

Rhythms Home

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| **By Barbara Marlowe** |

I would love to meet a woman who has never had ambivalence about her body, who lives in and accepts her physical self with only positive regard and acceptance. What would that be like?



Barbara Marlowe

As a child, I became disconnected from my body. My mind was the ‘real’ me, my body just a head on a coat hanger. I did my best to ignore my body and only spoke up when I felt pain. On the rare occasions I felt pleasure, I kept quiet and felt guilty. I came to value my body when it met the definition of socially attractive. I engaged in physical activities to look good, never for health or enjoyment.

What I didn’t know for much of my life was that I feared my body for the unwanted memories buried inside. My brain was the real me. Only my brain wasn’t so happy. As long as I could remember, I felt sad. As soon as I left home, I embarked upon a lifelong journey of fixing myself. I engaged in therapy: individual and group; participated in growth workshops too many

to name; read tons of self-help books; learned hypnosis and stress management techniques; successfully found medicine that allowed me to stop crying and think clearly; and explored Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), an integrative psychotherapy approach. And I did feel much better, even happy.

It wasn't until my mid-forties when my dearest friend asked me a pointed question, "You've only explored your thinking, what about your body?" I knew she was right. I'd done everything except deeply explore and experience my body. It was time.

So, I started receiving massage including Myofascial Release Therapy. I was shocked how hard it was to stay present in my body while a well-trained professional spent time releasing and soothing tensions I'd held for so long without realizing. Gradually, I began to access through my body what two decades before I had come to understand intellectually ~ I was physically and sexually hurt early on in childhood. Simple and as complex as that.

This is when I started to dance.

First I danced ballroom. I learned to allow the physical touch of strangers. I learned to follow, to let go of my mind and let my body relax and follow someone else's physical lead. It was excruciatingly difficult and enticing at the same time.

Eventually ballroom felt too confining. I searched for something different and found barefoot boogie and ecstatic dancing. No partner necessary. Full license to let go and express myself. I thrived in the company of other bodies moving so freely. I reveled in my unique, mad, wonderful and abandoned movements.

Over and over and over again.

Eventually I realized I did not find physical manifestation of my psychological growth through ecstatic dance. Even though I felt free, my authentic movements were still limited by my defenses to fully embody or 'feel into' many parts of my body. My authentic self is one of growth and my movements were not growing. I felt caged within my own 'free' expression.

I am forever grateful to have been introduced to the 5Rhythms® in my early fifties. Created by Gabrielle Roth, the 5Rhythms® is a movement meditation practice offered by trained teachers in classes and workshops. There are 'simple' instructions and then on-going practice to purposely engage all the body parts. Doing so can lead towards a full range of uncensored physical, emotional, cognitive, historical, psychological and spiritual expression. Gabrielle Roth is well known for saying, "It takes discipline to be a free spirit."

The first time I witnessed a trained 5R teacher move in her body, my own body lit up with desire! I wanted to live in my body like that ~ fully

embodied, free, grounded, exploring and honest. I embarked upon a long and continuing journey through years of training and practice. The 5Rhythms® offered me a map home ~ through the same body I'd been afraid of for so long. I have been able to move memories in real time. "That Was Then, Move It Now." I trusted the wisdom of my body and the rhythms and I am no longer I afraid of my body. Instead, I find joy. PERHAPS I never will meet a woman who never had ambivalence about her body and who lives in and accepts her physical self with only positive regard and acceptance. That's okay.

I am becoming such a woman. One who lives in her body with curiosity and kindness. One who, at rare and wonderful times, is one enough with her body to touch the Whole.

These are the 5 Rhythms (5R) that Guided Me Home

FLOW ~ I discovered my feet and breath. I found I was not grounded, not rooted to the earth. Once I found my feet, my ground, I explored feminine movement. Round, fluid. How many ways can my body express receptivity and surrender? Surrendering my body was incredibly hard. My muscles and mind did NOT want surrender. Now, I listen to my deep subtle body language ~ what does my body want? What is a yes? What is a no? I am present and am able to express all of what flows through me.

STACCATO ~ I'd only known the shadow of staccato: anger and impotence until the 5R. I found a clear, embodied expression of my passion and limits. I found the bones and strength of a powerful father and wild son inside myself that longed for expression. I practice clarity through my body. I embody my passion through my hips and heart. I hold my ground without tension or anger.

CHAOS ~ Grounded in my feet and alive with passion, the rhythm of chaos enabled me to shake off and clear out. I discovered the freedom to express the unexpected, the uncensored. I do not lose my bearings or balance as I dance madly, spine undulating and head releasing. I am amazed how long I can dance in chaos. The instruction of chaos has allowed the growth of an immense trust and confidence in my body. I move freely into the unknown.

LYRICAL ~ I learned to embrace spaciousness in my body, mind and spirit. Having shaken off so much in chaos, I became light on my feet. I explored the space between my ribs and discovered my arms. I became playful in my body and connected to the universality of being a spirit in human form. Interestingly enough, it has been in lyrical where I've touched my most profound grief. A grief so deep, there are no words, only movement. Gently, I move my grief with others in the universality of suffering.

STILLNESS ~ I still find it difficult to be fully present in my body while moving slowly. The rhythm of stillness frightened me at first. And no wonder, as a child I learned to freeze myself by becoming so still, I could

leave my body to endure what my mind could not take in. Ever so slowly, I am able now to stay present to listen to the Whole inside me and follow my soul in movement. Stillness remains a last frontier for me.

To learn more about the 5Rhythms, please find

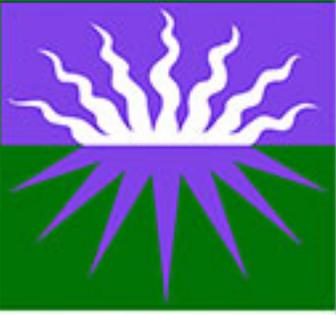
www.5rhythms.com.

Barbara Marlowe, LCSW is a Certified 5R® Teacher. She also holds a certificate in 5R® Movement Therapy. Barbara teaches a weekly 5R® class on Thursday nights, offers 5R® workshops and provides education about 5R® in therapy and integrative health settings. Reach Barbara by calling 828-776-3459.

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