

Dancing as Artistic Yoga - Laura De La Garza Noble

BY
ASHOK VYAS



When you meet Laura, the light of joy sprinkles near her as she talks about her fulfilling journey as a dancer. She started at a very early age and convinced her parents about her dream. The discovery for love a dancing as a toddler took her to competition studios in Mexico. She found her body movement as a way to discover and convey her feelings.

"Do what you want to do but have at least a college degree." This instruction by supportive parents led Laura to Rutgers University. She feels acceptance of artists and conviction about following your passion in the artistic field has more acceptance in the USA than Mexico.

Rutgers University gave her an exciting exposure to world dance forms. While she had practiced Belle and intuitively knew the movement of body and flow and how to lend after doing circles, observing her body in the space from within was needed to do it right in coordination with other dancers.

She also learnt about Bollywood dances, became aware of the story telling in Indian classical dance 'Kathak'. The rigorous practice to learn for four to five hours every single day after school prepared her for hard work. She looks at dance as a way to express herself, Laura gives credit to this artform for her personality traits. She is proud of being a dancer, choreographer, educator and Vinyasa Yoga trained fitness instructor.

While performance is the key experience for joy and satisfaction as a dancer, she conveys a theme through dance as a choreographer. Laura has been a part of the National Dance Water Project, which started in Florida. A prestigious project aimed at increasing awareness about the value of each and every drop.

She believes that the 'Whole is just as strong as the sum of its parts', when this idea is applied to a group dance and the vision of the choreographer, it means finding the right type of dancers for the mood of the dance. Laura explains that like voice, movement is a kind of voice for the dancer,

according to her, different textures and rhythms define different dancers. If the project is focusing on delicate movements with very straight forward lines, it should have artis, who complement that need.

Laura has worked on projects highlighting the domestic violence issue of women in Mexico. She is very clear in her mind about the difference in the dancing approach of different dancers, she says, as people express themselves differently, some are high pitched, some are low pitched, some talk fast, some talk slower, same with movements, body language of every individual is unique.

It is the choreographer's job to harness that texture. They need to make sure the movement is complementing the story or theme of the dance.

One scenario could be where movements may be created by the choreographer to highlight the music. In another scenario, if the goal is to highlight violence against women in Mexico.

She needs specific dancers to compliment the texture needed for the project.

She was a part of the National Dance Water Project, which started in Florida. This project works with different dancers . Awareness for water pollution and essential water. This project is movement specific, texture of movement mimicking the texture of water.

A lot of work ethic came from dance. She is trained to work with discipline and the world of dance has no place for laziness. Laura's professionalism comes from training in dance, she is a perfectionist. Laura explains, "everything has to be exact and perfect in the group dance with proper, well-practiced synchronization of movements.

When she reflects on her love for dancing, she recollects, her being good and consistent at school. The constant movement of her attention from school to homework to dance made her more flexible without losing the intensity of focus on moving forward with zeal.



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She didn't let covid dampen her spirit. She redesigned her approach to meet and tailored herself as per the covid impacted structure in the art field.

Laura De La Garza Noble shared her understanding of Yoga with practical tips in one of her inspiring Instagram posts, " Actively engage (not only physically but mentally) in anything and everything you do today. Try and see if that changes the way you approach unassuming or unpleasant tasks in the future.", the post continues with this profound message, which becomes even more relevant around 'International Day of Yoga on 21st June', " Overcoming obstacles starts with breathing and calming your mind."

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Pluralism in America

BY PROF.
INDRAJIT SALUJA



The conflicts we have in society, among family members, communities, Republicans, and Democrats, are because we don't listen to each other. Whether we agree or disagree, at least we must know and value different points of view.

We were searching for information about Pluralism and came across the site Center for Pluralism, which defines Pluralism as "Respecting the otherness of the others in religion, politics, society and the workplace." Jainism calls it Anekantavada - "No-one-perspective-ism," resisting philosophical dogmatism and recognizing the good qualities of many different points of view. The Quran teaches how to conduct civil dialogue respectfully and never undermines the value of other religions, and it says in verse 109:6, "You have your religion, and I have mine." Indeed, almost all religions have similar teachings; the analogy would be, "My mother is dear to me as yours is to you" There are no

arguments about that, so should be the arguments about religions.

We came across an article, "Poisoning your kids," and reached out to Dr. Mike Ghouse, founder and the president of the Center for Pluralism. We asked him about how he raised his children. Ghouse said he took his children to different places of worship to familiarize them with other religions and cultures. He did not want his kids to grow up to be bigots. He adds, "If my kids were to run for a public office, they would have a smooth sail, as they are not biased towards any American."

Ghouse's daughter asked questions at every place of worship; she would nudge him and ask, "Dad, what are they saying?" Realizing that a six-year-old will not get the whole meaning, he would filter it into a six-year-old's language and say, "Sweetheart, they are saying God is great, parents are great, and we must thank them for the food, clothes, home, and good life." This nudging and explaining business went on at every place of worship.

Ghouse continued, "Finally, at the DFW Hindu Temple, Ekta Mandir in Irving, Texas, we were chanting the bhajans in the sanctuary along with some 50 others, the nudging came, and my standard response went out. She screams in the middle of the

hall, "Gee, Dad, God can be worshipped in so many different ways," to thunderous applause. That is Pluralism in religion, as we understand it.

Cultural Pluralism got currency after the 9/11 tragedy. When a few troublemakers were throwing epithets at the Sikh Turbans, Muslim women's Hijab, Arab dresses, and other wears, we did not have the proper education then. Every human being wears something or the other on their head to cover from heat, sandstorms, rain, snow, or for other reasons. The type of cover evolves out of the material availability, environment, and culture. None is inferior or superior. They all serve the intended purpose.

We loved the statement on their site, "If we can learn to respect the otherness of the others and accept the God-given uniqueness to each one of us, then conflicts fade and solutions emerge."

We asked him where the mingling of races, faiths, and ethnicities would lead to?

Dr. Ghouse replied, "Ten years from now, wherever you go, be it a place of work, worship, playground, school, bus, train, restaurant, theater, or other public gatherings, you will find a display of diversity in every which way. You will also see people of different faiths, races, and ethnicities interacting, working, studying, intermingling, playing, and marrying each other.



Dr. Mike Ghouse, the man behind Center For Pluralism

"These interactions lend to misunderstandings and are bound to create conflicts. As responsible members of the society, we must prevent such conflicts so that each member can live securely with their faith, culture, gender, race, sexual orientation, or ethnicity."

The website mentions its mission: "The Center for pluralism is committed to building cohesive societies, a society where every human feels secure about one's uniqueness, whatever that might be."

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