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# The Dance Impermanence: An Artistic Inquiry Through Improvisation

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THE DANCE OF IMPERMANENCE:  
AN ARTISTIC INQUIRY THROUGH IMPROVISATION

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Thesis submitted to the faculty of Columbia College Chicago  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
Master of Arts in Dance/Movement Therapy & Counseling

Department of Creative Arts Therapies

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## **Abstract**

This research study investigated the use of movement improvisation to create dance/movement therapy (DMT) based interventions around the Buddhist concept of impermanence, or natural endings in life (Chodron, 1997). As the sole-researcher and participant were identical, the purpose of this research was to investigate *how* change can be facilitated, focusing on the researcher's personal experience to then apply as an emerging dance/movement therapist. The research was conducted through an artistic inquiry, which used arts-based methods as means of data collection, data analysis, and presentation of findings. Through improvisation, the researcher embodied impermanence as it related to concepts of holding on and letting go, specifically—stability and mobility, rigidity and chaos, and tension and release. Data was collected via video-recording of the researcher's improvisation sessions, culminating in select DMT interventions, as well as by personal journal entries. The DMT interventions' movements were coded through a Movement Assessment Coding Sheet (MACS). All forms of data were analyzed using Ogden's (2006) Sensorimotor Psychotherapy five core organizers and Riessman's (2008) Narrative Analysis, providing thematic patterns and chronicled relationships. Findings were synthesized and performed in the form of choreography inspired by created DMT interventions, concept embodiments' salient movement qualities, and the researcher's personal development. Findings suggested a distinct parallel process between the researcher and research topic, suggesting that personal transformation occurs through awareness of body/mind patterns, application of embodiment, and ownership of challenges. Based on the identified process of change, certain DMT implications and future research inquiries are discussed.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

In my journey as an emerging dance/movement therapist, I found the idea of change and transformation to be fundamental. Like many developing therapists in graduate school, I was exposed to countless theories, belief systems, and methodologies of other professionals in the field. I began to notice a trend. From my perspective, all of these scholars had a common goal within the practice of psychotherapy—to elicit change and healing for the individual with which they worked. Change, growth, transformation, and healing seemed interconnected. In order for healing to take place, space for change needed to be carved out by the therapist and client. This idea can be viewed in the literal sense, creating time and space for the individual seeking help and the helper to interact, and in the psychological sense, creating space within the individual, such as clearing the mind of cluttered thoughts or developing self-compassion, for a shift of the body and mind to occur. Dance/movement therapy (DMT) serves as a holistic vehicle to create this healing space.

In the field of DMT, clients' awareness of the body/mind connection is essential. This awareness is facilitated by the dance/movement therapist, and cultivated within the client's relationship to self and other. However, change requires much more than awareness, and elicits an unknown factor—*how* change happens. How to facilitate change became more interesting than the notions of when or why. This fundamental question—how do I facilitate change—fueled my curiosity and sparked my desire to investigate.

My personal process as a developing therapist and young person mirrored my interest in how change occurs. The parallel process between my learning material and self-awareness was dynamic and powerful. Many realms of myself, physical, mental, and spiritual began to manifest the constant need to shift within the ever-evolving journey of learning. This need to continually

shift my ideas and perspective required a releasing of my past story; I was discovering new meaning. The present—who I was becoming—seized my attention.

With a heightened awareness of my body, mind, and spirit connection, I began to resonate with a higher power and a desire for spiritualism. I was drawn to the organic nature of Buddhist teachings, rooted in Eastern culture and history. The truths of this spiritual perspective draw from the power of present moment awareness and the idea that everything is temporary. Specifically, I found the influential writings of Chodron (1997) to be particularly comforting during phases of loss and grief. I was introduced to the term impermanence, or “the decay that is inherent in all component things” (Chodron, 1997, p. 34). As an operational definition, impermanence is the acceptance of the ephemeral nature of this and every moment, allowing for letting go to take place.

The father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, also maintained an interest in the ephemeral nature of life. Freud (1915) explored the inherent pressure that is created between the appreciation of life and the impending destiny of death in his essay discussing transience:

Transience value is scarcity value in time. Limitation in the possibility of an enjoyment raises the value of the enjoyment. It was incomprehensible, I declared, that the thought of the transience of beauty should interfere with our joy in it. As regards the beauty of Nature, each time it is destroyed by winter it comes again next year, so that in relation to the length of our lives it can in fact be regarded as eternal. The beauty of the human form and face vanish forever in the course of our own lives, but their evanescence only lends them a fresh charm (p. 2).

Freud illuminated the thoughts I was experiencing. It was clear that the present moment was the only true experience; it all—nature, beauty, life—fades with passing time. From the big

picture, each human life has a beginning and an end—birth and death, and from the microscopic view, each breath has a beginning and end—inhale and exhale. Moreover, there are two ways in which one can react to this paradigm—one can choose to hold on or let go.

I began to wonder how I could create a bridge between the spiritual concept of impermanence and the practice of DMT. My theoretical framework as an emerging dance/movement therapist and researcher—humanistic psychology and client-centered therapy—aligned around the time I chose this topic. As a student and researcher, I was interested in the holistic nature of humanistic perspective, focusing on the positive image of what it means to be human. As a therapist, I found that my tendency was to be guided by my clients, supporting them as they directed our sessions' outcomes. The founder of the humanistic psychology movement, Rogers (1989) developed the client-centered therapy approach, where the therapist offers unconditional positive regard towards the client in the psychotherapeutic process. This theoretical framework focuses on methods that allow fulfillment of potential and growth for clients.

As my spiritual and theoretical framework aligned, I wondered how the relationship transpires between psychotherapeutic change/growth and impermanence. Simply stated, these are both vast and intangible concepts. I had to find a way to solidify these concepts into a tangible entity to research. One of my professors encouraged me to focus on how the concept of impermanence could manifest within the body. This helped me simplify what the concept meant to me at the most fundamental level—letting go. Therefore, I asked myself what are ways to embody this concept that attuned to the act of letting go, and perhaps to the opposite act of holding on. Within this dichotomy, I aimed to emphasize the oppositional tension experienced by human nature when faced with the experience of the ever-evolving present moment.

As an emerging dance/movement therapist and dancer, movement is at the forefront of my practice. I began to see the themes of present moment awareness and ephemeral experience as cornerstones to the practice of embodiment. Moore and Yamamoto (1988) further affirmed these paradoxes; body movement is at once natural and contrived, visceral and symbolic, personal and social, ever present and constantly disappearing. Our body movements and movements of others and ourselves are so constant and ubiquitous that we tend to cease noticing them. It takes conscious effort to notice our movement patterns and tendencies.

Lifetime dance maker and artist, Hay (2001), shared this ever-changing view on human movement. In her lecture at the *American Dance Therapy Conference*, she recognized impermanence as a “steadily transforming present” (p. 12). She questioned if anything she sees in art and in life is forever. Hay also identified dance and movement as therapeutic by noting two experiences that are as inseparable in life as they are occurrences in the body, “the weight of the past mingles with the weightlessness of becoming” (p. 13). The author spoke about this relationship in the context of performance. The acceptance of the past serves as a releasing and opening for change, allowing the present moment to happen. Essentially human movement, represented symbolically in the art form of dance, is a way to recognize the impermanent and ever-changing human experience.

At the foreground of my training to become a dance/movement therapist was a method in which to observe and analyze movement. Rudolf Laban created Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) as a framework to categorize and describe movement as the essence of life and the mirror of humankind. My classmates and I used LMA as a foundation. Moore and Yamamoto (2012) summarized LMA into general principles, one of them was movement is a process of change. Commonly, movement is defined as a change in place or position. An action begins in one place

and ends in another and, through perception of this change; we know that movement has occurred. However, while the difference between the beginning and ending locations of an action may be indicative of motion, movement itself is a position or even a change of positions. Rather, movement is the process of changing.

Yet, within change, Laban observed patterns and order. Laban (1974) stated that describing movement as a process of change can give the mover or observer of the mover an uneasy feeling because it is fleeting and in an “uninterrupted flux” (p. 37). However, the mover develops repeatable movement habits, providing an underlying pattern to change that may be perceived. Laban asserted that, within this underlying pattern, there are alternating rhythms of stability and mobility. This patterning of rhythmic alteration between stability and mobility intrigued me. Stability, as Laban defined it, “does not mean either rest or absolute stillness” (p. 43). As an operational definition, stability is the tendency to facilitate temporary and relative quietude, which is equilibrium. Mobility, on the contrary, means a tendency towards vivid, flowing movement, leading to a temporary loss of equilibrium. All movements cycle between the rhythmical changes of stability and mobility.

Moreover, the study of movement requires the study of patterns within the individual. Laban (1971) explained that the manner in which a person applies energy, or Effort, to fight against or indulge in an experience, allows that person to penetrate the “inner world in which impulses continually surge and seek an outlet in doing” (p. 17). While individuals do show habitual preferences for certain Effort configurations, human beings also possess the capacity to comprehend the nature of Effort qualities and their patterning in dynamic sequences. Likewise, humans may intentionally seek to alter their movement habits through conscious training. Laban used the term “humane effort” to characterize such developmental attempts (p. 15). Humane

effort is the intentional capacity, to vary and at will the kind of energies employed in an action, that distinguishes human action from the actions of animals and the mechanical motions of inanimate objects. Laban asserted that this concept is imperative to movement education, study, and self-development.

During my clinical internship, I noticed specific mental patterns within the clients with which I worked. These clients had ranges of diagnoses from substance abuse to psychotic disorders. It was clear that they were seeking treatment because their issues paralyzed them. They were holding onto some aspect of themselves, a story, a diagnosis, a memory, and an experience that defined who they were. At the basic sense of understanding, I experienced them as being either extremes of mental rigidity or chaos. Siegel (2012) explained the effects of lack of integration, in the brain and the body itself, as the underlying mechanism to well-being and mental health. Siegel asserted that a mind with mental illness cannot regulate and integrate the flow of energy and information. Therefore, the manifestation produces either rigidity or chaos. To provide further operational definitions, rigidity is the act of unyielding and inflexible state of being. Conversely, chaos is a total lack of organization, a state of utter confusion and disorder.

Meanwhile, another dichotomy fascinated me, relating to movement: how holding on and letting go manifests in the human body. In the practice of bioenergetics, the human personality is considered in terms of energetic processes of the body. Lowen (1975) asserted that bioenergetics rests on the proposition that each person is their body. No person exists apart from the living body in which they exists, expresses, and relates to the world around them. Lowen described “the life of an individual is the life of [their] body...since the living body includes the mind, the spirit and the soul, to live the life of the body fully is to be mindful, spiritual and soulful” (p. 42-43). In this realm of thought, bodily muscular tensions structure a person’s responses to their

surroundings and define the roles they play in life. Further, this type of therapy asserted that bodily tensions as “distortions and unnatural” and a result of long habituation (p. 104).

Therefore, I wondered how the concepts of tension and release could be related the embodiment of holding and letting go.

In another layer of developing my research topic, and from an artistic standpoint, I was drawn to the practice of improvisation. While engaging in movement improvisation, I could exist, trust, and create in the present moment. Albright and Gere (2003) asserted that improvisation is a form of research, a way of peering in the complex natural system that is a human being, providing “another way of thinking, one that produces ideas impossible to conceive in stillness” (p. 27). Improvisation allowed me to experience the present moment, without edits or conditions, processing information and stimuli at a given time. This act of engaging in movement in the present moment served as means of working with impermanence. The practice of improvisation was the ideal bridge between theory and practice of my research topic.

As I continued to be exposed to aforementioned theories, practices, and experiences, I began to make connections. I began to postulate how change in the body can create change in the mind, and how that process can have significant meaning. Therefore, the purpose of my research was to investigate all of the above curiosities through the following question: How can improvisation around the concept of impermanence facilitate the creation of DMT interventions that support letting go of old patterns and accepting change? The explored concepts related to impermanence were stability, mobility, rigidity, chaos, tension, and release. Each two concepts were chosen as dichotomies of each other, allowing for opposing embodiment experiences. Additionally, within the LMA framework, I noticed the relationship between an underlying

quality of movement, described as the going-ness or flow, and the idea of letting go. I accompanied my main research question with a sub-question: How is the access of flow related to the embodiment of impermanence?

In conducting this research, I not only examined these questions, but expanded representation of this concept within the DMT literature. The motivation and purpose of my research was to further my self-awareness as a developing dance/movement therapist, affirm my emerging lens of clinical psychotherapy, and integrate lifelong interests, such as human development, personal growth, artistic expression, and spiritual practice into present day work. Additionally, I was able to make connections between the artistic practices of improvisation to the creation of clinical DMT interventions that align with the concept of impermanence.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this literature review, I will create a context for exploring the intersection of DMT and impermanence. I will provide definitions for several concepts related to the topic of impermanence, as a foundation for understanding: present moment, mindfulness, growth/change, and spirituality. In order to illuminate gaps in the existing literature and demonstrate the need for my research study, I will also focus on the intersection of impermanence with the following areas: neuroscience, psychotherapy/therapeutic relationship, and DMT. The existing literature contains theoretical explanations as well as focuses on psychotherapy with the above topics, where applicable. A small amount of the literature yields results from research studies. Moreover, none of the existing information has ventured into the specific field of DMT, nor has it made the specific connection of DMT to the theory of impermanence.

American Buddhist nun, Chodron (1997), wrote a book devoted to the concept of radical compassion and the escape of pain and suffering. In her book, she offered approaches to suffering by moving towards painful situations with friendliness and curiosity, relaxing into what is uncomfortable. Among these approaches is the appreciation of *impermanence*, or “natural endings”, in life and death (p. 48). The idea of natural endings, according to Chodron (1997) and Eastern Tibetan Buddhist practitioners is necessary to acknowledge and accept as a source of healing. Chodron expressed that humans must become friendly with their suffering in order to truly appreciate happiness and experience comfort. In addition, Chodron suggested that when difficult times arise, and life presents endings, that we must recognize these times as moments of impermanence or “natural shifts in life”, and that nothing lasts forever (p. 49). The acceptance of this concept facilitates a curative factor by acknowledging that even pain or discomfort is temporary, which is comforting.

## **Impermanence Foundations**

**Present moment.** The concept of present moment is the baseline to understanding impermanence. According to Parks (2008), the present moment is “experiencing right now in its entirety with mindfulness and awareness” (p. 2). Weiss (2008) described the use of mindfulness and present moment in a slightly different way than Parks (2008): “the act of teaching the mind to stay in the present moment as a way to awaken from mental and emotional processes” (p. 3). Weiss (2008) declared the concept of present moment as a process that must be cultured and experienced daily. Both Parks (2008) and Weiss (2008) viewed the present moment as an experience of awakening and manifesting presence. Yet, Parks (2008) viewed this experience as passive process while Weiss (2008) saw it as more active involvement from the practitioner.

Further, Stern (2004) added that we are subjectively alive and conscious only “now”. He explained that “now” is when we directly live our lives, and that the present moment is the only time of raw subjective phenomenological experience (p. 37). Parks, Weiss, and Stern shared a view of the present moment as a practice of the mind experiencing right now in its entirety. Furthermore, a gap in the literature revealed that the two concepts of impermanence and present moment have not yet been scholarly related.

**Mindfulness.** Khong (2009) defined mindfulness as a way of being and experiencing the world. In ancient Eastern philosophy, Khong described the ontological dimension of Buddha’s teachings, “refers to the fundamental nature of beings, things, and phenomena” (p. 1). This dimension of Buddhist history provides a lens through which to view mindfulness. Through mindfulness, the individual can become aware of personal perception and natural way of existing.

Conversely, in a more western mindset, Siegel (2007) asserted that the contemplative practice of mindfulness extends beyond the conventional understanding as that which “is often seen as a form of attentional skill that focuses one’s mind on the present” (p. xiii). Above and beyond developing a deeper awareness of the present moment, mindfulness meditation is more fundamentally “a form of healthy relationship with oneself” (p. xiii). In mindfulness practices, the individual sits with emotions and thoughts, allowing space and time for self-awareness and regulation to occur. Moreover, Beauregard and O’Leary (2007) provided research in the field of psychoneuroimmunology, which investigates the relationship between the mind, the brain, and the immune system, lends considerable support to Siegel (2007), who brought this idea to neuroscience. To be mindfully aware —through the ongoing practice of contemplative meditation—is beneficial for the mental processes that affect the brain and body. (Siegel, 2007; Beauregard & O’Leary, 2007).

**Growth and change.** Due to the nature of the profession, the concept of growth and change is prevalent in the fields of psychotherapy and counseling. Particularly, the field of DMT utilizes body movement as action towards a clinical goal, providing a vehicle for change through personification. Unfortunately, this direct involvement of the body is not shared with other fields. Koch and Fischman (2011) encouraged the field of DMT to engage in “enaction and embodiment approaches with other psychotherapy fields” (p. 3). Koch and Fischman described enaction as “conceiving knowledge by action in the world” and embodiment as “physically representing a quality or idea” (p. 3). Further, the authors introduced the idea of emergence as “the temporary, but coherent coming into existence of new forms through ongoing processes essential to the system” (p. 4). The authors labeled this process as a single act that is perceived, created, or transformed and meaning is made. Through reinforcement of enaction and

embodiment, the moment of emergence is possible and necessary. Yet, even though these concepts are important, the authors acknowledged a gap in research and practice of growth and change within psychotherapy and counseling practices.

Similarly, Hartman and Zimberoff (2005) described growth as the “process of becoming someone else and, in particular, the aspects of that process that occur in between states, the transitional experiences” (p. 12). The authors described these experiences as special windows of opportunity for growth and development. These experiences can be viewed in the microcosm of one’s life, as moments: within the context of everyday life, within the process of psychotherapy, and within the practice of spirituality. These authors identified a connection between an individual’s growth and change in relation to their process of life, and most importantly, in their psychotherapy process. Hartman and Zimberoff (2005) as well as Koch and Fischman (2011) viewed growth and change as a necessary aspect of personal and psychotherapeutic processes; the authors also suggested that growth is a natural development of an individual’s emergence into the world, transitioning who they are in order to accept change.

**Spirituality.** Religion differs from spirituality in that it refers to a specific system of beliefs and organized practice of worship, ritual, or belonging to a sect of individuals (Traupman, 1966). In contrast, Eliason, Hanley, and Leventis (2007) expressed that spirituality derives its meaning from spirit, or the Latin *spiritus*, which means breath, inspiration, character, or also, soul. In Hebrew, Greek, and Roman cultures, the spirit was literally the breath of life (Eliason, Hanley, & Leventis, 2007). Equally, Western belief systems viewed the spirit as that which is other than our physical, or corporeal body, giving us life and self-awareness (Eliason and Smith 2004).

DMT master's student, Rothwell (2006), explored the question of how dance/movement therapists experience and described spirit as it manifests with the DMT context. In her thesis, she defined spirituality as the presence of a higher power, "something bigger than you and me" (p. 11). On the other hand, the belief that one's personal spirit can be nurtured and developed without conventional religion, or belief in a god(s), is gaining acceptance among many counselors and other helping professions. As Young, Cashwell, and Woolington (1998) have described spirituality as the "core reciprocal component of the overall wellness of the individual rather than as a stand-alone or isolated dimension" (p. 65). Spiritual health includes the concept of spirit as a life-giving force. Young et al. (1998) presented a different facet of spirituality than Rothwell (2006): while Rothwell (2006) found that spirituality is an individual experience and manifests in a higher power, Young et al. (1998) expressed spirituality as part of an integrated and overall wellness entity in an individual's life.

Conversely, Chandler, Holden, and Kolander (1992) asserted that the spirit is "the innate capacity to, and tendency to seek to, transcend one's current locus of centrality, which transcendence involves increased knowledge and love" (p. 169). The authors asserted that spiritual wellness is a balance between repression of one's spirituality and total immersion in one's spirituality. This balance is attainable through the loss and gain of self-awareness. Similarly, Myers and Sweeney (2003) viewed spirituality as "an awareness of a being or force that transcends the material aspects of life and gives a deep sense of wholeness or connectedness to the universe" (p. 253). The belief in an organizing force or power in the universe is essential to the concept of spirituality. When an individual is able to feel integrated with this energy, he or she has connected with a dynamic essence and is capable of being one with nature (Helminiak, 2001; Murgatroyd, 2001).

In the realm of grief and loss, Kinnier, Tribbensee, Rose, and Vaughan (2001) interviewed individuals who had near-death experiences and found that after confronting their own mortality, there was less fear of death, more appreciation of life, and a deep need to make relationships meaningful. According to the interviewees, it took facing death to emphasize the importance of spiritual effects of connectedness. Simply put, making meaning of death seems to enhance an individual's tendency to seek out spirituality and meaning in life.

### **Psychology and Psychotherapy Intersections**

**Neuroscience.** Hanson and Mendius (2009) studied the neurological affects of Buddhist principles and practice. They asserted that “something transcendental is involved with the mind, consciousness, and the path of awakening—call it God, Spirit, Buddha-nature, the Ground, or by no name at all,” and that name it goes by this transcendental dimension is ultimately “beyond the physical universe” (p. 9). These authors explained what happens within the brain when the practice of consciousness, such as meditation, becomes integrated into daily life: as little as 12 minutes of meditation a day can result in an increased size of the brain's pre-frontal cortex. Therefore, can physical embodiment of mindfulness yield neurological benefits and spiritual awakenings?

Similarly, in the literature of pastoral counseling, the mounting evidence from neuroscience suggested that a deepening and evolving spiritual practice, such as meditation or prayer, will further one's development far more than holding consistently to a particular belief and/or doctrines (Eliason & Smith, 2004). Likewise, from the perspective of neuroscience, Beauregard and O'Leary (2007) viewed mindfulness as a trend towards gaining spiritual awareness. All sets of authors, Hanson and Mendius (2009), Eliason and Smith (2004), and Beauregard and O'Leary (2007), asserted that the deepening of one's spiritual practice will not

only open their perspective beyond what is already known, but also move humans toward a new level of consciousness.

In relation to psychopathology, clinical practitioners Beauregard and O’Leary (2007) demonstrated the application of mindfulness meditation to the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder could produce tangible changes in a client’s neural circuitry and brain structure. The authors pointed out, “what was once a neural footpath” in the brain of the obsessive-compulsive individual grows over time “into a twelve-lane highway whose deafening traffic takes over the neural neighborhood” (p. 128). Yet, there is hope that through intentional and ongoing contemplative awareness and practice, the neural neighborhood can be quieted down and made more manageable. The authors declared that “neuroplasticity [the ability of neurons to shift their connections and responsibilities] make that possible” (p. 129). The individual engaging in daily contemplative practice and mindfulness meditation is not who he or she used to be, but instead, a new creation.

Likewise, McEwen and Lasley (2002) asserted, “we can alter not only the functioning but also the structure of the neural networks in our brains” (p. 120). More specifically, by repeating certain meaningful spiritual mantras and by engaging in repeated contemplative practices, humans have the capacity to become a new and more highly developed creation. This will not happen overnight, but in time can be possible if practitioners are patient with and compassionate toward themselves. When they repeat a spiritual mantra until they remember it, “[they] have made a long-term, possibly permanent, change in [their] brains” (p. 149). The practice becomes a way to develop new brain patterns, ultimately changing—if only a little bit— who a person is.

**Psychotherapy and therapeutic relationship.** From a clinical perspective, Stern (2004) placed present moment in the center of psychotherapy and linked it to the process of change.

Stern defined the present moment as being made up of small momentary events that enter one's awareness and are shared between two people, specifically therapist and client. These lived experiences, made up the key moments of change in psychotherapy, foster the connection in everyday intimate relations.

In the context of the therapeutic relationship, Rogers (1989) stated that when two individuals encounter one another, both are changed. The essence of a good counseling relationship is one in which the counselor uses his/her personal experience, self awareness, and faith to positively affect the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship. The profoundly intimate and human act of one person being present for another, demonstrating empathy, and unconditional love can be healing (Eliason & Smith, 2004; Rogers, 1989). One might go so far as to say, the act of being present allows for spiritual presence (Eliason et al., 2007, 2001).

Mindful awareness and the awareness of the present moment cannot be considered merely optional among clinical practitioners. The art of contemplative practice is the main aspect of spiritual life, as it has been all along and especially now in the light of neuroscience research (McEwen & Lasley, 2002). As Siegel (2007) pointed out, "Being mindfully aware, attending to the richness of our here-and-now experiences, creates scientifically recognized enhancements in our physiology, our mental functions, and our interpersonal relationships" (p. xiii). Similarly, Weiss (2009) suggested that mindfulness makes psychotherapy faster, easier, and more loving while simultaneously sharpening consciousness. This opens the client to a tremendous resource of self- introspection, observation, and reflection.

Correspondingly, Wegela (2011) wrote that the concept of impermanence is existent in everyday relationships. The author described the sense of groundlessness occurring when unexpected change happens, our normal reference points are no longer in place; therefore

humans feel that their ground has been swept out from under them. Wegela also described the possibility of “discovering our true nature in these moments” and stressed the need for mindfulness in order to move closer to others (p. 146). Furthermore, the author compared the view of impermanence in relationships to the termination stage of the therapeutic process. Eventually, the therapeutic relationship also inevitably comes to an end. As Stern (2004) and Weiss (2009) viewed the present moment as a correlation to therapeutic change, Wegela (2011) observed impermanence or present moment to the ending of a therapeutic relationship. The possibility of these correlations lends itself to many exciting research opportunities.

**DMT.** In relationship to human movement, two authors viewed impermanence as a way of experiencing. Moore and Yamamoto (2012) acknowledged that movement becomes less conscious as humans develop with age. As the concentration on movement shifts out of humans’ central consciousness, along goes the mindfulness that accompanies it. Moore and Yamamoto further stated, “movement is ever present and constantly disappearing” (pg. 6). As a result, dance and movement is not only ephemeral but also illusory. These authors proposed the importance to bring mindfulness back to movement, recognizing that any movement moment is happening here and now and never again.

In addition, Stern (2004), although not a dance/movement therapist, regarded important issues relevant to DMT, such as non-verbal communication and present moment experience. Stern concluded that the present moment is a special kind of story, “a lived story that is nonverbal and need not put into words” (p. 36). This interpersonal information is simultaneously taken in as it is unfolding. Stern maintained the “knowing about it cannot be verbal, symbolic, and explicit”; rather he described it as “falling into the domain of implicit knowing” (p. 112). It is “nonsymbolic, nonverbal, and nonconscious [not involving conscious processing] in the sense

of not being reflectively conscious” (p. 113). While implicit communication is often primarily associated with motor actions, it also includes affects, expectations, shifts in activation and motivation, and styles of thought—all of which can happen during the few seconds of a present moment. Stern upheld that repeated motor patterns play a prominent healing role in psychotherapy. Change can come through shifts in implicit knowing. Thus, healing can take place in the moment without reference to the past and without the use of cognitive interpretations or concepts.

Likewise, Parks (2008) explored the role of the present moment experience in the work of DMT. Parks (2008) found that therapeutic presence, or the therapist being fully in the moment—physically, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually—with a client, is necessary for healing to occur. Parks (2008) further explained a therapist’s experience of therapeutic presence involves being grounded in a healthy sense of self, while being receptive and immersed with what is poignant in the moment, and with a larger sense of spaciousness and expansion of awareness and perception. This grounded, immersed, and expanded awareness occurs with the intention of being with and for another, in service of the client’s healing process. Moreover, Stern (2004) viewed the importance of body awareness and implicit knowing as a way to practice empathy and establish interpersonal relationships. Both Parks (2008) and Stern (2004) shared views of therapeutic presence as an inroad to nonverbal psychotherapy practices.

## **Conclusion**

This literature review’s goal was to create a framework to explore the intersection of DMT and impermanence. I illuminated the similarities of an Eastern centered concept of impermanence to more commonly understood philosophies, such as present moment, mindfulness, growth/change, and spirituality. I also related these ideas to the realms of practice

and theory such as neuroscience, psychotherapy, therapeutic relationship, and DMT. It is apparent that the idea of present moment and mindfulness has been linked to growth and change in psychotherapy and recent findings in neuroscience (Beauregard & O’Leary, 2007; Eliason & Smith, 2004; Hanson & Mendius, 2009; McEwen & Lasley, 2002). There is also information on the relationship of personal change to the therapeutic process (Eliason & Smith, 2004; Parks, 2008; Rogers, 1989; Stern, 2004; Wegela, 2011). However, there are missing links between body-centered psychotherapies, such as DMT, directly to the concept of impermanence.

Therefore, this gap in the literature presented an opportunity for my study to shed light on the relationships between DMT, impermanence, and transformation. At the fundamental level, I was interested in the relationship between movement and this concept of natural endings (Chodron, 1997). My knowledge of LMA allowed me to deepen this exploration and create a movement study. The practice of improvisation, creating movement in the present moment, is an area of curiosity for me as an artist and a novice therapist—to trust in the vitality of the moment. Moreover, I wondered how these foundations and practices could help me facilitate change and transformation. These opportunities for new research lead me to certain investigative wonderings, specifically my research question and sub-question, respectively: How can improvisation around the concept of impermanence facilitate the creation of DMT interventions that support letting go of old patterns and accepting change? How is the access of flow related to the embodiment of impermanence? The juncture of noticing my clinical perspective and gaps in existing literature provided space for my personal motivation to have academic competence. It set the stage for my research study to take place.

### **Chapter Three: Methods**

In order to answer my research questions, I did a qualitative artistic inquiry. Artistic inquiry, as outlined by Hervey (2000), utilizes art making in any or all of the research process; art making may be used to collect, analyze, or present data. I chose the artistic inquiry methodology due to its emphasis on creativity, as this supports the nature of movement improvisation and empowers the researcher's individual and aesthetic lens.

#### **Methodology**

Several commonalities exist between qualitative research and the practice of creative arts therapies, particularly dance/movement therapy, creating a natural alignment (Creswell, 1998). Aigen's (1993) tenets of qualitative studies were used as a guideline, identifying overlaps between psychotherapy, especially humanistic approaches, and qualitative research, which were relevant to, and essential in, my study: the researcher (a) is considered the instrument of practice, (b) undertakes transformation, (c) takes measures to ensure an unbiased stance, (d) avoids generalizing, and (e) maintains a flexible research approach. These guidelines are similar to psychotherapy in the sense that the therapist uses an unbiased and flexible approach, and at times, emphasizes herself as resource for working with a client.

In addition, the researcher as instrument meant that I would function as a real person in both the role of therapist and role of researcher. In the context of research, a real person embraces rather than avoids human emotions. Although my study was not directly related to psychotherapy, it can be viewed as a development factor to my journey of becoming a therapist by processing emotions and illuminating personal barriers. Embracing my humanness as a researcher was a necessary tool to understand and translate the human experience—allowing me to more deeply grasp and describe study results. Next, transformation refers to the experience of

growth and change for the researcher. Aigen (1993) stated that qualitative researchers are also deeply impacted by their research endeavors and the deepening understanding they gain as they study the diversity of human experience.

In regards to the stance of the researcher, biases and values are kept in check through supervisors, advisors, and colleagues. I had this support system in place, during my study and writing process, in order to increase awareness around my potential biases, prejudices, and perspectives. Because this research study investigated change using my personal experience, this aspect of support was essential. Additionally, the theme of generalizability influenced both my personal process and the qualitative research. In my personal process, the uniqueness of the individual was valued instead of generalizing to the journey of others. And in the qualitative research, the profound understanding of a specific phenomenon was of more interest than providing predictions regarding future encounters.

Lastly, Aigen (1993) discussed the necessity of having a flexible research approach, to recognize that the process often takes unexpected twists and turns, and that the researcher must be prepared to move with these changes. Too rigid of an approach would have limited my process; it was important to maintain this flexible approach, especially with the nature of improvising movement in the moment. My research process consisted of open-ended research methods and unfolded as phenomena were engaged and examined. I let the unfolding process of the research guide me.

My qualitative study used the artistic inquiry methodology. This methodology resonated with me within its valued framework guidelines: engaging in art-making, preserving the aesthetics of the researcher, and fostering a creative process. The artistic inquiry approach focuses on artistic knowing and creative experimentation. Critical points for differentiation of

artistic inquiry from other approaches include; art making that occurs in response to the research question, and a focus on creative process (McNiff, 1987, 1994, 1998). Also, the researcher's corresponding methods valued both the subjective nature of movement and the aesthetic preferences of the researcher in preparation, data collection, analysis, and presentation stages of research.

According to Hervey (2000), understanding human experience needs an epistemological approach, requiring ways of knowing that can best be described as aesthetic, emotional, and intuitive. The artistic inquiry methodology captures this approach, providing a platform for the researcher to explore these ways of knowing (Eisner, 1997). The artistic practice I used for artistic inquiry was improvisation, being led by intuition and emotion and incorporating creative experimentation. With improvisation practices, I used pure art-making (movement), present moment experience, and self-reflection to explore the research question and sub question. I incorporated Albright and Gere's (2003) ways of knowing that grow out of a flow state of mind, where the self-critic shuts down and mindfulness emerges.

The improvisation dancer tacks back and forth between the known and the unknown, between the familiar/reliable and the unanticipated/unpredictable. The known includes any predetermined overarching score for the performance, the body's predisposition to move in patterns of impulses, and that which has occurred previously in the performance of improvising. Albright and Gere (2003) illuminated that the unknown is precisely that and more. It is a process of examining the unimaginable, that which the dancer could not have thought of doing next. Improvisation presses the mover to extend to, expand beyond, and remove herself from that, which is known.

Correspondingly, I used principles of Authentic Movement as a framework for my research process. Authentic Movement bridges many dualities including individual and community energy, psychotherapy and mindfulness practices, and ritualistic and improvisational processes. Authentic Movement derived from the work of the pioneering dance/movement therapist Mary Whitehouse and extended by her student, Janet Adler (Levy, 2005). Additionally, it is grounded in the relationship between two roles – the witness and the mover. Adler (1985) explained the relationship between the mover and witness is an extremely active one, allowing unconscious processes to become conscious. Although my process did not include authentic movement techniques directly, it was infused with the relationship between myself as the mover and myself as the witness. It was important to be present within the improvisational movement practice, and to observe myself through mindfulness, self-reflection, and the aid of technology. This interplay was present during my data collection and analysis phases of research. Then, during my presentation of findings/performance, the witness role shifted to my audience members.

The aforementioned aspects are conducive to my role as an emerging dance/movement therapist, supporting the creative and expressive nature of DMT, and fostering the ability to react in the moment to a given situation/ stimuli. Although no witnesses were present during the data collection phase, I responded to my present moment experience around the relevant concept being explored, allowing thoughts, emotions, sensations, and five senses perception to surface. This process also allowed me to explore body knowledge/body prejudice (BK/BP), or personal movement predisposition, as a mover and human with myriad experiences and biases. Moore and Yamamoto (2012) observed that humans have an innate dichotomy, with a concrete world of visceral experience and an abstract universe of symbols. Improvisation allows for a more

effortless link between concrete perceptions and abstract interpretations, where creating movement based on abstract concepts and allowing tangible/sensory experience to emerge, thus uncovers potential body knowledge and body prejudice.

## **Participants**

The rationale for my population selection lies within the nature of self-reflection. I was the sole researcher and participant. At the time of the study, I was a 23 year old, Caucasian female living in Chicago, Illinois. The data was collected in a dance studio, in downtown Chicago, large enough to house solo movement exploration. Since learning that research is a systematic and diligent inquiry into a given subject, I found that perhaps the subject of most interest was my own – physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It was a challenge to justify investigating a subject as the sole participant, as comparisons to peers' studies arose. I practiced being selfish, delving into the subject of personal journey as an emerging dance/movement therapist, student, artist, and person. In additional clinical relevance, my orientation to humanistic theories aligned, emphasizing the notions of personal development and meaning making in the research process. Furthermore, it nurtured the part of my identity that strives for original thoughts, investigation, and imagination.

## **Methods**

The methods of this study included a number of steps and ritual practices. First, space and time needed to be provided for the study to take place. I reserved the above mentioned dance studio for 15 weeks (semester long) – 12 weekly sessions for data collection, and three weekly sessions for recuperation, self-reflection, and data analysis. This process began in February 2013 and ended in May 2013. One day out of the week, I entered the space with a specific intention. Each session was focused on an identified aspect of impermanence; stability, mobility, rigidity,

chaos, tension, and release. I organized these concepts by dichotomies according to their opposing identities, for example tension and release were paired together as they relate to muscular tension in the body. These concepts/dichotomies were chosen based on my understanding of different theories, systems, and taxonomies of body movements and mental expressions, including but not limited to LMA, Kestenberg Movement Profile (KMP), Siegel's (2012) attachment theory, bioenergetics, and postmodern dance technique.

Due to the fact that there were only six identified concepts to explore, I investigated each specified concept twice. The first session, exploring a concept, consisted of mental preparation/mindfulness practice, improvisation of movement/art making, and self-reflection/journaling. Finally, the second session, exploring the identical concept, consisted of the same practice, as well as noting themes arising in movement and culminating in a concrete, repeatable movement sequence or dance. This allowed for the ephemeral and subjective experience to crystallize into a tangible souvenir. This practice also fulfilled the intention of creating DMT interventions from indicated concepts. This repeated six times. At the end of the semester, I had a substantial collection of data.

**Data collection.** The data took shape in the three forms. Video recording via my personal computer camera captured the movement/embodiment experiences and DMT interventions. I categorized this as the aesthetic experience, ephemeral yet observable. Journal entries and responsive drawings captured the written and self-reflective experiences. I categorized this as the kinesthetic experience, turning non-verbal experience into a verbal and written expression. The kinesthetic experiences' processing took place in the studio, directly after the improvisation sessions, in order to capture my immediate impressions on paper. Thirdly, a Movement Assessment Coding Sheet (MACS) was used to record observations of the DMT

interventions specifically (see Appendix B). Coding my MACS took place in the interim outside of sessions and after a dichotomy, such as stability and mobility, was finished being explored. I used the video recordings as observable data to code my MACS. Each of the 12 data collection sessions remained open to the ongoing evolutionary process and preliminary narrative data analysis findings after each experience.

**Instrumentation and movement tools.** The fleeting nature of motion and the limited capacities of the perceptual system are obstacles to reliable observation and description (Cruz & Berrol, 2004). Therefore, the observations were mediated by technical means, such as video recording. Certain languages and taxonomies of organizing movement were used as a tool of data collection and observation. Using both LMA and KMP lenses, I revisited the recorded DMT interventions. This process included sub steps as well. I had four rounds of observation per video. First, the task was to simply observe the recorded movement, secondly to identify the salient movement categories, thirdly to code in real-time within the acknowledged categories, and finally to double-check the coding and revise, if necessary. This took place after each dichotomy's interventions were created, such as chaos and rigidity, coding two at a time, with three coding periods per six total concepts.

I used an observation process outlined by Moore (2010) as relax, attune, find a point of concentration, and recuperate. Due to the personal investigative nature of this study, it was easy to become engulfed in the subjective and ever-evolving data. I relaxed by focusing on the breath, entering into a mindfulness practice that mirrored the data collection session itself. During the attunement part of the observation process, mirror neurons were triggered, eliciting the same kinesthetic response as during the movement experience (Rizzolatti, 2004). It was important to recognize these but not have them influence the coding process. The point of concentration

consisted of focusing on specified movement categories within the MACS. And finally, recuperation included introducing a change of focus, connecting to my breath again, and/or closing my eyes. The physicality of writing on the MACS paper, paired with the prescribed observation process, allowed me to recognize and implement internal boundaries as the researcher and participant. This was vital to keep a fresh eye on the observed movement and to integrate recuperation within the process.

The defined movement categories were viewed through the LMA and KMP perspectives. At the time of the study, I did not yet hold the credential of Graduate Laban Certificate in Movement Analysis (GL-CMA). The information and training I acquired was within my graduate program's Observation and Assessment I and II courses. Within LMA, the movement categories included Body, Effort, Shape, and Space. And within KMP, the movement categories included System I and System II. Further illumination about what was observed and coded, specifically, can be viewed in the summary of salient data (see Table 1).

**Data analysis.** At the end of each two-week concept exploration, I conducted a preliminary organization and analysis of the data. I first categorized the written, self-reflective journal entries using Sensorimotor Psychotherapy's five core organizers as a guideline. Ogden (2006) explained that these five core organizers consist of thoughts (cognition), feelings (emotions), five sense perceptions (sight, smell, touch, taste, sound), body sensations, and movement. As these five themes began to surface, it proved conducive to the tendencies of the written data. These tendencies or patterns emerged in relationship to the explored concept: cognition patterns, emotional patterns, five senses perceptual patterns, sensational patterns, and movement patterns. Some of these categories then shifted to other themes with which to

further organize data; five sense perception changed to relationship to the present moment, and movement patterns took on the language and taxonomy of LMA.

The DMT interventions, captured by both video recording and MACS documents, were understood as observable and organized forms, respectively, of the same facet of data. This provided a concrete way to describe the observable movement. It is important to note that full improvisation sessions, including the entire experience of embodying a given concept, were left as raw data, to later be used as a means of creating the presentation of findings in the form of choreography and performance.

Cruz and Berrol (2004) declared that there is no one correct way to organize the themes found in the data. It takes trial and error, willingness to “not know” (p. 134), and immersion in the data before the data can begin to yield results. This perspective allowed the focus to shift from a micro, line-by-line, analysis to a broader sense of connection and understanding. I began to view the data through the lens of a story, my story and relationship to impermanence as a whole. Using Reissman’s (2008) Narrative Analysis as a guidepost, the data was then analyzed on a macroscopic, thematic, and story-telling level. The idea was to bring forward the overall conversation between all data and my relationship to impermanence, ultimately letting go and accepting change. Another facet to the data analysis was bringing attention to the storied form of created DMT interventions’ movement data: how the primary researcher might sequence events, utilize visual images, and communicate nonverbally via gesture or body movement (Reissman, 2008). Narrative analysis focuses on the intention and particularities of language by asking “How?” and “Why?” within the data analysis process (Reissman, 2008, p. 12). I chose the specific kind of narrative data analysis – thematic, structural, dialogic, visual, and/or combinations – in response to improvisation outcomes, styles, and patterns.

Conceptualizing the eventual presentation of findings was helpful to look at the data on a macro, holistic, and aesthetic level. Bruscia (1998) defined aesthetic integrity as the quality of the beauty in the study. The theoretical base of artistic inquiry is built on the idea of aesthetics. Bruscia referred to the relevance, creativity, and awareness brought forth as guidelines for aesthetic integrity (Cruz & Berrol, 2004). Hence my research methods, and means of presenting my research, also demonstrated this level of aesthetic and artistic integrity.

**Performance.** Following that data collection and analysis stages of research, I developed my presentation of findings. As an artistic inquiry methodology, I chose to do this in the form of a dance performance. Specific aspects from each facet of data were synthesized using my intuition and aesthetic preferences. I expressed each concept, drawing from salient improvisational movement qualities, DMT interventions’ movement qualities, and journal themes/ patterns/ artwork. Therefore, I determined the themes and salient features of each concept’s data, resulting in certain choreographic choices (See Table 1).

*Table 1: Impermanence concepts’ salient data and choreographic choices*

Concept	Improvisational movement qualities	DMT interventions’ movement qualities	Journal themes/patterns/ artwork	Resulting choreographic choices
Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breath total body pattern of connectivity</li> <li>Bound flow</li> <li>Even effort phrasing</li> <li>Stable state (space and weight)</li> <li>1D, 2D use of space</li> <li>Central approach to kinesphere</li> <li>Low intensity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breath/ core-distal head-tail total body patterns of connectivity</li> <li>Bound flow</li> <li>Stable state (directing space and increasing/ decreasing pressure)</li> <li>Even effort phrasing</li> <li>Shape flow (growing and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feelings of limitation</li> <li>Thoughts of “contained in”/ “defined limits”, “being stuck”, “aware of pelvis”, “spatial clarity”</li> <li>Body sensations of warmth</li> <li>Imagery of being in a cylindrical container/</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audible breath and soft music</li> <li>Expressing internal breath support</li> <li>Slow pacing, gradual build in intensity</li> <li>Recreating cylindrical shapes in body</li> <li>Facilitating</li> </ul>

		shrinking) in the torso <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Near reach space</li> <li>• 1D use of space</li> <li>• Central approach to kinesphere</li> <li>• Gradual timing, low intensity</li> </ul>	structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angular shapes</li> </ul>	stable state in body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressing grounding through body shapes, breath, and flow of movement</li> </ul>
Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core-distal total body pattern of connectivity</li> <li>• Free flow</li> <li>• Swing effort phrasing</li> <li>• Mobile state (flow and time)</li> <li>• 3D use of space</li> <li>• Transverse approach to kinesphere</li> <li>• High intensity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breath, core-distal, upper-lower total body patterns of connectivity</li> <li>• Mobile state (freeing flow, accelerating time)</li> <li>• Swing/buoyant effort phrasing</li> <li>• 3D use of space</li> <li>• Transverse approach to kinesphere</li> <li>• Carving and arcing modes of shape change</li> <li>• Gradual timing, high intensity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings of resilience</li> <li>• Bodily sensations of tingling and rushing of blood</li> <li>• Imagery of perpetual motion</li> <li>• Imagery of energy streaming outward</li> <li>• Thoughts of “being off vertical”, “constantly moving”, “potential for new movement to happen”</li> <li>• Diagonal, complex shapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perpetual, instrumental music</li> <li>• Constant pacing</li> <li>• Quick moving/ less gradual build in intensity</li> <li>• Recreating 3D use of space</li> <li>• Facilitating mobile state in body</li> <li>• Expressing lack of grounding with jumps, spins, and quick movements through space</li> </ul>
Rigidity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body-half total body pattern of connectivity</li> <li>• Bound flow</li> <li>• Wringing action drive</li> <li>• Rhythm state (weight and time)</li> <li>• 1D use of space</li> <li>• Small kinesphere</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head-tail, body-half, upper-lower total body patterns of connectivity</li> <li>• Bound flow</li> <li>• Rhythm state (increasing pressure, decelerating time)</li> <li>• Wringing action drive (increasing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings of limitation, nervousness, and anxiety</li> <li>• Thoughts of “no options”, “no choices”, “no where to go”</li> <li>• Body sensations of tingling towards midline</li> <li>• Imagery of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ominous/ harsh vocals/ music</li> <li>• Slow pacing, stillness</li> <li>• Recreating imagery with ball body shape</li> <li>• Expressing simplicity through few movement</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central approach to kinesphere</li> <li>• Ball body shape</li> </ul>	<p>pressure, decelerating time, and indirecting space)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1D use of space</li> <li>• Central approach to kinesphere</li> <li>• Gradual timing, high intensity</li> </ul>	<p>being stuck/ tangled in mud or vines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blank spaces on page</li> </ul>	<p>choices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laying and covering body in soil on the ground</li> </ul>
Chaos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head-tail total body pattern of connectivity</li> <li>• Free flow</li> <li>• Passive weight</li> <li>• Passion transformation drive</li> <li>• Impulsive, impactive (accented) phrasing</li> <li>• 3D use of space</li> <li>• Large kinesphere</li> <li>• Peripheral approach to kinesphere</li> <li>• Screw body shape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head-tail, cross-lateral total body patterns of connectivity</li> <li>• Free flow</li> <li>• Impactive (accented) phrasing</li> <li>• Passion transformation drive (increasing pressure, accelerating time, and free flow)</li> <li>• 2D, 3D use of space</li> <li>• Abrupt timing, high intensity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings of exhaustion, sadness, anxiety, loss of control</li> <li>• Thoughts of “never feeling grounded”, “no spatial awareness”, “trust in myself”, “need constant recuperation”</li> <li>• Body sensations of warmth, tingling, dizziness</li> <li>• Imagery of external explosion</li> <li>• Condensed, circular shapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High intensity, loud instruments/ vocals/ music</li> <li>• Quick pacing, abrupt/ surprising movements</li> <li>• Recreating disorientation / loss of awareness of space with internal focus</li> <li>• Building muscular tension to then release outward</li> <li>• Expressing lack of safety/ risk taking with jumps, turns, and abrupt movements</li> <li>• Expressing lack of boundaries by jumping off stage</li> </ul>
Tension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upper-lower total body pattern of connectivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upper-lower total body pattern of connectivity</li> <li>• Bound flow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings of limitation, exhaustion</li> <li>• Thoughts of “I</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow, intensity building vocals/ music</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bound flow</li> <li>• Increasing pressure</li> <li>• Even effort phrasing</li> <li>• 1D, 2D uses of space</li> <li>• Central approach to kinesphere</li> <li>• Wall, ball body shapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhythm state (increasing pressure, decelerating time)</li> <li>• Press action drive (increasing pressure, decelerating time, and directing space)</li> <li>• 1D, 2D use of space</li> <li>• Central, peripheral approach to kinesphere</li> <li>• Wall body shape</li> <li>• Gradual timing, low intensity</li> </ul>	<p>am one with the Earth”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoughts of “bound, not changing”</li> <li>• Body sensations of muscular tension</li> <li>• Imagery of “hard but malleable” joints</li> <li>• Imagery of “wound up”, “interweave”, “twisted”</li> <li>• Tall, complex shapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow pacing, stillness</li> <li>• Building muscular tension with gripping and flexing movements</li> <li>• Recreating imagery with contorted body shapes</li> <li>• Expressing internal tension with stillness</li> <li>• Laying and covering body in soil on the ground</li> </ul>
Release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head-tail, cross-lateral total body pattern of connectivity</li> <li>• Free flow</li> <li>• Decreasing pressure</li> <li>• Even, buoyant effort phrasing</li> <li>• 1D, 3D use of space</li> <li>• Central approach to kinesphere</li> <li>• Low intensity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head-tail, body-half, and cross-lateral total body pattern of connectivity</li> <li>• Free flow</li> <li>• Dream state (decreasing pressure, freeing flow)</li> <li>• Resilient/ buoyant effort phrasing</li> <li>• 1D, 3D use of space</li> <li>• Central, transverse approach to kinesphere</li> <li>• Gradual timing, low intensity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings of comfort</li> <li>• Thoughts of “trust”</li> <li>• Body sensations of warmth, tingling, light-headedness</li> <li>• Imagery of undulating waves, fluidity, womb-like</li> <li>• Cloud/ fluffy shapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lighter, pleasant instrumental music</li> <li>• Releasing muscular tension with flowing and escaping movements</li> <li>• Recreating imagery with undulating movements</li> <li>• Moving, splashing and engaging with water in pool</li> </ul>

As the table states, my choreographic choices ranged from all aspects of producing a work of art, including music, costume, set design, lighting, and staging. Since the performance

was an evening-length solo exploration, I shared the stage/space with certain set items, such as soil and water. I chose these organic elements to illuminate certain aspects of the data. For example, I used soil as an illumination of bound flow, during rigidity and tension embodiments, representing grounding yet restricting energy. While dancing in the soil, I removed a layer of my costume, representing vulnerability and authenticity. Also, I used water as an illumination of free flow, during the release embodiment, serving as a symbol for washing the dirt clean and becoming new. I also shared the space with the audience, my witnesses, who were recruited via marketing materials, such as posters and postcards, sharing through social media, email, and promoting to the DMT community.

The performance, titled *Letting Go/Letting Be*, took place on the evening of April 16, 2014, at the Conaway Center of Columbia College Chicago. The space was vast with high ceilings and deep rows of chairs. The stage was elevated slightly and surrounded by giant pillars. I used the area beside the stage to set the soil and water. I outlined the stage with candles to provide intimate lighting. During the beginning of the performance, I invited my audience members to join me in a Buddha board exploration, or small easel that is painted on with water, promoting mindfulness and creativity. The water marks on the easel as dark strokes, dries, and slowly fades away. I used a projector screen to enlarge my Buddha board, as I painted, engaging in this practice with the audience. The order of the performance was slightly different than the data collection process, presenting the interventions/embodiments as a seamless and narrative progression with transitions and musical interludes (see Appendix F). I ended the evening with a question and answer session. The performance was captured on video and can be viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xZdcLXqWGI>.

## **Validation Strategy**

Cruz and Berrol (2004) stated that, within movement observation, perception could be compromised by selectivity, prior knowledge, interpretation, and other factors. As a single research subject, artistic inquiry study, validation was addressed through a resonance panel triangulation strategy. The feedback from the resonance panel served as one point, and my MACS and personal journal as the other two points.

**Recruitment procedure.** After the data collection, analysis, and presentation processes, I began to recruit a resonance panel. I had intended to recruit experts in the fields of DMT, artistic improvisation, mindfulness practices, movement analysis, narrative analysis and/or psychotherapeutic change. I knew that professionals with these credentials existed; it was just a matter of availability and willingness to participate. The recruitment process consisted of directly asking, via email or in person, colleagues within the DMT network of professionals. I used a letter format, outlining my study and expectations for participation (see Appendix D). Once I received word back that there was interest and willingness, I responded with the premise and motivation of the study, research question, and MACS for further detail. I did not want to send any raw or analyzed data, as it would presumably hinder each participant's ability to view the data with a novel and unbiased lens. As the date of the panel neared, I sent an outline of events, what to expect, and made myself available for any questions or concerns. Some scheduling challenges with securing space arose, demanding flexibility from the participants and myself. In the end, I secured three panelists, all dance/movement therapists with clinical, artistic, and movement observational experience.

**Resonance panel procedure.** We met on an afternoon in the same studio that the data collection took place. I welcomed everyone and positioned a recording device in the room, in

order for me to revisit and review the verbal feedback in the future. I made sure the consultants signed an audio release form (see Appendix E). I began by introducing my study, once again, and summarizing the data collection and analysis process. I invited questions and answered them as needed. We then delved into two data forms, the MACS and video recording of the DMT interventions around dichotomies related to impermanence; stability and mobility, chaos and rigidity, and tension and release. Each of the six interventions was observed and coded on the MACS, embodied, and then discussed. We mirrored the same data collection process as what happened in the actual study: observing the video once, selecting the salient movement parameters on the MACS, then repeating four times, focusing on Body, Effort, Shape, and Space within the LMA framework. The KMP framework was optional to code. I encouraged the consultants to do this process to the best of their ability. I then loosely taught each intervention to the participants and we embodied it together. It was important that the coding of the MACS happened before the embodiment because it was undesirable for their embodiment to influence what they coded. We summed up each concept with a discussion of their reactions, impressions, thoughts, and feelings about the experience.

### **Ethical Considerations**

As the primary researcher and participant of the study, some ethical concerns included my emotional and physical well being, as the subject of this study is physically and spiritually comprehensive in nature. I enlisted my personal board-certified dance/movement therapist as a means of support, in order to discuss any complications that arose in my body/mind while participating and conducting this study. A contract was used, emphasizing self-care accountability during the length of the study (see Appendix C). For the protection of the data, I

kept video recordings on a password protected personal computer and journal in a personal bag. I planned to destroy the raw data collected within two years after thesis submission.

## Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

When I began my research, I hoped to further understand impermanence as a compass to embodying the therapeutic process of letting go. My initial motivation to research this topic was to affirm my emerging lens of clinical psychotherapy. I knew early on, in my graduate school experience, that I was able to make connections between clinical theories and artistic practices, such as humanistic psychology and improvisation. Also, this process would further my self-awareness as a developing dance/movement therapist, in order to facilitate change in others.

While at my clinical internship and in my personal process as a graduate student, I began to notice change was both necessary and cumbersome. It was a process of noticing, accepting, intending, and practicing (Hackney, 2002). Movement was the best way to approach change, because the essence of movement is change. Hackney proclaimed, “movement is a metaphor for change, and it is an actualization for change” (p. 24). During my research process, not only was I investigating the idea of change, I was embodying it. My research process mirrored Hackney’s aforementioned intricacies of change. The theme of change and transformation is demonstrated in my results themselves, my experience of presenting the results, and further implications related to current research.

As the results of my research point out, improvisation about concepts of impermanence can, in fact, facilitate the creation of DMT interventions that support letting go of old patterns and accepting change. Though, since my research question was asking the *how* this happens, instead of simply asking *can* this happen, further discussion is necessary. The results indicated that my creative and attentive practice, in itself, illuminated physical (body) and psychological (mind) patterns through mindfulness, deepened expression of those patterns through

embodiment, and shifted awareness through intention and self-reflection. My experience of performing and presenting these findings was rooted in mindfulness, embodiment, and intention. Therefore, the embodiment of concepts related to impermanence; stability, mobility, rigidity, chaos, tension, and release created a tangible and meaningful platform for presence and growth. This discussion examines my body/mind patterns, embodiment applications, and prominent shifts experienced. Also, it illuminates certain challenges and limitations within the study, provides implications for DMT, and recommends questions for future research.

## **Patterns**

Specific patterns, within my body and mind, were illuminated in my presentation of findings process. These patterns also coincided with themes interwoven throughout my research process, from data collection and beyond. I noted each pattern as a theme, providing different layers of consistency and meaning.

**Flow as movement.** The first pattern connected my sub research question, relating the access of flow to impermanence, to many epiphanies. I found these insights imbedded in how I experienced flow in my body. Moore (2012) asserted the difference between free flow as relaxed, easy-going, and fluent, to bound flow as careful, controlled, and restrained. This description surfaced many times in my embodiment experience and in the creation of DMT interventions. Not only was it observed and coded on my MACS, it was experienced in my body as feeling, sensation, and breath. Laban (1974) correlated this process of attuning and relating to objects emotionally with the motion factor of flow. Laban (1974) asserted flow as “the function of feeling, as to judge the value in terms of whether the emotions are likeable, pleasant, and acceptable, or not” (p. 75). Specifically, during the embodiment of mobility, chaos, release, where levels of free flow were more present, I had strong emotional reactions such as joy, rage,

and sadness. I found that the other three concepts; stability, rigidity, and tension, which had higher levels of bound flow to have less of an emotional impact on my body and mind. Perhaps, this illuminates the function of embodying free flow, which elicits emotions outward from the body/mind. While, on the contrary, the function of embodying bound flow constrains and holds emotions inward.

Another major element of flow was physical sensations experienced in my body. During embodiments that contained a higher level of free flow, I often felt tingling and warming sensations. In Eastern culture, the Chinese can refer to this sensation as qi, which translates to “natural energy, life force, or energy flow” (Deng, 2003, p. 346). Qi is also often described as the natural element of breath or air. Additionally, Maoshing (1995) described that this ancient Chinese term is the energy that sustains all living beings and is found in many belief systems. This further demonstrated a tangible energetic experience, resonating in present moment sensations and serving as proof that my body was in motion.

Next, the function of flow was related to breath support. As the first total body pattern of connectivity, breath is fundamental to life and movement. Hackney (2002) pronounced breath as a physiological support for all life processes and, hence, all movement. Breath brings life; it enlivens. My relationship to flow was accessed through my breath. Hackney explained “breath is the fluid ground from which all movement emerges, it provides the baseline for flow and effort” (p. 41). As the baseline of breath and flow was built, my relationship to change was facilitated. It provided a foundation for the ever alternating growing and shrinking of my body, otherwise known as shape flow (Moore, 2012). From the basic to the most complex level, every movement was either an opening or closing, allowing breath to support those changes. I was able to facilitate small shifts, letting go of tension within my body, through the access of flow.

Therefore, I found that the access of flow, with ample breath support, was directly related to the embodiment of impermanence. These entities went hand-in-hand, supporting and connecting each other in time and space.

This personal journey of finding my relationship to breath and flow is ever evolving and applies to future clinical work. In the practice of DMT, I can facilitate clients' embodiments of flow to assess tendencies towards freeing or binding movements, noticing certain correlations to emotional expression and regulation. Further, I can use flow as an inroad to facilitate change, knowing that breath supports and enlivens this process.

**Effort states and states of mind.** As there are four major categories in LMA and two major systems in KMP to consider, it was important to focus on the prominent patterns. Therefore, the pattern that arose the most in the research process was the relationship of my movement dynamics (effort state) to emotional state (state of mind). Laban (1971) asserted that movement is a psychophysical phenomenon through which the individual's inner attitudes become visible. Laban also related effort dynamics to both "mental processes and functions of consciousness" (Moore, 2012, p. 74). As an example, I found this to be true in my embodiment of the concept mobility. During the embodiment, I felt the motion factors of flow and time to be present, which is categorized as mobile state. After the embodiment experience, on my way home on the subway, I found that my state of mind to reflect the effort state. With free flow and accelerated time, I felt an influence on how I travelled through space, down the stairs and into the subway station – quicker and less careful. Laban supported this experience with his statement, "the dancer moves, not only from place to place, but also from mood to mood" (Moore, 2009, p. 147).

According to Siegel, (1999) a state of mind is defined as the total pattern of activation in the brain at a particular moment in time. These patterns of activation reveal the neural network within various circuits, facilitating the components of information processing. Therefore, the circuits that are connected carry out particular functions and process as a cohesive whole. For example, perhaps the reason why I felt more mobile while embodying the concept of mobility was that my state of mind shifted to that of functional readiness for more movement. Siegel also affirmed, “cohesive states of mind are highly functional and adaptive to the environment” (p. 209). In my embodiment of chaos, I felt a loss of control, lessened caution, emotional arousal, and disorganized attention. It was as if the stage was set for all my past mental processes related to chaos to manifest. However, my ability to be mindful – to observe myself in the process – provided cohesion in my chaotic state of mind. States of mind are dynamic processes and required me to be aware of mental process patterns over the course of my research.

In future clinical application, it will be important to note that clients’ states of mind will be influential on their ability to become aware, process, and adapt to their environment. It will be important for clients’ to bring awareness to these states as an observer of their habitual mental processes. Additionally, I feel prepared to note my current state of mind while facilitating DMT with clients, noticing shifts and influences on the present moment.

**Relationship to present moment.** Early on in my research process, it became clear that not only was the idea of the present moment a place of intrigue, but also my relationship to it. Throughout my data collection process, I became aware of certain thought processes and reactions to realizing those thoughts had raced tangentially. For example, some of my journal entries included unrelated thoughts, wondering why this was happening and bringing my attention further away from the task at hand. As a result, a pattern of self-judgment occurred,

lending to the emotion of frustration, anger, and a bit of disappointment. Chodron (1997) assured me that this, in itself, was meditation “how we stay in the middle between indulging and repressing is by acknowledging whatever arises without judgment, letting the thoughts simply dissolve, and then going back to the openness of this very moment.” (p. 16) In practicing mindfulness, I was not trying to live up to some kind of ideal—it was quite the opposite. I was trying to be with my experience, all that it was. Chodron also claimed “this very moment is the perfect teacher, and it’s always with us” (p. 17). By returning my attention back to the present moment, I learned vast amounts from what my experience had to teach me, observing tendencies for tangential thoughts and repressed emotions.

This experience will be invaluable for future clinical application, where my own ability to be mindful can serve as a model for my clients. I have a sound understanding about the rigor required to engage in mindfulness practices and the benefits it yields to let go of habitual thought patterns. Additionally, I can facilitate this practice within my clients, leading them down the road to trust the present moment as a reliable and honest teacher.

## **Embodiment**

As an artistic inquiry research study, embodiment was a vital part of the process. It served as my main outlet of expression. This non-verbal and visceral backbone was present in the data collection and presentation of findings stages of my research. Performing was a rich experience, enhancing my relationship to presence, growth, and providing another level of exploration within the topic.

**Flow as state of mind.** During the embodiment of my results in performance, I entered into a state of mind that can be described as flow. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described this flow experience as a state of mind when consciousness is harmoniously organized. A few factors

contributed to this experience; the merging of action and awareness, the paradox of control, and a loss of self-consciousness. This flow state provided an optimal way of being and yielded much enjoyment and pleasure.

When all my energy and attention was directed towards the task at hand, expression as performance, there was no psychological energy left over to process any information than what the activity offered. In short, I was fully present and alive. According to Csikszentmihalyi, this was the merging of action and awareness. He described this feature of optimal experience as the most universal and distinct, “people become so involved in what they are doing that the activity becomes spontaneous; they stop being aware of themselves as separate from the actions they are performing” (p. 53). I felt this in my performance; the dance (activity) took over the dancer (me), allowing my movement to flow smoothly and boldly. My experience was connected to impermanence by being moved by the dance, accessing flow in movement and in mind, letting go of thoughts, letting events of the performance be, existing in the present moment, and venturing into the unknown with courage and confidence.

Before my performance, I felt a lot of pressure to perform/communicate my findings clearly. Though, as soon as it began, all worries of failure went away. Csikszentmihalyi described this as the paradox of control. The paradox lies within the possibility of control, rather than the actuality. There was a risk for an aspect of the performance to go wrong. However, the sense of control provided a flow state to where anything was attainable, making anything seemingly possible. I was able to embrace the impermanence of the moment and let go of these worries. As a result of a flow state taking me over and embracing impermanence, I experienced a freedom to determine the content of my consciousness.

Additionally, I was able to experience a loss of self-consciousness. Normally, I experience some level of performance anxiety. For this presentation of findings, I felt a particular self-imposed expectation to perform well. However, all thoughts of judgment, worry, fear, and defense dropped away. I entered into a higher level of consciousness and presence, in order to lose a sense of self. It is important to note that a loss of self-consciousness is not a loss of self, and certainly not loss of consciousness, but rather, a loss of consciousness of the self. Csikszentmihalyi affirmed, “the loss of a sense of a self separate from the world around it is sometimes accompanied by a feeling of union with the environment” (p. 63). My experience as a loss of self-consciousness was lead to self-transcendence, to the feeling that the boundaries of my being expanded into new realms.

After reaching this higher level of consciousness, I feel confident in illuminating this experience in others. Specifically, my understanding of engaging in a flow state of mind—merging of action and awareness, paradox of control, and loss of self-consciousness—can be applied in the practice of DMT. Using movement as an intervention, I can bring clients’ into a flow state of mind by focusing on the action, letting go of worried/judgmental thoughts, connecting to the self/environment, and existing in the present.

**Being witnessed.** In my experience of performance, I found my audience to be influential. Before then, I had not shared my findings with anyone other than my advisor. It brought up a sense of vulnerability and deeper awareness of the present moment. Siegel explained this as a “now moment” or a special kind of “present moment that gets lit up subjectively and affectively, pulling one more fully into the present” (Siegel, 2010, p. 16). Siegel further related this to therapeutic relationships. These moments take on a particular quality because the habitual framework—the known, familiar environment of the therapist-client

relationship—has been altered or risks alteration. The state of the “shared implicit relationship” is called into the open (p. 16). In performance, the audience and I created this shared relationship, where vulnerable and authentic moments were intimately shared between us. I knew what would happen next, per the choreographed dance, but the audience witnessed it for the first time, thus creating their experience of unveiling the unknown.

Specifically, I felt a *now moment* during the embodiment of tension. During this part of the presentation, I utilized the aesthetic choice of stillness while laying on the ground, in soil. The only observable movement was in the rise and fall of my chest. This moment went on for around six minutes, while music played, personifying various viewpoints of holding on and letting go. Upon reflecting and receiving feedback from the audience, this moment in the performance was perhaps the most memorable to them. They were pulled into the present and the precipice of the unknown. One audience member claimed the tension in her body build as she witnessed me in stillness. She was able to reflect on her experience while witnessing mine. The shared non-verbal experience of stillness was charged with presence and served as a recuperative measure for the observers.

Similarly, my performance was infused with a principle of Authentic Movement—the experience of being witnessed. Through sharing the performance space and non-verbal interactions, myself as the mover and the audience as the witness reached new heights of self-observation, awareness, and insight. Adler (1985) believed that the awareness achieved has the potential to be transpersonal, to go beyond the personal conscious and toward a universal conscious. This aspect of the relationship became apparent to me upon reflecting and receiving feedback from the audience. Many members of the audience shared their reactions to witnessing my journey. Some reflected on their relationship to letting go, some connected my process to

situations in their lives, and some shared stories of grief and loss. It was apparent to me that not only was performing a transformative process for me, but also for many of the people who bore witness to it. Further, it satisfied a personal yet universal need to be seen and heard—that, within moving and being witnessed, my dance and story were honored.

In potential future clinical application, this process is vital to DMT. As a dance/movement therapist, the practice of witnessing clients' in their stories and establishing a relationship of mover and witness will be ever-present in the therapeutic relationship. It will be important to draw on this founded non-verbal, kinesthetic relationship for healing and change to take place—for my clients' bodies, movements, and stories to be truly seen and honored as well.

**Dualities.** Throughout the process of embodiment, in data collection and in presentation of findings, the need for recuperation was apparent. Since I was exploring dualities or dichotomies—stability and mobility, rigidity and chaos, and tension and release—it was a matter of embodying extremes. The created DMT interventions aimed to bring me further into a given concept. Entering into these extremes provided me with an experience of stepping up to my edge, needing consistent recuperation, and searching for balance and integration.

In embodying the dualistic concepts, I met my edge—physically and mentally. While expressing the concept of chaos, I found that I wanted to avoid the experience, to move away from it at any cost because it evoked uncomfortable thoughts and emotions. Though, after time of being in the intensity of the experience, it became easier. Again, Chodron (1997) assured me that this often happens in mindfulness practices, “when we meet our edge and just can’t stand it” (p. 13). Chodron also related this moment of meeting one’s edge to the psychological illness of addiction, where the tendency is to back away from the greatness of the moment:

There are so many ways that have been dreamt up to entertain us away from the moment, soften its hard edge, deaden it so we don't have to feel the full impact of the pain that arises when we cannot manipulate the situation to make us come out looking fine (p. 54).

I saw my willingness to enter into these stirring situations to require courage. Chodron further asserted that meeting one's limit, and not becoming overwhelmed and undone by it, is a sign of health. While directly embodying each duality, I was entering into the uncomfortable realm of being, knowingly and openly.

Siegel (1999) shared this view of mental limits and in his theory of window of tolerance, where various intensities of emotional arousal can be processed in the brain without disrupting the functioning of the system. Siegel declared, "one's thinking or behavior can become disrupted if arousal moves beyond the boundaries of the window of tolerance" (p. 254). The width of the window within a given individual may vary depending on the emotional processes themselves. For example, I found the width of my window to be narrower during the embodiment of chaos—involving emotions of anger and sadness—as it nearly surpassed my normal tolerance level. While, during the embodiment of mobility and release—bringing up emotions of excitement and joy—my window seemed wider. I was more familiar with these emotions and therefore more available to tolerate them. However, I never overtly stretched beyond my window of tolerance. I remained conscious in meeting my edge.

In the act of meeting my edge, it was clear that many moments of recuperation were needed. This theme emerged constantly in my data. I needed recuperation from the exertion of movements. Exertion followed by recuperation is an active natural cycle, which the body utilizes to replenish itself (Hackney, 2002). I found this process to be active and not passive. Bartenieff

(2002) acknowledged, “each movement creates its own rebound to return or shift to the next movement” (p. 71). Therefore, this was a natural process happening without me directing it. At times, I did actively introduce the opposite movement to my body/mind, as means of recuperation, from how I was previously moving. For example, while moving with bound flow, or energy moving inward toward my core, during the embodiment of rigidity, I found ways to alternatively access free flow or streaming energy outward from my core.

With all of these factors considered, I constantly searched for balance and integration within my body/mind. I found that the experience of continually meeting and being with my edge was not emotionally balanced. Siegel (1999) asserted, “emotional growth is based on the movement of dynamical systems toward a balance between continuity and flexibility in the flow of states across time” (p. 301). Siegel further explained the lack of balance as “without rigid constraints on which neuronal groups will be recruited (excessive control) or a chaotic, random flow of activations (excessive disorganization)” (p. 302). I described this experience as the meta-process. The process of embodying extremes also reflected extremes within my mind, requiring an employment of balance and integration. Spending too much time in a given concept affected my well-being and relationship to equilibrium. Therefore, I experienced my research topic and embodied concepts on another and unexpected level.

In relevant clinical application, I foresee the act of embodying extremes to be integral to the practice of DMT. I can utilize the created DMT interventions, into given concepts, as an inroad to deepening my clients’ experiences. It will be important to ensure that regulation and consciousness are to be maintained throughout this process, so that my clients will not be sent outside of their window of tolerance, and therefore mentally and physically dis-regulate. Also, it will be vital to incorporate recuperation into any given DMT session, as a means to re-establish

equilibrium and build balance within myself as the witness/facilitator and clients' as movers/participants.

## **Shifts**

My research process was an organic unfolding of information and feedback. While in it, many shifts occurred within myself as a student, researcher, and emerging therapist. It became apparent that my research topic was, in fact, taking shape in myself. In the processes of data collection, analysis, and performance, I took note of shifts within my body/mind. These shifts included but are not limited to; letting go of shame/cultivating connection to self and others, letting go of comparison/cultivating creativity, and letting go of perfectionism/cultivating self-compassion. Perhaps the DMT interventions resonated with me, allowing patterns to surface, intensify, and change. As a researcher, along with my artistic endeavors, it was my responsibility to communicate my study through written form. My writing process included major moments of challenge, vulnerability, and ownership. I was called to confront my barriers to writing, and work through them with compassion and connection.

**Letting go of shame.** As human beings, our fundamental need is connection to others and ourselves. Anything that gets in the way of this, or rears “the fear of disconnection” is shame (Brown, 2010, p. 39). Brown (2010) explained that shame is the painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging. Many times, I encountered shame in my research process. The very subject I was researching—the need to accept and let go—was an opportunity for growth in my life. I felt flawed because of this. My shame trigger of not being a *good enough* researcher, writer, student, and therapist vicariously arose. In order to cultivate connection, I needed to own my story. Brown asserted that shame is

about fear, blame, and disconnection. Story is about worthiness and embracing imperfections that bring us courage, compassion, and connection. Further, that “owning our story and loving ourselves through that process is the bravest thing that we will ever do” (p. xi.). In conducting this research and sharing it with others, I claimed my story and professed my worthiness.

**Letting go of comparison.** In my research and writing process, I was challenged to not compare myself to my fellow classmates’ work. As my research study included creativity at its core, I felt the undying vulnerability that my content would be judged and therefore disregarded. Brown (2010) described creativity as “the power to connect to the seemingly unconnected” (p. 96). During a phase of data collection, time passed without work with my study. I felt debilitated by shame and stuck by comparison. Interestingly, the impermanence concept that I had explored before this break was rigidity. This may suggest that I was allowing my own relationship to rigidity to influence my research process. I was called to confront this aspect of my process with compassion and ownership. I employed support from my advisor, friends, and myself to ensure that my development had value. Creativity, which is the expression of my originality, helped me stay mindful that what I brought to the research field is completely unique and cannot be compared. My research study was about facilitating change, so part of my transformation was owning and celebrating my existing creativity.

**Letting go of perfectionism.** Another barrier to writing was my desire for perfection. I found that my striving for perfectionistic goals, to have a perfect thesis, was not only unattainable but also unhealthy. Brown (2010) claimed that shame is the birthplace of perfectionism, and can lead one down the path of depression, anxiety, addiction, and life-paralysis, referring to “all opportunities missed because of the fear to put anything out into the world that could be imperfect” (p. 56). I found this to be especially true with my writing process.

I had to gain insight and claim that my thesis was going to be imperfect, but an imperfect thesis was better than no thesis. To overcome perfectionism, I needed to acknowledge my vulnerabilities to universal experiences of shame, judgment, and blame—to practice self-compassion. Neff (2003) explained that when you become more loving and compassionate with yourself, you embrace your imperfections. Chodron (2006) further affirmed, “when you open yourself to the continually changing, impermanent, dynamic nature of your own being and of reality, you increase your capacity to love and care about other people and your capacity to not be afraid” (p. 35). It was in the process of embracing my imperfections that I found my truest gifts and moments of shift: courage, connection, and compassion.

As an emerging dance/movement therapist, these shifts will affect my clinical efficacy on many layers. First, I acknowledged and overcame personal barriers—such as shame, comparison, and perfectionism—that affected my research process and inhibited my ability to arrive into the present moment. Next, these barriers gave me an opportunity to develop self-worth by engaging in courage, connection, and compassion. Further, this parallel process can also be translated to my work as a clinician. Now that I have experienced these shifts, I can claim them as my new way of being, letting go of previous patterns and accepting change within myself. I can serve as a compassionate guide and to my future clients, who may be faced with similar challenges, in their processes of change.

### **Study Limitations**

Although my research found support for the embodiment of impermanence to facilitate change, and in turn the efficacy of DMT, my study is limited. My role as the primary researcher and sole participant must be considered. This limitation allowed time and space for an in-depth personal journey but did not provide any basis for generalizing to others. My enthusiasm and

hope that this study could be translated to other individuals, trying to create change in their lives, cannot be supported by the study alone. It gave birth to some important questions: what was the role of personal bias on my study? Did my inclination for connecting these topics encourage the outcome? Further, were my personal movement ability and preferences influential on the embodiment and DMT interventions? Again, this suggests that the results of my study are difficult to generalize to other individuals' processes and even to the DMT setting. However, it is important to note that I needed to go through the process—to experience personal shifts and transformation—before I could facilitate this in future clients.

In addition to potential personal bias, my research question, in itself, may contain some limitations. Although the creation of my research question was intentional, it was both involved and detailed. I struggled with bounding my vast perspective on the nature of this topic. The goal of creating a thorough research question was to focus my attention and delimit my possibilities. However, even with these intentions, the topic seemed too immense for one person to investigate. Further, the research question did ask *how* rather than *what* or *when*, indicating a qualitative nature and contributing to difficulty measuring the results. Also, the notion of *letting go of old patterns and accepting change* is an immense phrase. There are full psychological modalities that focus on this practice alone. In the end, I found that this topic was an overwhelming venture for my body/mind. I attempted to invest in and digest the material in an abstract and non-linear way. It was easy for my to get lost in the ideas and difficult for me to communicate the magnitude of implications. My sub-research question, about the access of flow related to impermanence, was more concrete to answer due to the direct relationship between two entities. If I ever attempt to expand on this research study, or replicate it in any way, I will have more knowledge on how to shape the research question and thus my study.

Another limitation to the study was the process of my resonance panel validation strategy. Many factors contributed to this limitation. First, the actual meeting time of the panel took place after my presentation of findings. Therefore, I presented my results without any concrete validation from third party members. The tangible material, MACS that the consultants filled out may be limited due to the individual ability to observe and code movement. I encouraged them to code to the best of their skill, but every consultant was not trained in movement observation or was out of practice. This affected my triangulation strategy to my own MACS and journal, as I was not able to understand some of their observation coding marks. Also, some logistical barriers, such as technology and scheduling, played a role. When viewing the DMT interventions, the projector screen was not showing the entire video, at times cutting off a small corner of the video and thus parts of my body. Due to time constraints, we did not embody the last two interventions, tension and release. Lastly, as a part of our discussion of the data, more questions arose than were answered. It was clear that the consultants were aware of their need to be present and mindful, along with personal BK/BP, which provided a nice validation to my process. They also spoke of their relationship to the data as coupled with memories of grief and loss. This parallel process suggests some validation to my research, but it is difficult draw anything conclusive or definitive.

### **Summary and Future Research**

The purpose of my study was to investigate the idea of impermanence as a means to facilitate change. More specifically, I hoped to understand how improvisation and embodiment of this concept could facilitate the creation of DMT interventions. During my research process, I aimed to answer this research questions and sub question: How can improvisation around the concept of impermanence facilitate the creation of DMT interventions that support letting go of

old patterns and accepting change? And, how is the access of flow related to the embodiment of impermanence? I intended to not only give a context for these ideas to intersect, but also give a platform for my personal experience to contribute to the existing literature. As the results of my study showed, improvisation around the concept of impermanence facilitates the creation of DMT interventions that support change on many levels. This process allowed time and space for illuminating body/mind patterns, deepening the embodiment experience, and shifting awareness and presence.

Through my embodied research process, I gained explicit knowledge of an implicit experience. With the present moment as my anchor and improvisation as my vessel, a parallel process was revealed through my inquiry into the topic of impermanence. First, I discovered and worked through my connection to holding on within my body, in the form of stability, rigidity, and tension and within my mind, in the form of fear, worry, and judgment. Then, I found my connection to letting go within my body, in the form of mobility, chaos, and release and within my mind, in the form of joy, rage, and sadness. The DMT interventions brought me further into these extreme states, illuminating my reactions in the moment and revealing patterns over time. Holding on was simple and familiar, while letting go was diverse and foreign. Overall, I found this process to resonate on two levels, personal and professional. My clinical connection to this work lies within the fact that I facilitated this research process with and about myself—acknowledging physical and mental patterns, providing space and time for a deep embodied practice, and bringing multiple layers of self-awareness and reflection. After a rigorous and diligent inquiry into the topic of impermanence, I feel confident in my ability to observe and facilitate this in future clients—letting go of patterns and accepting change. I am aware that this type of work is complex and unique to each individual; yet, vital to psychotherapy. As a

dance/movement therapist, movement observation and verbal processing are parts of clinical practice. Certain patterns related to impermanence, or letting go, can be illuminated and discussed. It will be important to identify *what* to let go, in conjunction with *how* it will happen. Further, after experiencing intense movement improvisations around these concepts, I feel willing and able to make clinical decisions based on intuition, creativity, and response to present moment information. Perhaps, I can use the essence of the created interventions in the context of clinically practicing DMT, remaining mindful that they were created as a result of my own process and may not be translatable to others. I will acknowledge impermanence, or letting go, as a foundational gateway to personal change—harnessing courage, connection, and compassion as means to get there.

Certain implications of this research can be made to the DMT field. Clients' psychological patterns can manifest within their bodies and thus be difficult to identify, provoke, and shift (Hackney, 2002). Similarly, the practice of illuminating and shifting these patterns, or re-patterning, through present moment embodied experience, lends itself to the foundation of DMT as inherent body/mind connection (Bartenieff, 2002). This process includes the clarification, expansion, and broadening of expressive movement repertoire (Levy, 2005). Also, the power of increased body awareness, non-verbal communication, and attunement provides a deeper level of understanding and connection to self and other (Chaiklin, 1975). Further, in terms of best practice, it is vital for the dance/movement therapist to become aware of mental barriers to the work, allowing for the employment of recuperation and compassion towards herself as practitioner.

Currently, research shows no shortage in the importance of change and healing as part of the therapeutic process. Additionally, it is well known that shifts in the body can create shifts in

the mind within the field of DMT—that movement functions as a dynamic and innate process, uniting opposite positions within the psyche (Bartenieff, 2002; Hackney, 2002; Levy, 2005). Yet, directly investigating the application of impermanence will hopefully give depth to this as an intervention method. Further research may also motivate the DMT community to codify this presently elusive topic. I hope that future DMT researchers will persist on this path, continuing the investigation of this topic and giving it presence and voice within the community. In future research, I hope to answer the following: What are the effects of impermanence as an intervention method within DMT? What is the relationship between acceptance and letting go in the therapeutic process? Also, what is the role of physical and psychological letting go/releasing within the psychiatric illnesses of addiction, post-traumatic stress, and mood disturbances? Further, what is the role of movement modulation in psychological health? Lastly, how can the embodiment of impermanence facilitate the stages of grief and loss? That awareness of impermanence can serve to deepen people's commitment to living a life of value and meaning.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Definition of Terms**

#### ***Body/Mind Connection***

In the DMT field, the human body and mind are believed to have reciprocal or bidirectional influence on each other; thus, change in the body can cause change in the mind, and vice versa. This integration and interaction between aspects of human functioning typically considered of the mind and those typically considered of the body is referred to as the body/mind connection (Levy, 2005).

#### ***Bound Flow***

Bound flow, a motion factors that explains movement qualities in LMA, represents restrained or controlled movement quality. Movements with bound flow may appear restricted or even tensed (Moore, 2009).

#### ***Chaos***

Chaos is a state of utter confusion and disorder, total lack of organization of the system and flow of the brain. In children, chaos can result from insecure attachments with caretakers and manifest psychologically or physically (Siegel, 2012).

#### ***Flow***

Flow as movement is described as going-ness, range of control, and feeling and is one of the Effort elements in LMA. Flow varies in between bound flow and free flow (Moore, 2009). Flow as a state of mind is described as way of knowing where the self-critic shuts down and mindfulness emerges. This flow state provided an optimal way of being and yielded much enjoyment and pleasure (Albright & Gere, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

### ***Free Flow***

Free flow, a motion factors that explains movement qualities in LMA, represents movements that are relaxed or difficult to stop. Movements with free flow may appear easy going and fluent, yet they may appear uncontrollable in extent (Moore, 2009).

### ***Growth***

Growth is a necessary personal process of becoming someone else, the in between states or transitional experiences and natural development of an individual's emergence into the world, transitioning who they were in order to accept change (Hartman & Zimmeroff, 2005; Koch & Fishman, 2011).

### ***Embodiment***

Embodiment is not only recreating someone's movement in one's own body, but also requires "active sensing of bodily sensation, impulse and affect" (Levy, 2005, p. 222).

### ***Impermanence***

Impermanence is a Buddhist concept/truth that recognizes natural endings in life—that nothing is permanent, the ephemeral nature of this and every moment. It is "the decay that is inherent in all component things" (Chodron, 1997, p. 34).

### ***Mobility***

Mobility is the state of being mobile, or constantly changing. It includes the ability to move physically, or capable of being moved readily. It is a tendency towards vivid, flowing movement, leading to a temporary loss of equilibrium (Moore, 2012).

### ***Present Moment***

The act of teaching one's mind and body to experience right now in its entirety, with awareness, as a way to awaken from mental and emotional processes, the only time of raw subjective phenomenological experience (Parks, 2000; Weiss, 2009; Stern, 2004).

### ***Release***

In bioenergetics, release is the physical act of relinquishing, freeing, or liberating. Release can take place physically within muscular structures and can manifest psychologically (Lowen, 1975). Certain postmodern dance techniques use this principle as a foundation to promote movement.

### ***Rigidity***

Rigidity is the psychological state of being rigid, stiff or unyielding, not pliant or flexible, and stringent. In children, rigidity can result from insecure attachments with caretakers and manifest psychologically or physically (Siegel, 2012).

### ***Stability***

Stability is the act of being stable, continuance without change, not likely to fall or give way, as a structure, support, foundation. Stability does not mean either rest or absolute stillness. It is the tendency to facilitate temporary and relative quietude, which is equilibrium (Laban, 1974).

### ***Tension***

In bioenergetics, tension is the act of stretching or straining in the muscles, stress, or uneasiness. Bodily muscular tensions structure a person's responses to their surroundings and define the role they play in life. This type of therapy asserted that bodily tensions as distortions and unnatural and a result of long habituation (Lowen, 1975).

## Appendix B

### Movement Assessment Coding Sheet

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Client Name:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Session #:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Location:* \_\_\_\_\_

#### **BODY**

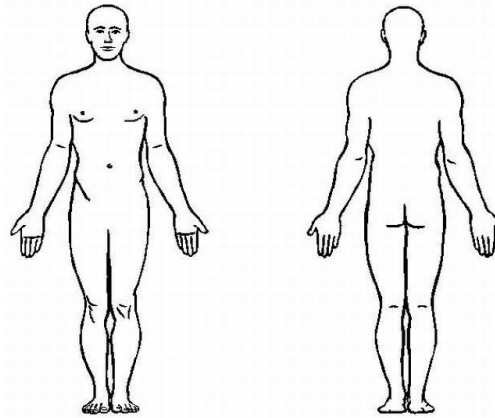
**Connectivities** – cross out missing/circle pervasive use

Breath lateral      Core-distal      Head-tail      Upper-lower      Body half      Cross-

**Notes:**

**Active/Held parts** – cross out held/circle active

Head      Arms      Scapula      Pelvis      Legs      Feet      Hands



**Phrasing** – name body parts used for each

**Sequential -**      Initiation      Exertion      Follow-through      Recuperation

**Successive -**      Initiation      Exertion      Follow-through      Recuperation

**Simultaneous -**      Initiation      Exertion      Follow-through      Recuperation

---

-- **Alignment** - general notes and tic marks

Heel-sitzbone connection

Head and neck

Spinal

Hip to foot

## EFFORT

### Elements (tic marks)

<b>Space</b>	Indirecting	Directing
<b>Time</b>	Decelerating	Accelerating
<b>Weight</b>	Increasing	Decreasing
<b>Flow</b>	Freeing	Binding

### States (tic marks)

Awake (T&S)	Dream (W&F)
Mobile (T&F)	Stable (W&S)
Rhythm (T&W)	Remote (S&F)

### Action/Transformation Drives (tic marks)

Float	Glide	Dab	Flick
Punch	Slash	Wring	Press
Passion (Spaceless)	Vision (Weightless)	Spell (Timeless)	

### Phrasing – circle tendencies

Impulsive

Impactive

Swing

Accented

Even

Vibratory

Elastic

Bouyant

Weighty

## NOTES

## SHAPE

### Shape flow support – scale visibility

not visible					visible	<u>Comments</u>
1	2	3	4	5		

### Modes of shape change (tic marks)

Mode present	Body part used
Shape flow	n/a
Spoking	
Arcing	
Carving	

### Shaping Qualities (tic marks)

Rising	Sinking
Spreading	Enclosing
Growing	Shrinking
Advancing	Retreating

### Still Forms – circle tendencies

Tetrahedron

Wall

Pin

Screw

Ball

## NOTES

# SPACE

## Kinesphere (tic marks)

<b>Size</b>	Small	Medium	Large
<b>Levels</b>	Low	Middle	High
<b>Reach</b>	Near	Mid	Far
<b>Approach</b>	Central	Peripheral	Transverse

## Use of Dimensions - general notes and tendencies

Vertical

Horizontal

Sagittal

## Use of Planes - general notes and tendencies

Vertical

Horizontal

Sagittal

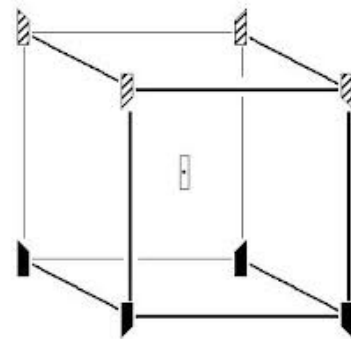
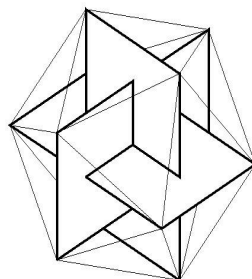
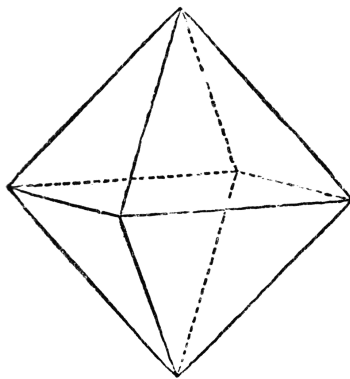
## Use of Diagonals - general notes and tendencies

Float/Punch

Glide/Slash

Dab/Wring

Flick/Press



## SYSTEM I

### Tension Flow Rhythms (tic marks)

<b>Oral</b>	Sucking	Biting	Snapping
<b>Anal</b>	Twisting	Strain/Release	
<b>Urethral</b>	Run/Drift	Start/Stop	
<b>Inner-Genital</b>	Swaying	Surging/Birthing	
<b>Outer-Genital</b>	Jumping	Spurting/Ramming	

### Tension Flow Attributes (tic marks)

Even Flow	Flow Adjustment
High Intensity	Low Intensity
Abrupt	Gradual

### Pre-Efforts (tic marks)

Channeling	Flexibility
Vehemence/Straining	Gentleness
Suddenness	Hesitation

## SYSTEM II

### BiPolar Shape Flow (tic marks)

Narrowing	Widening
Shortening	Lengthening
Hallowing	Bulging

### UniPolar Shape Flow (tic marks)—indicate placement and identify stimuli

Medial Narrowing	
Lateral Widening	
Lengthening/Shortening Down	
Lengthening/Shortening Up	

Bulging/Hallowing Back	
Bulging/Hallowing Forward	

### **Shaping in Directions** (tic marks)

Across	Sideways
Down	Up
Backward	Forward

### **Shaping in Planes** (tic marks)

Enclosing	Spreading
Descending	Ascending
Retreating	Advancing

## **OVERALL**

### **Appearance** - general notes and tic marks

Eye Contact

Groundedness

Breath

Attention

## **Dx**

## **Tx Plan**

## Appendix C

### Self-Care Accountability Contract

I \_\_\_\_\_ (Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist) agree to provide individual dance/movement therapy sessions for \$40/session regarding my client's [Julie Brannen] study of my experience of impermanence study as described in the attached narrative. I understand the purpose and nature of this study, and am informed on her ethical considerations. I will hold my client accountable for her self-care rubric as necessary. I understand that my name and other demographic information will not be used.

I agree to have the sessions take place at the following location \_\_\_\_\_ on the following dates 3/14/13 (biweekly) – for the length of the study's data collection and analysis process, and to be available at a mutually agreed time and place for additional follow up sessions if necessary.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Research Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Primary Researcher**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dance/Movement Therapist

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix D

### Letter to Resonance Panel Participants

Date\_\_\_\_\_ Dear\_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your interest in my master's thesis, "The Dance of Impermanence: An Artistic Inquiry Through Improvisation". I value the unique contribution that you can make to my study and am excited about the possibility of your participation in it. The purpose of this letter is to confirm some points that we have already discussed and to secure your signature on the participation-release form that you will find attached.

In the process of this resonance panel, I am seeking comprehensive feedback in your area of expertise; artistic improvisation, mindfulness practices, movement analysis, narrative analysis, and/or psychotherapeutic change. In this way I hope to answer my question: *How can improvisation around the concept of impermanence facilitate the creation of dance/movement therapy interventions that support letting go of old patterns and accepting change?* This resonance panel will serve as a validity check after my data analysis process. Through interacting with members on my resonance panel, I hope to bring forth further awareness after analysis of my study's findings.

Through your participation as an expert panel member, I hope to understand my experience better. I value your participation and thank you for the commitment of time, energy, and effort. If you have any further questions before signing the release form or if there is a problem with the date and time of our meeting, I can be reached at [brannen.julie@gmail.com](mailto:brannen.julie@gmail.com) or 772-834-2756.

Sincerely,

Julie Brannen

## **Appendix E**

### **Audio Release to Resonance Panel Participants**

Date 4-27-14

Thank you for participating in my thesis resonance panel to review the data from the study, “The Dance of Impermanence: An Artistic Inquiry through Improvisation.” I value the unique contribution and perspective that you can make to my process. The purpose of this form is to obtain permission to release audio recording of today’s panel. The audio recorded, of only vocal responses, will be used solely for review of this researcher and will not be included in the final thesis project/submission. However, this researcher reserves the right to use phrases, direct quotes, and/or feedback from the panel, without providing any identifying information or origin.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand the above terms and agree to have my voice recorded today.


I value your participation and thank you for the commitment of time, energy, and effort.

Sincerely,

Appendix F

Thesis Performance *Letting Go/Letting Be* Program

**Credits:**  
Researcher/Performer: Julie Brannen  
Technical Assistance: Columbia College Chicago AV Staff  
Front of House Assistance: Bobbi McKissick  
Videographer: Devin Cain  
Cover Design: David Argov



[www.thedanceofimpermanence.vtrb.com](http://www.thedanceofimpermanence.vtrb.com)

**Special Thanks:**  
Department of Creative Arts Therapies, for supporting this performance financially and administratively  
Jessica Young, for your calm and direct guidance throughout my process thus far  
Susan Imus, for your candles and support  
Bethany Brownholtz, for your wicked grammar and organization skills  
Paul Holmquist, for your scheduling and liaison magic  
YOU, for coming to bear witness to my experience –

**Thank you for coming!**  
Columbia College Chicago's Dance/Movement Therapy & Counseling MA program is geared towards those with a passion for dance, expressive movement, and psychology. This profound interweaving of disciplines has resulted in one of only six programs nationally approved by the American Dance Therapy Association. Upon completion, students become Registered Dance/Movement Therapists and may be eligible to sit for the Illinois State Licensing Exam to become a Licensed Professional Counselor.

**Department Chair:** Susan Imus  
**Department Contact:** Bethany Brownholtz  
**Office Location:** 624 S. Michigan, Suite 1100.  
**Phone:** 312-369-7697; **Email:** [bbrownholtz@colum.edu](mailto:bbrownholtz@colum.edu)

**"Letting Go/Letting Be"**  
A Thesis Performance  
In partial fulfillment of an M.A. in Dance/Movement Therapy and Counseling within the Department of Creative Arts Therapies

Wednesday, April 16  
7:30pm - 9:00pm  
Free



**Columbia**  
COLLEGE CHICAGO

Conaway Center at Columbia College Chicago  
1104 S Wabash, Chicago, IL 60605

# Thesis

## The Dance of Impermanence: An Artistic Inquiry through Improvisation

This thesis project explored the connection between how change in the body creates change in the mind. Through the practice of movement improvisation, I explored the embodied experience of *impermanence* (or *natural endings in life*) as it relates to holding on versus letting go, stability versus mobility, rigidity versus chaos, and tension versus release. Each improvisation session culminated in the creation of a specific dance or intervention for future dance/movement therapy application.

My interest in this study branched from my curiosity in artistic creation, the present moment, and human development. Secondly, it stemmed from my enduring relationship to the body, mind, and spirit connection within the practice of dance/movement therapy. Furthermore, I became akin to the importance of 'letting go of...' in my life's journey and in the process of change. Perhaps most importantly, I hoped to gain insight into my personal lens as an emerging dance/movement therapist.

Throughout the process of this study, I investigated the research question: *How can improvisation around the concept of impermanence facilitate the creation of dance/movement therapy interventions that support letting go of old patterns and accepting change?*

This performance is a culmination of results from the data. As an artistic inquiry research methodology, the results will be presented in a non-linear, abstract fashion per my aesthetic choices. The embodiments and interventions are listed on the following page.

"I see you, I feel you, and my spirit says it's time for us to dance."

-Brandie Smith

Breaking away the layers of...

Inviting newness into...

Letting go of...

Letting be.

# Performance

Introduction

\*Please join me in my Buddha Board exploration

**Stability** embodiment and intervention

*Returning* by Jennifer Berezan

*Existential Bummer*, spoken word by Jason Silva

*Sur Le Fil* by Yann Tiersen

**Mobility** embodiment and intervention

*La Noyee* by Yann Tiersen

**Chaos** embodiment and intervention

*Golden Dawn* by Goat

*Out Of Control* by Hoobastank

**Rigidity** embodiment and intervention

*The Seer* by The Swans

**Tension** embodiment and intervention

*The Seer Returns* by The Swans

*Nothing Lasts Forever* by Maroon 5

*Nothing Lasts Forever* by Nas

*Blue* by Beyonce

*Hold On* by Michael Buble

*Madeleine* by The Backstreet Boys

*Golden Dawn* by Goat

*Let It Go* by Idina Menzel

*Let It Be* by Carol Woods & T. Mitchum

**Release** embodiment and intervention

*Breathe Me*, instrumental by Sia

*Ghosts That We Knew* by Mumford & Sons

*Returning* by Jennifer Berezan

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\*Please stay for a short question and answer session