

THE INTENTION FRAME

The 'intention frame' defines the space of the Dance Floor.

Why it is important

Since writing the first edition of this handbook we discovered the value of using something on the floor to represent the 'intention frame' (that is shown on the charts of all the dances).

Using an intention frame in the way we describe below adds depth, insight, clarity and focus to the dancer's process. It creates a safer space, in which they feel held by the presence of the physical frame, which reminds them of their purpose. After their dance people often say that connecting with their intention was the most important part.

What we use for the frame

Usually we use a pale purple satin ribbon. It matches the colour of the intention frame on the charts; it is a different colour to anything else in the Dance Floors (and hence maintains the colour-coding system); and we feel that the light playing on the lilac satin suits the level of intention.

We have different styles in how we lay the frame down. Bridget tends to keep the ribbon flat, tape the corners to the floor, and lay the edges in straight lines. Gina usually lets the ribbon curl and take its course as it unrolls, creating a softer, natural shape.

How to use the intention frame

After the briefing at the beginning of a dance ask the dancer to pause before stepping onto the Dance Floor. In this pause invite them to get in touch with the intention of the process. Why are they doing it? We often suggest they touch the frame with their feet, and take a moment's silence, to bring this alive inwardly.

Before or during their silence, we remind them of the intention that the Dance Floors are designed to serve:

compassionate connection with myself and (for the inner-outer dances) also with others. Sometimes we say this briefly as above; sometimes we express the full meaning of the intention, saying something like what follows here:

The space of the Dance Floor is designed to serve a particular intention. I'll say what it is, and you check if this feels true for you, if it resonates within you.

Inner-Outer Dances: my intention is to form a quality of connection that will lead to my needs and the other person's needs being understood and respected, and that will increase the likelihood of both our needs being met.

Inner Dances: my intention is to form a compassionate connection with myself, to understand and respect my needs, and to increase the likelihood that my needs will be met.

We take care that the dancer connects with this meta-level of intention. Other levels, such as, 'My intention is to remain calm whatever she says,' can be explored once on the Dance Floor, as a mixture of OFNR. We define the intention for the dancer because if we ask them an open question such as, 'What is your intention for this dance?' they are likely to begin exploring the content of the dance.

When it's not their intention!

Before an Inner-Outer Dance a dancer sometimes notices that they do not want to hold this intention. They don't want to connect with the other person. This indicates that an Inner Dance would better support them. We have never found someone unwilling to connect with the intention for an inner dance.

Present moment awareness

The intention frame also defines a space of present moment awareness which the dancer steps into, and explores through the steps of the dance.