Bronxville, NY 10708, USA

culturally sensitive and dexterous ways. The following five principles have provided the framework in which to co-create sustainable partnerships and collaborative new programs: Awareness, Acceptance, Action, Adaptability, Accountability. It is through the ongoing practice of these five principles that forms the foundation for all processes and relationships, including this author's partnership in Rwanda. The primary and core essence of manifesting these principles relies on the exquisite nature of shared experience, and its intimate impact in developing resilience, unity and peaceful communities.

Marian Chace, an early dance/movement therapist and leader in the development of the profession of dance/movement therapy, identified dance as communication and essential to fulfilling basic human need. She employed keen sensitivity to her clients' kinesthetic movement expressions, no matter how subtle and nuanced (Sandel, Chaiklin, & Lohn, 1993). She, and others, established the core value of "meeting people where they're at" at the very beginning of the therapeutic process and relationship. Chace's clinical approaches to sensitively acknowledging and joining others in their therapeutic process underscores the essence of respectful humanism within clinical and treatment collaboration. This notion integrates the agency each person brings to beginning therapeutic encounters in the first place. Respectful acknowledgement at the onset of therapeutic relationships and processes help ease personal and relational expression as vulnerable people explore pathways for building new resources and skills. The importance of clearly identifying one's own positionality as dance/movement therapists, starting with "where we're at," is necessary groundwork for expanding the capacity when incorporating crucial factors of social justice, inclusivity and the maintenance of cultural humility/dexterity over time.

A poignant example of global dance/movement is the generational heritage of how dance/movement has been essential to Rwandan people, both before and after the genocide in 1994. Dance's integral part in Rwandan community life reminds people in Western culture that social change and growth is impossible without each other. This insight has tremendous potential within the dance/movement therapy community across educational, clinical and other professional settings. There are rich cultural experiences in Rwanda, particularly highlighting the value and impact of shared experience, that are integral to community building and healing. During current times in Western culture when individuality, competition, and power are scraping away at the value of connection, Rwandan culture supports core principles for not only dance/movement therapists, but for all humans who aim to advocate for social change, peaceful communities, and the necessary elements of shared experience.

DiAngelo (2016) differentiates between particular unique elements of each individual (lens), with common factors that groups may share (frames). She utilizes this metaphor of eye glasses, and our individual lenses specifically, to identify what is unique to each one of us. This might include our personality, our family influences, our birth order, and other unique experiences. The lens of this author is a personal context for describing privilege and dominant culture. It is in this context this author's identifiers and positionality within the unique context of Western cultural society will be described, which not only underscores its relevance living in the United States, but as ongoing practice for ongoing partnership in Rwanda. During

these particularly tumultuous social times in Western society, identifying one's positionality (e.g. race, class, gender, sexuality, class and others) seems of growing importance and expectation. Describing the author's embodied identifiers will then be described as the link to how individual positionality can influence social justice and change. An extensive project using dance/movement therapy and body-mind strategies with survivors of genocide in Rwanda will be discussed, highlighting how dance and movement are inherently and organically integrated into building Rwandan community and resilience through shared experiences.

## Individual Identifiers

I am a White cisgender heterosexual female. I go by the pronouns of she, her, hers. I am a mother of two young adults, one who identifies as male; the other who identifies as female. I am Jewish by birthright and continue identifying as Jewish with a strong choice and conviction. I grew up middle class. Three generations of my family grew up within walking distance of one another. I graduated from college in California and moved to the East coast where I have lived ever since. I am 60 years old. I have two sisters who both identify themselves as cisgender white heterosexual females. I married young, was married for a long time, and now I am not. I own my home which was only possible through a divorce. I live in a somewhat diverse neighborhood of working class people who, mostly, do not hold what some would consider "professional" jobs. I own a car. I eat healthy foods as much as I can and have the financial resources to do so. I am a dance/movement therapist, Reiki practitioner, yoga teacher, and educator. My privilege as a White person brings to life a vital dynamic between who I am as an individual, and intense feelings about my Whiteness, both historically and presently.

To be an able-bodied person throughout one's life is also a privilege. I have the freedom and capacity to my own self-expression with few limits; to "select those movements which seem to be the most suitable and desirable for our own nature," and the "practice of the free use of kinetic and dynamic possibilities is of the greatest advantage," (Laban in Bartenieff, 1980).

## Laban Movement Analysis and Privilege

Rudolf Laban, mentioned above, was the founder of Laban Movement Analysis who worked closely with Irmgard Bartenieff during World War II. The concept of positionality influences how one is perceived within society, and perhaps contributes to beginning to understand elements of social dynamics, while at the same time, obscuring others (DiAngelo, 2016).

As dance/movement therapists who engage in movement observation paradigms, especially when conceptualized in an earlier era, cultural humility is necessary when exploring one's assessment of another person's nonverbal communication and expression. Choice of words, collaborating with our clients, and maintaining fluidity in adapting earlier systems, are essential. Rudolf von Laban's work stemmed from a

time and place when his perspectives of that era restricted the development of more expansive sociocultural ideas.

Particular attention to notions of multiculturalism, differing abilities, biases or assumptions in language, and the necessity of collaborating with others in assessment and treatment, are all of central importance. Just as dance/movement therapists must incorporate global dance/movement lineage and heritage, it is also necessary to incorporate how earlier movement observation paradigms must be adapted with clarity and due diligence to expand social and cultural awareness and change.

## Embodied Experience

The means in which dance/movement therapists reveal and convey their individual identifiers, must also include the integration of essential elements of one's embodied experience. As mentioned previously, this author's embodied identifiers formulate an integrative approach that instills clarity for how relationships in the clinical setting, and partnering in Rwanda, has been established and maintained. It is in this spirit that the embodied or "real lived" experiences of the author will be described.

I am a person who predominantly lives and returns to my body. Whether it is to find words to my emotions, to find pathways to manage my surroundings, or to discover what's comfortable between me, and others. I cry easily, my body sensations are frequently strong, and I am continually aware of my breathing patterns and textures. I notice my posture, how I walk when I am free, and where I constrict when I am sad, angry, or confused. When I am uncertain about verbally navigating, I look at my hands for clues in my gestures, or notice muscular qualities in my chest or throat. When I am amidst particularly intense emotion, my words become jumbled, my thoughts less clear, and it's always better if I wait until my body-mind systems calm down and soften. When I engage fully in my body during expressive experiences, structured and self-directed, I always find truths, information, and insight.

I am older now. The biggest challenge about aging are the physical functioning ones. Otherwise, the link between my body and my mind are actually becoming increasingly integrated and wise. I have learned and practiced language that helps me discern, in words and nonverbally, how I feel, what I am thinking about, and what my convictions are in the bigger world. I am realizing that though I am only one small person on this planet, my input does make a difference. In fact, I wonder if the differences each person makes are not as small as we may think or internalize.

Though I have been often told that I am "too sensitive" or "too emotional," I am now harnessing those gifts and continually challenging myself to share them with others. I am wondering about and exploring humility and grace on the one hand, with a leaning forward into the sagittal plane to share my insights and understandings with clarity, on the other. I am less apologetic about being sensitive, both to myself and to others. I am committed to translating this subtle and concrete bodily felt world of mine so that I can understand myself best, and I can guide and facilitate others with the utmost of respect.

This requires an ongoing study of language, bias, neutrality, and wondering about how my world coexists with someone else's. This also requires of me that I approach

holism among others, both as perceived similar and different than myself, in unfamiliar ways than I am used to. I must study history, claim my own Whiteness in new ways, and at the same time, stay pointed to my own truths that rest and are activated so deeply in my body. I must recognize that the bodily clues that I receive about safety and trust from others, may not always be the same as my own barometer. If I am seeking truths with others in my smaller and bigger world, and yearning for what feels like honest connectedness, I must keep returning to what is unflinchingly my own.

The necessary due diligence of reflecting upon individual and systemic opportunities and barriers of social change, without doubt, is ongoing. My commitment to be vulnerable, as an individual and a member of the dominant cultural group, requires a certain degree of courage, acceptance and balance. Courage to see how historical oppression is still manifest, and by no means, an experience of the past; acceptance of my membership in the dominant group on micro and macro levels across time; and, balance towards the process of ally-ship, minimizing burden of marginalized people, and aiming towards the capacity to remain curious to seek connection to others across shared and differing backgrounds. For example, many White people are woefully uninformed when it comes to the continuing presence of racism. Seeing ourselves as individuals, with no connection to our nations' past, erases history and hides the way in which wealth and social capital have accumulated over generations and benefit us as a group today (Sensoy, 2017). The dynamic integration of individual identifiers and embodied identifiers forms the foundation from which to do this important dynamically-engaging social justice partnership. Availing myself to new experiences and situations that promote the intention to be curious about people from differing backgrounds and cultures provides rich opportunities for personal and collective growth.

## **Embodying Shared Experience Through Dance in Rwanda**

Due to the long process of living together in the same area, a territorial consciousness develops among members of the same cultural group (frames). There are historical links when a cultural group lives within its own homeland, where its own history evolves, so that members become bound to this homeland through bonds of patriotism (deBeer, 1998). Rwanda is a constellation of ethnic groups, tackled by the demands of colonization and the divisiveness that incurred, both pre- and post- genocide in 1994. In the past 25 years, the re-establishment of Rwandan unity, has aimed to find a balance between respecting the uniqueness of ethnic groups while ultimately highlighting the priority of a unified nation that longs to survive, to thrive, and to develop its shared experiences, more than difference. Dance is a vibrant expression of this value.

Traditionally, dance occurs collectively in a community setting. Dance does not merely form a part of community, it represents and reinforces the community itself. Dance often expresses the categories that structure the community, however, towards the powerful and sustenance of the whole. Dance celebrates major roles in people's lives, is central to rituals, and prepares people for their positionality within

communities. Dance tells oral stories that provide the essence of the community's identity. Dances are filled with varied rhythmic sequences and may include any part of the body. Music, and drumming in particular, are essential to the dance and incorporate call-and-response interactions among dancers and the audience. Many of the dances are earth-centered and integrate movements of everyday life. Dancers not only represent a spirit but also embody that spirit during the dance (Appiah, 2010).

Colonial rule in Rwanda shifted ethnicity and cultural borders prior to the genocide. Rwandans migrated to nearby countries and multiethnic towns. These migrations undermined the tight-knit communities so basic to Rwandan dance and other customs. However, the traditional community-based qualities of dance remained to help preserve the identity of Rwandan people. Furthermore, after the genocide, traditional dance served to sustain cultural continuity, as well as, encourage innovation and development.

The genocide in Rwanda impacted three-fourths of an entire nation. The traumatic effects of this human strategy left hundreds of thousands of survivors suffering from the loss of family members, children, partners, and close friends. The notion of rebuilding human connection is mind boggling. "Empathic repair," a term used among Rwandans rather than "forgiveness," is at the core of resilience and reintegration. According to (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2018), the possibility of empathic repair, relies on the human capacity for imagination, because imagination plays a significant role for constant reflection, co-construction of meaning, and dialogue with self and with the other through language and other subtler forms of communication. Through imaginative experiences, there is an attempt to grasp an experience not one's own, in order to understand what the other is going through. Dance serves as such a vehicle as a cultural entry point to a renewed social dynamic and foundation for other political and economic transformations (Plancke, 2017).

The author has consistently believed in exploring the ongoing dynamic and balance between privilege, power, shared experience, and humility. Consciously examining how these factors interact within the context of working with vulnerability, has consistently led to the insight that empowering shared experience among all participants is imperative to social justice and change. The collective group experience discovers potential that is impossible to conceive by individualized approaches alone.

## **Partnership with Avega**

It is with this frame of reference that the impetus to pursue a sustainable partnership in Rwanda grew. This project was designed in partnership with Avega, a non-profit organization in Kigali, Rwanda that supports survivors and widows of genocide since 1995. Through a "train-the-trainer" sustainability model, counselors are taught body-mind strategies to ease stress related to loss, trauma, and hopelessness. These tools are offered with an intention to support already existing counseling techniques and practices.

Avega is a non-profit making organization that renders and performs its activities all over Rwanda with its head office located in Kigali, the capital of the country. It is comprised of above 19,500 widows and 71,478 of their dependents, mainly orphans.

Amongst these members 5628 widows are 65 years old or over. 926 of them are childless. The widows and orphans in membership of AVEGA are those who were affected by the 1994 genocide.

The 1994 genocide claimed the lives of over one million Tutsis and a number of moderate Hutus. In a period of huge upheaval and enormous terror, Tutsis were slaughtered, stabbed, battered and hacked to death ruthlessly. Many women and girls were raped and endured extreme sexual violence, while a number were infected deliberately with HIV. Many survivors were left widowed, homeless, disabled, traumatized, and impoverished, with other insufferable difficulties. Widows also lost their children as well as their husbands and relatives. As a result, many of them do not have even a single child to care for them. Nevertheless, after the genocide, many widows adopted orphans who did not have anyone to care for them. Many orphans and widows are traumatized and are in need of regularly scheduled counseling and aid. Due to these problems, AVEGA established a counseling program that helped raise awareness of AIDS among beneficiaries because at that time, when beneficiaries found out that they were HIV positive, the solution was either to commit suicide, be desperate, lose hope or to experience a sense of stigmatization. However, after intensive counselling session and support, beneficiaries have confronted these issues and have been more able to continue with their lives with greater hope and optimism.

Trauma continues to be prevalent among the survivors and directly impacts their dependents. Many survivors do not recognize that they have trauma related problems, therefore counselors need additional skills to support survivors and to help expand their abilities to cope with post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), loss, and hopelessness. It is in this context that AVEGA partnered with this author to increase the skills of counselors, caregivers and volunteers countrywide. Avega is very committed to continued education and training for all of its constituents. Through this collaboration, professionals and volunteers learned and applied new strategies, which will be monitored over time, to empower all concerned to integrate holistic and physical elements to optimize wellbeing, quality of life, and overall health.

## **Dance/Movement Therapy and Other Body-Mind Strategies**

Dance/movement therapy and other such strategies are founded on the principles that the body and mind are integrated and work reciprocally together. One's state of mind affects how the body reacts, and how the body experiences life's circumstances effect our state of mind. For some, breathing becomes quite shallow or they hold their breath without even realizing it. For others, thoughts are racing and it is difficult to make decisions or manage daily tasks. And still for others, sadness gets locked in tense muscles with limited energy to see others or even get out of bed. In most counseling approaches, these symptoms are explored through verbal conversation alone.

Through body-mind practices, the point of entry for these concerns is first approached through body movement expression; breathing exercises, meditation, yoga positions, stretching, and creative body movement and dance. All strategies

approach each person's style with sensitivity and respect. This yields a sense of personal empowerment. There is much research that supports this holistic approach, after a long history when people thought otherwise. There is greater understanding that our human nature intertwines physical, emotional, social and cognitive qualities. Each reciprocally affects the other in important ways.

Grounded in the mind-body connection and in the power of movement as communication, dance/movement therapy and other body-mind strategies are uniquely efficacious modes of psychotherapy for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other effects of abuse and trauma. Trauma leaves its imprint on both mind and body and research demonstrates that effective treatment requires involvement of both. Because movement is used as the primary means of assessment and communication, the body is not merely addressed in therapy but actually given a voice. Memories that may be too difficult to express verbally can be shared through movement and dissociated feelings, previously unknown, can be identified as they arise in the body. Survivors can eventually regain a sense of control over confusing thoughts and feelings as they navigate their own bodily felt experience. Relaxation and stress reduction techniques can also be incorporated to help survivors cope because of its active application of strategies and tools (adapted from American Dance Therapy Association; [www.adta.org](http://www.adta.org)).

Post genocide, Rwandan music and dance are no longer used to promote individual ethnicity and conflict, but they are geared toward unity and sustainable peace (Adekunle, 2007). Keeping shared experience that ignites the spirit of community and connection at the forefront of one's approach is essential to attuning to cultural needs and lived experiences of Rwandan people. Shared experiences of loss, for example, cuts across other distinguishing identity factors like religion, ethnic group, or race that may otherwise divide people in conflict. It is ironic that the same factors that can ignite and perpetuate animosity, fear and hatred, might also suspend those negative sentiments. Towards rebuilding Rwandan communities and healing from the trauma of genocide, themes of love and loss may provide the way out of violence.

## Train the Trainer Model

The conceptualization of this train-the-trainer program emphasized values and philosophies that underscored humility, collaboration and sustainability. It was imperative to help counselors first access consciously their own inherent skills and talents, to develop trust with each other and to embrace exploration of new tools, all within the context of body-mind experiences and dance. The 3-day train-the-trainer model is named *Partnering with Avega to Ease Stress Holistically for Widows of Genocide*. The strategies incorporated into the program include dance/movement therapy, yoga, meditation, and tools for relaxation.

In January 2019, counselors from all 30 districts and other healthcare settings throughout the country of Rwanda participated in the first train-the-trainer *Ease Stress Holistically* program. A 10-item self-report scale, Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck, Mermelstein, 1983) was used to gather preliminary data about



counselors' perceived stress level, both before, and after, the three days. The items on the scale were translated into the primary language of the counselors, Kinyarwanda; cultural and other contextual factors were recognized. The data demonstrated favorable outcomes regarding the reduction of stress for the counselors over the 3-days from engaging in dance/movement therapy and other body-mind experiences. The purpose of collecting data was two-fold; (1) to evaluate counselors' general response to the effectiveness of reducing stress through body-mind approaches, and, (2) to provide a model for the importance of counselors collecting data with their clients in implementing future programs toward sustainability, within Avega and more broadly in Rwanda.

All body-mind based strategies served to add to counselors' tool box for addressing PTSD symptoms and other concerns for Avega members and their dependents. Training program goals for all participants emphasized cultural values both across broad themes, as well as, the distinctive qualities of each unique therapeutic relationship between counselors and their beneficiaries (clients). Training manuals translated into Kinyarwanda, and tool kit hand bags were provided for all participants in order to maximize the hands-on nature of the training program, and to provide the materials that support ongoing counseling services.

The methodology of this training program included several different approaches and experiences. A core value of this particular model is to respect that each person learns and integrates information differently, and in their own unique ways. The curriculum, therefore, included a broad base of educational approaches; (a) instructional teaching, (b) interactive discussion, (c) utilization of a curriculum training manual, handouts, and tool kit bags filled with materials (e.g. rhythm shakers, large exercise balls, yoga straps, scarves, essential oils, beads for meditation), (d) body movement exercises and experiences (e.g. yoga, creative movement, meditation, guided imagery, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques), and, (e) hands-on practice among participants to develop trainer leadership skills for future in-country programs. This format was flexible, as well as structured, allowing participants to become fully engaged in a comfortable manner. Content was reviewed in a multi-disciplinary manner in order to fully understand concepts and skills, and to develop confidence in sharing these skills with Avega members afterwards. Counselors shared examples from their own work to enhance the learning environment.

## **Linking Embodied Social Justice in Rwanda to the United States**

Circling back to the beginning of this paper, establishing positionality and inclusive language to express one's individual identity is broadly emphasized in Western culture. Many feel elements of despair and anxiety about whether or not their experiences are valued, or even have a place in society altogether. Hatred, misunderstanding and conflict override curiosity and humility. Power and privilege become barriers to more comprehensive acceptance of historical and everyday patterns of oppression and marginalization. Competition overcomes collaboration, and getting to the top, blinds potential awareness and sensitivity to the needs of others. An individuals' experiences of desperation replace the courage necessary to take risks

toward collaboration and deeper understanding. In these scenarios, difference over-rides shared experience.

Cultural unification, along other social, political and other economic elements, demonstrates in lived experience the potential for healing when shared experience is at the forefront. Dance in Rwanda has been illustrated as a compelling element in these priorities, and is a powerful link to why this author has such strong and sustainable ties to this country.

Inherent in the muscles and bones of the Rwandan people is a relationship and intersubjective approach to resilience, connection, and rebuilding community. It is the moment-to-moment negotiation of the intersubjective relationship between people, as well as from introspection and ongoing mutual reflection, and it involves making sense of the intersubjective experience of empathic resonance (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2018). The fluidity and ongoing-ness of this process undoubtedly mirrors principles and values in dance/movement therapy, supports dynamic connections, and fosters the groundwork for sustainable resilient outcomes toward social justice and change.

At the center of this ‘love’ is *Ubuntu*- a deep sense of caring for the other that is embedded in most traditional African societies. The concept of *Ubuntu* is an ethic based on the understanding that one’s subjectivity is inextricably intertwined with that of others in one’s community. From the perspective of *Ubuntu*, all people are valued as part of the human community and worth being so recognized. This entails not blind acceptance of others, no matter what they do, but rather orientation to openness to others and a reciprocal caring that fosters a sense of solidarity (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2018).

In Rwandan culture, the concept of self is described as ‘I am because we are.’ While recognizing the importance of the individual, the individual is always in relation- rather than solely directed toward developing individual autonomy. There is an African expression that states “*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*.’ The literal translation means ‘a person is a person through being witnessed by, and engaging in reciprocal witnessing of other persons.’ Or, ‘a person becomes a human being through the multiplicity of relationships with others’ (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2018).

The beauty and potency of these words are instrumental in reminding us that our socially just humanity truly requires mutual dignity, decency, and an ongoing commitment to shared experience.

## References

- Adekunle, J. (2007). *Culture and customs of Rwanda, chapter 8: Music and dance*. Orlando, FL: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA). [www.adta.org](http://www.adta.org)
- Appiah, A. (2010). *Encyclopedia of Africa: Dance in Sub-Saharan Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Bartenieff, I. (1980). *Body movement: Coping with the environment*. New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers.
- Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24, 386–396.

- De Beer, F. C. (1998). Ethnicity in nation-states with reference to South Africa. *African Journal of Ethnology*, 21(1), 32–40.
- DiAngelo, R. (2016). *What does it mean to be white? Develop racial literacy: revised edition*. NY: Peter Lang.
- Gobodo-Madikizela, P. (2018). *Forgiveness is the 'wrong word': Empathic repair and the potential for human connection in the aftermath of historical trauma*. South Africa: Stellenbosch.
- Lewis, P. (1996). Depth psychotherapy in dance/movement therapy. *American Journal of Dance Therapy*, 18, 95–113.
- Plancke, C. (2017). Dance performances in post-genocide Rwanda: Remaking identity, reconnecting present and past. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 11(2), 329–346.
- Sandel, S. L., Chaiklin, S., & Lohn, A. (1993). *Foundations of dance/movement therapy: The life and work of marian chace*. Columbia, MD: The Marian Chace Memorial Fund of the American Dance Therapy Association.
- Sensory, O. (2017). *Is every one really equal*. New York: Teachers College Press.

**Publisher's Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

**Susan Carey Orkand** has worked as a dance/movement therapist for almost 35 years with people across the lifespan and across different abilities in psychiatric, medical, palliative care, and community based settings. The aim of her work has always emphasized a sense of wholeness, body-mind connection, and awareness, as well as a deep desire to get to understand the contexts of someone else's life. Her career has included diverse opportunities in research, publication, clinical work, supervision and education; both nationally and internationally. Her ongoing passion for incorporating holistic practices led her to become a registered yoga teacher and a Reiki III practitioner. Currently, She is a professor and the education clinical coordinator in the graduate dance/movement therapy department at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York; and conducts a small private practice in her home office