

Dancing the Rhythms of Life

toward appreciating dancing

Sam Gill

Précis

In *Dancing the Rhythms of Life: toward appreciating dancing*, Sam Gill's goal is to develop a fuller richer appreciation of the importance of dancing in human life and development. He surveys the broadly accepted views of dancing held in Western cultures, appreciating them while showing that dancing is rarely considered of much value. Based on the insights he gains from the study of the dances of other cultures, in this book specifically Australian Aboriginal and Indian Hindu, as well as a detailed analysis of a salsa dance form, SalsAmigos, he has developed to teach to teenagers, Gill charts perspectives and ideas for the enrichment of our understanding of dancing. As a student of dances throughout the world, the human senses, religion, science, social sciences, and philosophy, Gill brings many insights to the detailed analysis of specific features in the dance he teaches to teens to demonstrate new ways dancing should be valued. In an unusual extended analysis of specific elements of a particular dance, Gill considers such aspects of dancing as motivation ("flow"), touch, movement and proprioception, physical exercise, team and community experience alternative to the common sport team model, the treatment of diversity and difference, creativity and improvisation, and issues of gender and gender roles. He also discusses in some depth the pedagogical philosophy he has developed for the affective teaching of this dance. The book is, read in one way, a careful discussion and analysis of a specific dance directed to serving teen and human development and to demonstrate the ways dancing should be valued. Here the book offers important insights and contributions to many issues related to teen development. Read another way, the book explores history, cultures, and philosophy in the persistent development of a sophisticated and new understanding of dancing.

Sam Gill (PhD, University of Chicago) has taught at the University of Colorado in Boulder for many years. He is the author of more than a dozen academic books and several dozen articles on topics including Native American religions, Australian Aboriginal cultures, theory and ethics of academic studies, play, and dancing. He is also a dancer (hip hop, African, and many Latin American forms), a dance teacher and choreographer (salsa, *rueda de casino*, bolero, bachata), and he has developed a number of salsa dance programs for teens and adults.

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Contents

1. SalsAmigos, Salsa, and <i>Rueda de Casino</i>	3
SalsAmigos	
A Brief Social History of Salsa Music	
A Brief Social History of <i>Rueda de Casino</i> Dancing	
SalsAmigos: An Emerging Dance	
2. Mind and Body	21
Western History of Separation of Mind and Body	
The Inseparable Mind/Body	
Cognitive Science	
Philosophy	
Teen Bodies in Their New Brains	
Teenagers as Problems?	
3. Dancing	39
Our Inherited Views of Dancing	
Dancing as Self Expression	
Dancing as a Universal Language	
Ballet as “the Dance”	
Dances are Icons of Cultural Identity	
Dancing as Sport and Spectacle	
Academic Views of Dancing	
Other Views of Dancing	
Other Dance Traditions Inspire New Understandings of Dancing	
They Jump Up of Themselves: Aboriginal Australia	
Nataraja (Shiva), the Lord of Dance (India)	
New Ways to Understand Dancing	
SalsAmigos and Dancing	
4. Dancing the SalsAmigos Way	55
Changing Partners: <i>Guapea, dile que no, and dame</i>	
Adding Complexity: <i>al medio</i> and <i>tarrito</i>	
A Whole New Dimension: <i>vacila, confusion, and afuera</i>	
And Beyond	
5. The Value of SalsAmigos	65
Value of SalsAmigos and Other Dancings	
Motivation and Happiness	
Touch and Contact	
Movement and the Kinesthetic Sense	
Physical Exercise	
Community and Diversity	
Individuality and Creativity	
Gender	
Music	
SalsAmigos Compared with Other Movement, Social, and Educational Forms	
Self-Othering of Dancing	
6. “It’s Just a Dance!”	82