



A dance that empowers women

TAMLYN JOLLY

Move beyond perfection addiction

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21st Century Parenting

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We get so uptight about doing things perfectly, from providing our children with a perfect education to the perfect party, and the most perfect life we can create for them (and more).

Our pursuits can be accurately called perfection addiction — a process that calls us into judgement all the time, mostly with ourselves because we feel guilty if we don't measure up to our expectations, which is often the picture of looking good, to the outside world.

I was recently reminded by Irish philosopher and leadership expert, Sean Weafer, that the essence of life is not about being perfect but about **perfecting**. We are all walking a unique path in the company of others. We must discover and uncover that uniqueness — and children will help you to do just that — if you give them half a chance to be their authentic selves instead of training them to play the looking good game too.

We fall into this trap so easily because society supports it, and because we have become so numb to our own emotions, our own need to feel. So, when it comes to birthday parties, for example, do we allow our children to get involved in making the invitations, decorations, the food and wrapping the prizes?

Or, do we keep all these things to

ourselves, calling it hard work, instead of fun?

Do our children get to really live their parties — to breath life into them — which include the planning, the putting together as well as the enjoyment of the event itself, or are they just visitors dropping in for a while to attend a well-executed event?

They need and want to be part of the process, not just the pretty outcome. It's part of how memories are made, and how life skills are acquired. It's part of building a life and living it. It's about living, loving and appreciating.

We will all do things differently and hold varying opinions, from birthday parties to our children's education and how we spend our time and our money. On many issues there is no longer a strictly right or wrong or black and white answer.

Rather, there are many shades of grey often due to diverse backgrounds, religions, circumstances, family make up, financial situations etc. These are the things that impact on our choices or our ability to make choices, and we need to honour our journey of perfecting that which we are, and that which we are becoming.

Let's move beyond the pursuit of perfection to authentic connection — with ourselves and our children. They can tell the difference!

A common misconception about belly dancing is that it is suggestive and intended to entertain men.

This notion could not be more wrong.

Belly, or Oriental, dancing is probably the oldest form of dance, with roots in all ancient cultures, from the Orient to India and the Middle East.

Most importantly, belly dancing developed as a form of communication among women in the seclusion of their homes. With no TV or internet, older women used this dance form to educate their daughters about life.

St Lucia's Lizelle Vermaak had become despondent with the monotony of everyday life and was seeking something more meaningful when she saw a belly dancing advert on TV.

After winning a DVD from which she learned the basics, Lizelle quickly recognised her need for formal training. She formed a group of women interested in learning the dance form, but St Lucia's outlying location meant Lizelle's future in belly dance hung in the balance.

Nonetheless, she forged on and was eventually introduced to Anne Knowles, CEO of Belly Dance SA in Pietermaritzburg, who put together a distance learning programme.



Lizelle's Zahara Moon studio, with Teacher Trainer Anne Knowles (far right, front)

Lizelle would have to qualify as a teacher to ensure a future for belly dance in St Lucia. Zahara Moon Belly Dance was born.

By the beginning of 2013, Lizelle's belly dancing class had grown, she had passed the first two teaching levels and resigned from her permanent job.

By keeping her end goal in mind, Lizelle overcame many obstacles and was well on the way to carving out a career from her new found passion.

'The beauty of belly dance is that it can be done by women of all ages, shapes and sizes,' said Lizelle when asked why she chose to pursue this dance form.

Belly dancing also 'strengthens a woman's self-confidence', it is 'feminine yet empowering'.

A busy year for Lizelle, 2014 marks the third anniversary of Zahara Moon studio and will see her complete levels three and four of her teachers' qualification.

Lizelle will then be qualified in the basics of belly dance and will start delving into the many different styles.

With 10 levels to complete, Lizelle considers herself a 'baby' when it comes to belly dance, but she is enjoying the journey.

Highlights of her belly dance career include her studio performing at last year's Mr Price Pro Ballito surf competition and meeting belly dancers from around the world through dance workshops.



Empangeni Child and Family Care Chairperson Nareen Chetty
PHOTO: Duschanka Hitzeroth

Reaching out a hand of help

Profile

DUSCHANKA HITZEROTH

The responsibility of being a wife, a mother and business assistant are roles too, but underneath them is the spiritual centre that connects us all.

A soul filled with compassion, care and 'ubuntu' to reach out and touch someone's life is just what the new Empangeni Child and Family Care committee chairperson aspires to be.

Nareen Chetty, born and raised in eS- howe, has been living in Empangeni for 13 years.

'I have been with welfare for five years now. I started as a committee member then advanced to a member of the executive committee and recently chairperson,' said Nareen.

Assisting full time with a family business, Nareen spends her weekends coordinating

fund-raising drives for the welfare.

'I love children so much and it deeply saddens me to see broken, helpless and abused children. I want to make a difference especially where children are involved.'

'At welfare we offer programmes for destitute mums and babies as well as counselling for rape victims.'

'We have two social workers at the premises, but my main responsibility is to raise funds and keep the welfare afloat as it is a non-profit organisation. We appeal to our community for assistance in fund-raising and supporting our events too,' said Nareen.

Spirited and deeply cultured, Nareen hopes to some day travel to India.

'I would love to travel to India, especially the temples and learn more about my culture. Also, I love cooking traditional meals. My favourites are mutton biryani and butter chicken,' she said.

Attaining a diploma in Public Relations and Customer Services, the 35-year-old mother of one assists at their Empangeni industrial family business with administration duties.

'Despite helping my family with the business, I like to get involved in other projects and I am really blessed to have an extremely supportive husband and immediate family who encourage me through all my ventures,' said Nareen.

If she is not cooking, working or helping others, Nareen enjoys the odd film or TV series.

Finding refuge and peace of mind in prayer, Nareen dedicates her mornings to some meditation.

'My driving force is beginning my day with prayer, it is important to be thankful and grateful for the gift of a new day, the mere fact of waking up and having breath and an able body is a blessing,' she said.