

BIODANZA 10/10 CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

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Ten years since Rolando has passed, a 16th day of February in Chile. Ten days after his passing there was an earthquake, the third largest in the world. I was in a wooden cabin in the south of Chile and at that moment I jokingly said to myself, "Rolando, it wasn't necessary!" This was because he liked spectacular events; if he was to leave, it was going to be noted.

Ten years after his passing, the same date towards the end of February, Coronavirus begins in Europe, and the same thought came to my mind: "Rolando it wasn't necessary!". What a way to remember you, first with an earthquake and then a pandemic.

Sometimes I ask myself what father's thoughts about this time would be. I think it would be like many of us, a mix of deep sadness or on the other hand admire how the Earth is capable to give us a clear message to humanity.

I think this pandemic is in a way a message from life, a message that life had whispered to us, but we did not hear. Ecologist Movements, feminists fighting for equality, original people, they had heard, and they were fighting. Feel most of these struggles are the one of the same, the struggle for life and love.

I think life is constantly whispering what you must do, what is right for you and Earth. Life whispers all the time, but we don't hear, and they don't allow us to do so. Then the moment arrives when life shouts at you! Through illness, or tragedy, and that is when you take deep life decisions. This I have lived in my own flesh.

Today I can live this experience within the collective, as part of humanity. As a society, we have not heard the messages from life, we have ignored them constantly and nature through its biological mechanisms has given us a message. I don't believe it's a divine message, nor punishment; it is a need of Earth to defend itself against the anti-life forces which inhabit Earth. It is a living system which is defending itself.

The question that is emerging is: us, as humanity are, we capable to do a deep change?

On the one hand I am a pessimist as I am sure that many sick logics will continue to exist, and others will also increase. Populists, nationalisms and their narcissist and xenophobic leaders will continue to exist as well as the economy of exploitation of nature and people. Exponential growth of technology with all its virtues but also with its inhumane aspect and social control.

On the other hand I am an optimist, I believe a great change will come and it will not come from politics, nor from economy, but it will come from the people; this is why I am an optimist as I am a believer in people. This is a unique moment of history in which the same "*vivencia*" has arrived to each inhabitant of this planet. We are all experimenting the same vital experience and due to this many more people will be available to a big change in their lives.

My experience of the earthquake in Chile has shown me that deep changes are generated years after the catastrophe. One needs time for things to take on a new direction and for people to integrate in their behavior what they felt. In Chile, after the earthquake and reconstruction, we had the social earthquake that started the following year in 2011 and had its maximum expression in 2019 and 2020. People do not aspire for a social change; they are demanding it. They wish to live, not only survive, they wish to find the sense of life that they have lost.

Courage

I chose "Courage" for this event as I believe we need it, also because I think it was the main virtue of Rolando. To create Biodanza you needed courage. When one talks about dance, love and tenderness as social change, one seems to be naive, but it is not so.

Rolando could've chosen an easier path, and validate Biodanza in a mystical and spiritual level, where one does not have to explain much. But he went further, he looked for validation in Science, Biology, Psychology, and today neuroscience agrees with him. How wonderful!

Rolando thought that to enter education, health, work, and to be a tool for social and human change, he required acknowledgement from science.

Rolando said *"Courage is the capacity to challenge our own shadow. To enter our own mystery of pain and frustrations, to search for darkness and to ascend to the light"*.

I believe this courage is born from love. I do not believe in the concept of the warrior, in the struggle for an ideal. I like the courage of a mother that will do the impossible for her child, this is an incredible strength born in love. This is the path of Biodanza. Biodanza is not a mental ideology that we must believe, it is a way to learn how to love oneself, the other, everyone. It is through loving that we automatically connect to life. It is through loving that our strength appears and the courage to make changes.

In order to have this courage, we need to love life deeply, this is not an easy path. Rolando knew. This is why he created a beautiful tool that each day I rediscover: Biodanza. Deep change does not occur with awareness, to know that we need to change. It will come from the wisdom of our being, our instinct to save our lives and life around us.

Our bodies have the response to life, for ours and others, this idea is marvelous; through music, dance, and love we find the message in the body, in mine and in the other.

Biodanza is a way to learn to hear those whispers of life and not to wait for the screams. The dance and affectivity will give us the courage! What a great discovery Rolando! Our struggle will be nicer than what we thought! Our struggle will emerge from the feeling of loving and acknowledging the other as a brother/sister.

In our lockdown more than ever we have asked ourselves the key questions of life, at an unconscious or conscious level; Where do we want to live? Who do I wish to be with? What do I want to do? Sooner or later we must be in charge of this feeling and this thought for then to act, to do the change in the lifestyle. For this, we need courage.

In Biodanza, courage arrives in a sweet and tender way, through dance, embraces, and love.

I will end with a poem of Rolando that I have always liked and today more than ever makes sense. It is to pay homage to our capacity of rebirth. It is called:

ECSTASY OF REBIRTH

(Rolando Toro Aranedo- 1995)

From the nothingness we must extract
our energy
From the night we shall pull the sun

From the void
your tender renewed eyes
From the song of the earth, silent fruits
From the shining horizons
summer will lift her head of a bull

When death reduces us to dust
we shall still see
the sunflower of pollen and bees

From the abyss that separates lovers
we shall still
seal in an embrace
under the glory of the world

Clothes in rags, persecuted
with no bread
in foreign lands
we shall dance triumphant
in the lungs of stars
of a million years light

Your smile
will appear for no reason
from my terrible solitude
I will still give
all my love

And we shall drink the nectar of all the fruits
the passion from all the kisses
we shall penetrate
in the original pupil
of the universe
converted into mother
and transformed into daughter

Having lost
we shall fall laughing
on a transparent field
in the morning of a new April
having aged
we shall see our child reflection
in children
grandchildren and great grandchildren
and multitudes
of sweetness and song

Re birthed
against our own will to die
re birthed
against our desire to be alone

We shall be nude
Embracing
Confused
in a tourbillon of caresses

Even in the middle of desolation
we shall live

In the asphalt, cracked
geraniums will explode

In the middle of abandonment
of interior death, in exile from Paradise
we reemerge in ecstasy

Even among bombs
in the vesanic hurricane of stupidity
we shall be reborn in ecstasy

Our hope has died
only life is left

Survive
even though us
with the last gesture of tenderness
we reborn triumphal
pure and illuminated.