



Chapter Five

© TAHYA 2022
copyright
all rights reserved

The Gift of Liberation



A revolutionary phase of my evolutionary journey ...

It was the Winter of 2008 and I was feeling on top of the world having just received an award from the LVAIC Dance Consortium in recognition of my "service" to (uplifting) dance in our community (and beyond). Little did I know in the Spring of that same year the greater gifts of the dance would prove life-saving when my life, my world, was turned upside down...

My thirty-year marriage abruptly ended the moment my husband "declared" he 'simply' fell in love with someone else.... (*Uh, excuse me, actually not so simple, my dear*)... Nonetheless, long story short, I chose to accept what I referred to as his '*Declaration of Independence*' and to navigate the waters as best I could (and I did so fairly well, at least so I thought), because I realized this big shift may very well result in being a

~ *Gift of Liberation* ~

I am a woman, who like many of us, aspired to be the (antiquated version of) perfect nurturing mother and loving wife who did everything the best I could ~ from creating a beautiful and comfortable home environment, to making wholesome meals, taking care of the bookkeeping and mentally, emotionally and financially (maintaining full and/or part-time jobs throughout my marriage) supporting my husband's higher education so that he could "advance in the world". I considered myself an attractive and sensuous woman (I am, after all, an instructress of belly dance)! Nonetheless, quite suddenly and unexpectedly I found myself thrust in the middle of a nightmare, seated in an attorney's office sitting across from the man I thought I would grow old with and against whom I was now "pitted," negotiating ~ fighting ~ to keep my home as he was abandoning me and our son. Granted at the time our son was twenty years old no longer a child; nonetheless, his father was turning his back on him.

Only a few weeks earlier I would have professed I considered myself blessed to be married to someone who "afforded" me the luxury to follow my passion (and I bless his heart for that ~ over the course of our marriage he did his best to support my pursuit of my passions for drumming and dance). We were, I thought, a relatively happy couple, weathering life's ups and downs ~ e.g., the deaths of our parents and the ensuing estate settlements (both being the eldest of our siblings and executors of our parents' wills), health issues, etc.

And then there I was in a couple's counseling session and when the counselor asked me to describe our marriage, I expressed I *thought* we were rowing merrily down stream when quite suddenly and unexpectedly, in the instant it took for him to say "I've fallen in love with someone else; I want a divorce," my little boat capsized and I was thrown into what felt like a Category 5 Hurricane.

I quickly realized I had been naively floating in a little cosmic ocean of my mind's making while my husband was adrift in a sea of confusion... My sweet little boat had been cruising gently (numbly) down the stream and now it had capsized and I was struggling to keep my head above the rough and turbulent waters. I admit I was more than a little challenged to keep my head above water.

I further describe my experience as somehow managing to grab hold of the keel (bottom part of the boat) yet when I looked around amidst the dark and stormy scene of this nightmare that was now my life, I was alone without the man I thought was my life's partner. Well, he was, at least, up until that point; but now, I spied him way off in the distance, with a lifeline extended toward another woman on a far away shore.

With the love and support of my siblings and friends it started to make sense to me. His fears kept him clinging to shore while yours truly intended to right side up her boat and continue navigating down stream, hair blowing in the wind, heart/mind open to whatever and whomever "appeared" next in my life's journey.

Nonetheless, I will tell you this situation came as a BIG shock to me (and to pretty much everyone who knew us). I believed in the matrimonial vows I took as being sacred and time honored; so when I solemnly vowed "until death do us part," I expected to be married to this man accordingly. Furthermore, I honored the part about "in sickness and in health." (In a nutshell, he'd had several surgeries, not the least of which was a radical prostatectomy.) Yet here I was being "dumped" and "thrown aside" when someone younger came along.

The piece d' resistance for me was that my husband proved himself to be so very shallow when after months of my inquiring what might make him happier (he did seem quite depressed for quite some time), he would simply reply he was tired until the day he finally offered up another reason he was despondent with me: *I've simply fallen in love with another woman. I want a divorce. Can you handle THAT?* Um, woa! There is nothing simple about that buddy. You are married and you've betrayed the trust. You've been unfaithful and now you're going to have to dissolve a 30-year marriage. Simple? Ha! And then he had the nerve to tell me I was a "f-ing bitch" whom he knew *would take him for everything he was worth.* * OMG! WHAT?!?! I was being hit from left field and below the belt, I might add. Suddenly, unexpectedly, shockingly, it seemed I was in a really bad B-movie with a superficial and predictable script. There was very little depth to the character I had as the leading man in my life. *I'll be in my trailer, the diva in me thought. Find me a better script and a new leading man!*

ANYWAY, I'm afraid mine is all too common a story and like many women, I felt so very betrayed.

Years earlier when he wanted to leave a secure position where he'd been employed just shy of twenty years with great benefits for our family, not to mention a pension, I supported his choice to leave ~ even though I was uncertain the happiness he sought would be found in this job change. I encouraged him to consider finding the joy within but since he convinced me this job change was what he really wanted, I supported his making a career change. Regrettably, it was a very short period of time before he realized the grass was not greener in the new arena and it became all the more complicated when he was diagnosed with prostate cancer.

It was low risk but any risk was more than he wanted to handle in any way other than radical prostatectomy. Everything I heard about the outcome of this surgical procedure left me skeptical with regard to maintaining intimate, loving, sexual relations. Learning it was very

*A completely ridiculous statement he made immediately following the attorney explaining to us that in the Pennsylvania divorce court the law is "no fault" and all assets are split 50/50.

possible this aspect of our marriage could be seriously compromised, I threw myself into a care giving mode focusing on alternative and complimentary practices ~ e.g., juicing organic fruits and vegetables everyday ~ no small task, I might add, since at that time in our community it was quite time-consuming finding organic produce, not to mention the time it took to wash and chop everything before putting it all in the juicer and then cleaning up afterward....

I dedicated the major part of my day in the kitchen in an effort to keep my husband vibrant and healthy. At the same time I invited everyone we knew (our family, friends, my class participants, etc.) to offer up prayers for his well-being. It was quite the campaign and I firmly believe his immune system was very strong thanks to it all and so, he was in excellent health prior to this surgical procedure and his hospital experience proved inconsequential since his immune system was so strong ~ thanks in no small part to my dedication to the foods we were consuming, I am sure. Furthermore, the doctor told him they successfully performed the nerve sparing procedure and we were optimistic that in time our sexual relations would return to "normal."

Meanwhile, thinking we ought to investigate intimate sensual relations beyond what we had known to this point, I bought various books on lovemaking and intimacy. Inspired by the popular musician Sting and his wife, for example, I perused books about tantric sex. I suggested we could consider this as an opportunity to take our relationship to new and perhaps deeper levels of intimacy, love and lovemaking. He was uninterested and seemed uninspired. He was always professing to be tired. I suspected he was probably depressed, and yet he wouldn't go to a support group either. So I prayed for a shift in a more positive direction, all the while maintaining my "end of the bargain" (managing home, bringing in supplemental income, managing the bill paying, making dinner, organizing social events, etc.) *and* doing my best to exercise patience regarding our (lack of) sexual relations. And, I might add, I was a vibrant, healthy woman who was feeling plenty juicy, sensual and sexy, particularly since I continued to dance and offered on-going dance instruction. YESssss, the dance kept me going! The dance I was practicing, the dance I was facilitating others to practice every day keeps oxygen circulating and blood flowing to the vital organs and sustains energy flowing throughout the chakras! I was also reading Loretta LaRoche's Juicy Living, Juicy Aging! Like Loretta, I wanted to feel "pumped" and rather than consider aging a disease, I want to be living *juicy* aging!!! Consider yourself a piece of fruit ~ i.e, plump and juicy!

I would ask him from time to time how he was doing. Did he want to talk about anything? On most occasions his response was that he was tired (translation: uninspired). He tried taking performance enhancing drugs; however, he neglected to tell me when he'd take a pill because, I found out later, he wanted "things" to happen "spontaneously." No fair! He expected me to be a mind reader. We'd gotten into a habit He watched basketball or other sporting events on TV till he retired to bed while I threw myself into a variety of work ~ updating my website,

whatever. Nothing amorous about that. So, how was I supposed to know? How about a clue? Maybe a little romantic music & candlelight would've been a nice start! So, when "things" didn't happen "spontaneously" there was anger (toward me). Anyway, I'll spare you any further boring details, suffice to say we didn't have sexual relations for many years and by our thirty-year anniversary, when he, at last, was pronounced cancer free, I was "rewarded" with *"I've simply fallen in love with another woman. I want a divorce."*

Fantastic. I have been a healthy vibrant woman remaining loyal to someone recovering from the big 'C' scare and he walks out on me? I'm the one who supported him in "sickness and in health" and, I am somewhat embarrassed to say, the months rolled into years. I could feel him slipping away so I made a conscious effort to give him a loving hug and kiss every day when he left the house. I imagined in so doing it was a little blessing and in his receiving this blessing, he was going out into his day, out into the world, feeling loved. I will never know how he felt about that. He was now responsive and quite frankly dismissive as if that momentary exchange was going to make him late for work. Ho Hum. I admit, I was in such a high giving mode, I didn't fully register that I was getting very little in return. I bet you know what I'm talking about. We women give and give and give and give and give.... ever notice that?

Over the course of our marriage he also had back treatments and double hernia surgery ... "in sickness and in health" ... and now I'm sitting in the counselor's office as he professes he hasn't loved me for ten years?! Ten years? OMG! Are you kidding me? You've been stringing me along telling me you loved me so I'd stay? Stringing me along to be your caregiver? Gee thanks for your truthfulness and loyalty. Furthermore, he sucked ten years of my youth in his selfish desire to stay in the marriage so I'd take care of him. I realized I had been completely blind to his selfishness and this realization caused me great grief albeit I guess that was a BIG lesson I needed to learn.

His next admission to the counselor caused me further great shock, that is, he said he was very much in love with this other woman because he wanted to be a father to her children. Uh, hello, he IS a father. We have a son together! When I emphatically made this statement aloud, he waved his hand in a most dismissive way saying "Michael will always be my son; I want to be a father to be more children." **Now** you tell me? When I'm post menopausal?!

I suggested "adopting" someone else's children at age 59 might be a big leap not to mention each of these children has a father. I also suggested Big Brothers might be a less risky tactic... but, he is on this path for the lessons he needs to learn and it became abundantly clear I needed to make my #1 concern to focus on which direction I was headed.

Nevertheless, I admit, I was wounded, deeply wounded; however, I was not about to be defeated. I called upon the warrior Goddess in me. I called upon Artemis and Athena and

invoked strength, wisdom and courage. Shields up! I was going to battle to keep my home, my dignity, my pride. These would not be stripped away not no way, not no how.

Regrettably, wouldn't you agree, far too many women find themselves in this situation: Loving, loyal and faithful; nonetheless, they are abandoned. Despite the "commonality" this angers me and, I might add, the very "commonality" of his action fueled my indignation. I do not think of this life's journey as a dress rehearsal. Rather, I do my best to "go for the gusto." So, it deeply saddened me to know I was now sitting in a counseling session with a man undergoing a "common" (the counselor's word) scenario ~ i.e., man seeking to regain his youth with a younger woman. Indignation rising. What has youth got to do with anything when a perfectly lovely, vibrant woman is in your home ~ oy!

A friend reminded me "A wise woman has many advisors," and one of my sisters told me I was feeling "righteous indignation." This further fueled my moving forward rather than crumbling.

I sought counsel and kept my shields up. I had to negotiate the dissolution of the joint finances of this 30-year partnership. It was not easy. Not easy at all. I was the household bookkeeper and I had managed our money frugally (vs. had he managed the money there would have been very little, if anything, saved I assure you.) and now according to Pennsylvania law, where divorce is 'no fault', each person is entitled to 50% of the assets. More indignation rising! I was appalled! He expressed his desire to start over and I was ready, willing and able to let him go ~ *Go on with your bad self!* ~ BUT the law says, o by the way he's entitled to 50% of the assets, one of which is the home my parents sold to us at no profit on their part in order to help their daughter and grandson have a nice home?! SHIELDS UP!

My righteous indignation meters were peeking! The SOB is unfaithful, deceitful, etc., etc., and he is pointing a finger at *me* referring to me as a *f-ing bitch!*? Woa! Lookout! Here comes Warrior Goddess ready to wage war!

Luckily for us both, however, there is also in me compassion, and as my Guru Mimi suggested even Kuan Yin will release the string if any one of her loved one(s) need to return to the abyss to start over and learn their lessons. I took this advice and let go of this man I had invested nearly all my life (up to that point anyway). I let go and sought counsel as I realized I needed to negotiate this "transition" with the greatest of intelligence and informed counsel available to me so that the beautiful home I lived in would not be plucked away by some ridiculous law no doubt written by some man. Arrrrgh!

Where did I get my strength? From my siblings, my friends and... the dance, my dear!

*The dance has buoyed me when navigating rough waters
in addition to celebrating joyous times.*

Many sweet hearts uplifted me as did the arts I practice dating back thousands of years to matriarchal societies ~ e.g., women's rituals of coming together in circles to conduct ceremony, invoking blessings from Heaven Above for fertile crops, safe deliveries of their offspring, etc., etc. ~ and, over the years as I studied the movements inherent in women's history, women's culture, I learned the various Goddess archetypes and I summoned the strength, the courage and wisdom of the Goddess to stream through me, my friends and siblings so that the counsel I received was sage, not vindictive. I intended that, in the end, the outcome of this experience would be Highest Good for all concerned including our son.

I could have been filled with rage and anger and, trust me, I had my moments but so much more than that I wanted to arise victorious over, not a victim of, some man's whim. I wanted to arise a gorgeous, sparkling iridescent butterfly who, at the moment, found herself in a chrysalis stage.

Biologically speaking, there's a phenomenon called metamorphosis, when a caterpillar, which is a worm, fascinatingly turns into a beautiful creature ~ a butterfly. At a certain point in its development, the caterpillar's body starts to die and yet within the body of the caterpillar, there are a few cells that I recalled hearing referred to as the *imaginal* cells, as in they're *imagining or dreaming a new reality*.

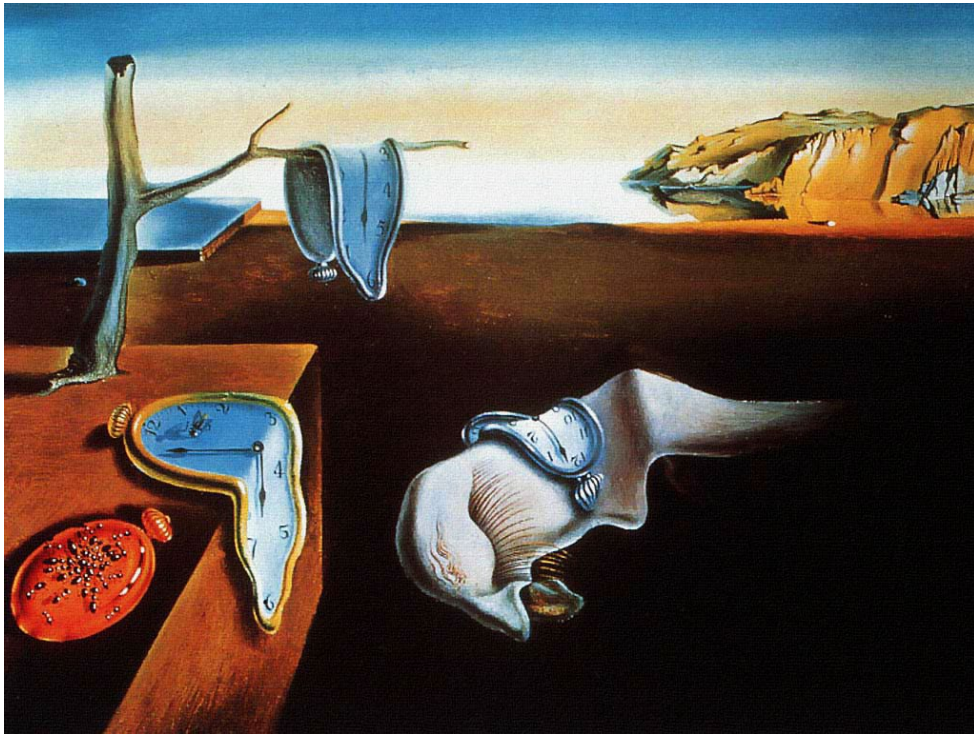
And soon these imaginal cells start to connect with each other, and as the rest of the body of the caterpillar dies, they use the dying carcass of the caterpillar as their nutritive soup. And when that connectivity reaches a critical threshold, a genetic code wakes up, which has the information for wings, and a new creature seeks its way to freedom.

Mmmmm hmmmmm, you guessed it: I did my best to activate imaginal cells within me and carefully crafted my mantras, chants, drumming and dances to support the dreams of my new reality!

Thankfully, rather than numbing myself, which some of us may be prone to do with drugs and alcohol, I had the dance and I danced everyday, lifting my chest up, proudly holding my shoulders back, maintaining a posture that represents confidence, and keeping my heart chakra open to the possibilities of new friends, new places, and, yes, *maybe* even a new love.

Certainly in the beginning of this ordeal, there were moments in the darkest depths of grief and despair, crying uncontrollably, when completely emotionally distraught I gasped for breath. I was distraught to the point of being "off the charts" ~ I mean, Richter Scale. Thankfully, a dear friend encouraged me to call whenever I was feeling this way and she would "walk" me thru yogic practices of laying down and focusing on my breath... One practice she suggested I found particularly helpful. It was the **Sa Ta Na Ma** meditation. (NOTE: See pages following p. 9)

There were moments I would lose track of my physical being and I would have to most conscientiously exercise mind over matter. I'd put my hands on my thighs to literally "get in touch" with my body as it felt like my life had turned into a no-time zone ~ I was in a hellish time warp....



[The Persistence of Memory, 1931, Salvador Dali](#)

Over the course of my marriage I supported my husband getting his Bachelor's degree and his Master's degree as well as his being on the Board of this and that and getting National Certification in his current profession. I, on the other hand, had only an Associates Degree. Faced with this new set of circumstances, I wondered, "How will I support myself. Will I have to give up doing what I love (teaching/sharing the dance). Who will hire me?" Wow, talk about having to be resourceful. I called upon the Goddess within and, you know what I heard her say?

"Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and start all over again...."

She was swirling a song in my head; so I went on-line to find the lyrics and did indeed find them... [PICK YOURSELF UP](#) from the Film: Swing Time 1936 with Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers (Lyrics by: Dorothy Fields / Music by: Jerome Kern)

Interestingly, the song goes on to say:

"work like a soul inspired...."

I faithfully wrote in my journal to stay in touch with my Higher Self, the Goddess within and She reassured me that although my future may be veiled in mystery, a new paradigm was emerging and my role was to fully take part in my NEW life. Bless the past for the good it served, and then release the past, and BE HERE NOW. As I embraced my evolution, I began to understand the concept related to '*accepting change brings about peace,*' and I began to embrace the changes in my life, while also acknowledging I needed to take time to recover from the shock, mourn the death of my marriage, release what I no longer needed, and welcome the seeds of NEW experience(s).

I considered myself so blessed to offer classes related to my passion ~ the drum & dance arts I practice ~ with opportunities to let my light SHINE, to arise and celebrate the Essence of Presence in me all the while encouraging others to acknowledge the same via the mudra, yoga and the drumming and dance arts I have been practicing my entire adult life. I encouraged myself:

BE EMPOWERED, ARISE & CELEBRATE THE GODDESS WITHIN!

How you ask? Determined to arise victorious and to emerge from my chrysalis stage all the more a beautiful butterfly with broad, gorgeous, sparkling iridescent wings, I treated myself to massages, practiced deep breathing relaxation exercises, smudged the rooms as well as every corner, nook and cranny of my home and I resolved to take excellent care of myself every day by eating healthfully, exercising, resting, and reaching out to allow others to assist me. I drummed and chanted: "*I am a sacred woman.*"

Eventually, I found myself expanding the chant: "I am a sacred woman, a magnet of magnificent abundance, great love and creativity to the highest degree ~ Thank you Mother/Father God!" ... and.....

I danced the spiral dance in celebration of my LIBERATION & EVOLUTION!

¡Viva la liberación y la evolución!

Sa Ta Na Ma MEDITATION

This is a simple yet powerful meditation which brings peace, tranquility, eliminates stress and clears the subconscious mind your personal power to build, as it cleanses negative thoughts and allows peace and joy to enter the mind.

Sa-Ta-Na-Ma mantra contains the five primal sounds of the universe to tune in to the cycle of the universal self.

Sit with the spine straight in the lotus position, easy pose or a chair. As slowly taking in a nice deep breath, drawing the breath all the way down into the belly, touch first the index finger to the thumb, then the middle finger, ring finger and then 'pinky' finger, placing one finger at a time touching the thumb...

As you touch the index finger to the thumb chant "SA"

Touch the middle finger to the thumb chant "TA"

Touch the ring finger to the thumb chant "NA"

Touch the pinky finger to the thumb chant "MA"



Corresponding effect:

As you touch the index finger to the thumb chant "SA"

Knowledge

Touch the middle finger to the thumb chant "TA"

Patience - wisdom

Touch the ring finger to the thumb chant "NA"

Vitality - energy

Touch the 'pinky' finger to the thumb chant "MA"

Communication

The meditation is a combination of chanting a mantra while moving the hands through mudra. Mantra means “repeated word or phrase” and to fully experience the benefits of the meditation, a variety of singing, whispering or silently repeating the mantra may be used.

The sounds of the mantra Sa Ta Na Ma comes from one of the oldest mantras Sat Nam which means “my true essence” or “true identity” and are designed to be uplifting. There are many interpretations for each of the sounds, one being that there is no meaning to the sounds at all, but simply a vibration and a stimulation of 84 acupressure points in the palate of the mouth which occur when singing and whispering the words. Other translations of the sounds are:

SA is birth, the beginning, infinity, the totality of everything that ever was, is, or will be.

TA is life, existence, and creativity which manifests from infinity.

NA is death, change, and the transformation of consciousness.

MA is rebirth, regeneration, and resurrection which allows us to consciously experience the joy of the infinite.

Sa Ta Na Ma Chant:

Chant **Sa Ta Na Ma** on inhalation; repeat on exhalation in a normal voice 3x’s

Chant **Sa Ta Na Ma** on inhalation; repeat on exhalation in a whisper 3x’s

Chant **Sa Ta Na Ma** on inhalation; repeat on exhalation silently 3x’s

Chant again on inhalation; repeat on exhalation in a whisper 3x’s

Conclude chant on inhalation; repeat on exhalation in normal voice 3x’s

Resume normal breathing, stretch up & shake your hands out.

When using the mantra in the meditation there are three “voices”.

- The singing voice, which represents the voice of action. (When singing the notes recommended for the mantra are A, G, F, G)
- The whispered voice, which represents the voice of the inner mind or the voice of your romantic nature.
- Finally, in silence repeat the mantra mentally to yourself, representing your spiritual voice.

There are different lengths to the Sa Ta Na Ma Meditation. The Alzheimer’s Research & Prevention Foundation recommends the 12 minute version, but there is also the option of a 6 minutes or 30 minutes. The timing for Sa Ta Na Ma voices are listed below.