The lived experience and transformational potential of 5 Rhythms dancing meditation: An intuitive inquiry

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Forms of dancing meditation have been popular choices for self-development in the Western world, yet they continue to be under-represented in the academic literature on mindfulness and transformative practices. The present study explored the lived experience and transformative potential of 5 Rhythms, a dancing meditation practice developed by Gabrielle Roth (1998). Anderson’s (1998) qualitative research method, intuitive inquiry, was applied in order to engage both intellect and intuition, enabling the researcher to tap her own embodied knowing of 5 Rhythms practice. The research progressed through 5 hermeneutical cycles, allowing a process of reappraisal, transforming the researcher’s original understanding of 5 Rhythms through in-depth engagement with nine participants, all of whom were 5 Rhythms dancers. Following semi-structured interviews and transcription, a Thematic Content Analysis yielded eight core themes. Overall, the findings suggested a number of processes and conditions that facilitated and accompanied psycho-spiritual transformation in 5 Rhythms dancing, including embodiment, interconnection with others, self and the world, mindful presence, self-compassion, freedom, spirituality, creativity, and the interplay of opposing forces such as surrender and control. Implications and recommendations for future research are discussed at the end.

Keywords: 5 Rhythms, transformation, embodiment, spirituality, movement meditation, intuitive inquiry

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As a result of growing interest in body and movement-based self-development methods in the West, an increasing number of people turn to the various forms of creative, improvisational dance practices to find emotional healing, personal growth, or spiritual connection (Hanna, 1995). Dancing has been viewed as medicine in early civilizations and within shamanic traditions and its therapeutic potential has entered the field of psychology in the 1960s within the context of expressive arts and dance-movement therapies (Adler, 2002; Bräuninger, 2014; Pallaro, 1999). The benefits of dancing to psychological well-being, quality of life, and mental, social and physical development have been supported by a wealth of studies (e.g., Bräuninger, 2014; Karkou et al., 2017; Koch et al., 2019; Payne, 2006). However, research on dancing from a transpersonal or holistic perspective is limited, for instance, looking into the less explored areas of whole-person transformation and spirituality.

Transformation represents both an outcome and a process (Hart, 2000) and can be understood as psycho-spiritual development and growth, which involves the whole person: body, psyche, and spirit (Schlitz et al., 2008). Spirituality is a highly subjective experience which varies across contexts, cultures, and individuals (Sheep, 2006). Nevertheless, Worthington (2012) defined it as a sense of closeness, oneness, or connection with the Sacred through any of the five sources: a divine/theistic entity, the transcendent, nature, humanity, or the authentic self. Relatedly, transpersonal perspectives encourage the development of an expanded sense of self that encompasses broader dimensions of life, humanity, and the universe (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993) and have a powerful impact on worldview, relationships, and core values.

The present research resulted from the author’s personal journey with dancing since her childhood and practicing the 5 Rhythms movement meditation over the past six years, which became her spiritual practice and had a profound transformative impact on her life. 5 Rhythms was created outside the psychotherapeutic context by Gabrielle Roth in the 1970s and derived from her life-long explorations in dance, shamanism, healing, spirituality, and theatre work (Roth, 1989, 1998). The 5 Rhythms - flowing, staccato, chaos, lyrical, and stillness - are not rhythms in the musical sense, but experiential rhythms that might surface naturally when the body is put into motion. The rhythms are described as dynamic fields of energy which are available for the dancer to move into, through or with and provide a map for exploring the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of the individual and the realm of the collective (Roth, 1998). 5 Rhythms teachers hold the space in each session by playing various genres of music following the sequence of the rhythms, and facilitating experiential exercises.

The majority of studies on dance practices focused on dance-movement therapies (Bräuninger, 2014), while movement methods beyond the field of psychotherapy, such as 5 Rhythms, received much less scholarly attention. The few existing studies on 5 Rhythms practice reported transformational effects in the areas of spirituality (Hurst, 2010; Kieft, 2013), relationships (Davison, 2009; Kieft, 2013), emotional well-being
(Cook & Ledger, 2004), body awareness (Kubny, 2013), and creative expression (Cook & Ledger, 2004; Hurst, 2010; Kieft, 2013). All of these authors recommended further research into the therapeutic and transformational impact of 5 Rhythms dancing.

The current study’s objective was to shed more light onto the under-exposed domain of dance as a means for meditation and for psycho-spiritual transformation, through the lens of 5 Rhythms. The following question guided the research process: What conditions, qualities, and processes foster and accompany psycho-spiritual transformation in 5 Rhythms as viewed by the participants?

**Method**

The study applied Anderson’s (1998, 2004) intuitive inquiry for an in-depth qualitative exploration. The method progresses through five cycles of hermeneutical process: 1 - clarifying the research topic, 2 – gathering pre-understandings from literature and own experience into a set of primary lenses, 3 – collecting original data and preparing descriptive themes, 4 – refining interpretive lenses and comparing them with primary lenses, and 5 – integrating findings with literature.

With the use of purposive sampling strategy (Grbich, 1998), nine (six women, three men) 5 Rhythms dancers were recruited to volunteer for the study. The inclusion criteria were to have experience of dancing the 5 Rhythms and to be over 18 years of age. The sample size provided a sufficient amount of rich data. Data collection was concluded when theme saturation was achieved, in this case after nine interviews. Participants represented a relatively varied population in terms of age (30-74), nationality (of different European countries, e.g. Portuguese, Dutch, German, British), and level of experience (3 months -10 years). Informed consent forms were signed prior to participation and pseudonyms were chosen by each participant to protect their anonymity.

Within Cycle 1, the researcher clarified the research question by engaging with creative and experiential exercises suggested by Anderson (2004), including imaginal (i.e. the arena of symbolic and unconscious processes in the psyche) dialoguing with a selection of texts or images which claimed the “intuitive researcher’s attention” (p. 12). In addition to intellectual analysis and a conventional literature review, the author used her own dancing, meditation and automatic drawing to engage with symbolic content from the unconscious as ways of intuitive knowing. In Cycle 2, these exercises continued to draw out relevant assumptions and pre-understandings from the previous literature and from the knowledge and experience of the researcher. At the end of Cycle 2, nine primary lenses emerged from the dialoguing process, through which the research topic was viewed prior to data collection in Cycle 3 (see Table 1 below).
In Cycle 3 an interview protocol was prepared, containing open-ended questions which covered the personal experience of each rhythm, challenging and significant experiences on the dance floor, group dynamics, and the impact of 5 Rhythms. To collect data, 1-hour, in-depth semi-structured Skype interviews were conducted. At the start of the interviews, participants were also asked to describe each of the 5 Rhythms by providing a quick and intuitive list of adjectives, tapping into all of their senses, which were then captured in word clouds for each of the rhythms. Interviews were recorded and audio transcribed verbatim with the consent of the participants. Descriptive themes emerged from the data following a process of Thematic Content Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This involved the identification of meaning units within each transcript, and their grouping and regrouping until clusters of themes and categories began to take shape. Meaning units are defined as parts of a text which are separated by breaks or a change in meaning. To assist the first phase of selecting and coding meaning units, the qualitative research software QDA Miner Lite (version 2.0.2; Provalis Research, Montreal, Quebec, Canada) was used. Next, the process continued manually with the printed transcripts, which were merged, subdivided, or discarded until arriving at eight core themes, which then transformed the primary lenses into the final nine interpretive lenses in Cycle 4. The final fifth cycle of the inquiry consisted of integrating these lenses with previous literature.

Results

Before outlining the eight core themes, participants’ descriptions of each of the 5 Rhythms are presented in the following word clouds (Figures 1-5) to illustrate the shared essence as well as the striking disparities between the lived experiences of the individual rhythms.

The Thematic Content Analysis of the interviews with Leipzig, Moon, Raj Doot, Butterfly, Miles, Liz, Simon, Mary and Violet yielded eight core themes as follows:

1. Transformation involves discipline and surrender

Participants expressed that over time, their 5 Rhythms practice facilitated transformative changes in the psychological, physical, spiritual, or interpersonal domains. For Raj Doot, 5 Rhythms was a “catalyst for a huge transformation in my own way of being.”

Participants depicted their dancing journeys as a process of learning, exploration, or experimentation, which required discipline and intention to keep practicing despite the discomforts of the dance: “I always want to go, because I know every time maybe I will overcome a challenge or maybe another will come” (Moon). An attitude of surrender and letting go of control was equally important within the transformative process: “I was in this place of complete surrender where the part of those emotions that had owned me were no longer like a dark experience” (Raj Doot).
Figure 1  
Participant Description of Flow Rhythm

Figure 2  
Participant Description of Staccato Rhythm

Figure 3  
Participant Description of Chaos Rhythm

Figure 4  
Participant Description of Lyrical Rhythm

Figure 5  
Participant Description of Stillness Rhythm
Dancers viewed the rhythms, the facilitator, other dancers, and the body as teachers. Leipzig said: “The dance also shows me where my problems are and that’s great.” When asked about the integration of insights off the dance floor, participants’ answers varied from having a major impact outside the classes to experiencing changes as a slower, more subtle process.

2. Mindful presence and its challenges
Participants emphasized that 5 Rhythms is a practice of meditation and involves the continual refocusing of the mind to the present moment. Butterfly shared: “There’s no thinking about the future, what you’re gonna have for tea, what happened last week ... it’s just everything is in that moment, there’s nothing else.”

Dance-specific features served as anchors to the present moment, including the physical sensation of moving, the sound of music, and the physical proximity of other people:

You’re moving your body ... and there are other people as well and then you suddenly touch someone or bump into someone or you have to move out of the way, these kind of things bring you back into the presence ... then the next rhythm comes in and you have to move your body again in a different way, it doesn’t allow your mind to stay with a certain thought (Violet).

For some, flow rhythm was a gateway into this mindful presence: “Your awareness shifts a bit from the mind to the feet” (Violet). There were accounts of intentional connecting to the breath, to body parts, to tightness in the muscles, to emotions; a process of listening inwards with a gentle attitude. Liz referred to this as allowing the self to have “more fluidity ... in a psychological sense as well as in a physical sense.”

Other participants found it challenging to stay present with the slower rhythms of flow and stillness. Liz said that stillness can be a “hit and miss” mixed with discomfort, self-doubt, or eventually settling in and “just being with how it is.”

3. New ways of connecting and relating to the self
Participants experienced an array of transformative changes in the way they related to themselves, which in the long-term led to increased authenticity, self-awareness, self-acceptance, and confidence. Mary referred to this as a “deepening connection” with herself and Moon described it as “living from the heart.”

Interviewees demonstrated resilience and the willingness to be with unpleasant and pleasant emotions, body sensations and thoughts with self-compassion and non-judgment. Liz said: “Going through the rhythms I sort of connect with the different aspects of myself, rather than the default”, which helped her “being loving and compassionate whether it’s the bits I like or don’t like.”
4. New ways of connecting and relating to the body
A large number of meaning units clustered around the topic of body. Dancers experienced the interconnection of mind-body-spirit, a theme that permeated the whole research. Many learned that thoughts and emotions influence movements and vice versa: “You cannot have the same thought that you have when you have your arms down and then when you move your arms up” (Violet). The rhythms fostered an increased “sensitivity and awareness” (Simon) of the body, as well as an entirely new perception of it as an independent, intelligent, creative being.

Participants found giving a voice to the body and allowing it to express itself to be a transformative experience. Violet said: “The body is grateful that it can experience all these different movements which it doesn’t normally do.”

Interviewees who have danced the 5 Rhythms for at least 1 year or more, felt healthier and more flexible than at the beginning of their practice: “I’m healthier, fitter, stronger, run further, so that’s been amazing” (Mary). A couple of participants shared their insecurities around their bodies and suggested that 5 Rhythms facilitated a transformation of these beliefs into a more accepting, loving, and positive body image. Moon stated that it was “difficult for me to move and express myself, especially through my body, because I’ve always been a bit ashamed of my body ... so now, that this freedom that this practice is giving me is powerful.”

5. Emotional healing and letting go
Many interviewees reported that 5 Rhythms helped them access, move through, process, and let go of difficult or traumatic emotions, tension, stress, expectations, and control. Liz shared: “That sense of being able to move or loosen something within me or free something so it’s not ... bottled up, there can be a slight shifting or opening or moving with or releasing.”

Participants also experienced emotional healing through subconscious processing: “A freedom from baggage or stuff that I had that’s now gone, and I didn’t even know what it was, but it’s gone” (Butterfly). In other instances, suppressed emotions or memories surfaced to the level of consciousness: “Main trauma aspect ... was swerved up into consciousness so therefore there’s a possibility of ... some assimilation” (Simon).

An intention of allowing was frequently mentioned across the interviews. Simon explained that letting go, for him, meant allowing his body “to be overtaken by whatever wants to happen”. Violet claimed that if we allow the body “to do its work it will know what to let go of”.

6. Connecting to something larger than the self
Participants often felt an embodied awareness of the larger scheme of things or being connected to a greater force, meaning, or purpose through dancing, as well as an
experience of opening up “doors in your mind” (Mary) or “expansive openness” (Liz). Butterfly said: “It really allows me to express myself and, in a kind of a deep, like spiritual way, like have this connection to something that is bigger than myself.”

A sense of expanded awareness, direct knowing, and interconnectedness were central concepts in this theme:

There’s a sense of being interconnected with the whole of life, ... but in a much more active way than... sitting still and meditating... when you’re dancing... it’s more of an active demonstration of that ... and it’s almost like, but who’s moving, am I moving or am I being moved, or is this just the universe itself moving which is all the time... so there’s a change of perception... some insight starts becoming available (Simon).

7. New ways of relating to other people and a sense of belonging
Participants shared their challenges and joys of doing group or pair exercises in the class. Dancing with and alongside others offered opportunities to try out new interpersonal dynamics, play with boundaries, witness and be witnessed, and to transform the way dancers communicated with and related to other people in their lives. Butterfly suggested that partner dance was like a conversation, it could get “awkward” or “harmonious”, Moon said it can be “challenging, meaningful, or energising”, while Liz described it as “playful, synched, easy, or tricky”. Simon shared: “This experience was like a deep intimacy where I didn’t know the person’s personality... the kind of expansive connection with somebody”. As time went on, participants became more accepting and tolerant towards not only the other dancers, but people in general. Some attributed these shifts to being exposed to a culturally and socially diverse group of people in the classes.

Many experienced a sense of community and belonging. Leipzig had a 6-month break and upon return she felt like: “It was like a lost family member.” Mary felt that having an on-going connection to a community with a shared intention helped her find “friendship, acknowledgement and support ... it`s given me something else...a dimension that I didn’t have before.” She suggested that 5 Rhythms provided an “alternative space” where people could “find pan-religious connections” and “build a community based on rhythm and flow and breathing”. Simon felt 5 Rhythms provided a “container” for both “autonomy and communion”. Violet shared an insight from the dance:

There is actually no clear boundary between us, we’re always, always connected ... I’m expressing myself as me and I’m an individual, that’s not a contradiction to the fact that also we’re all one and we cannot be without each other.
8. Freedom
Interviewees experienced having a powerful sense of freedom on the dance floor; freedom from self-limiting beliefs, everyday roles, default identities, as well as freedom of the body, movements, and of creative self-expression. Miles said: “Sense of freedom, of being able to let go and be uninhibited”. Butterfly felt she can be her “unapologetic” self in the dance. She also found freedom in the non-verbal nature of communicating through movements:

So I can be freely who I am through dance and verbally it’s very hard, because verbally it’s filtered... through movement it’s not... I tried lots of other forms of dancing ... none of them really gave me the freedom for expression that I was looking for (Butterfly).

Playfulness, creativity, and joy were closely linked to the experience of freedom on the dance floor and were most often experienced during lyrical rhythm:

It’s just fascinating to see wow I’m moving like this ... where this all come from, I don’t know... just leave it alone and do all this amazing creative stuff that has a mind of its own... it’s like some creative, spontaneous journey... about rediscovering how to move (Simon).

Within Cycle 4, the primary lenses were transformed into nine interpretive lenses (i.e. expanded, changed, or new lenses) in light of the new data from the above themes. These are presented in Table 1, alongside the primary lenses.

Discussion
Overall, the findings support the previous themes found by related 5 Rhythms research, including therapeutic and transformational changes in well-being, spirituality, relationships, self and body-awareness, and creativity (Cook & Ledger, 2004; Davison, 2009; Hurst, 2010; Kieft, 2013; Kubny, 2013). Additional themes also emerged including embodiment, mindfulness, discipline, surrender, freedom, interconnectedness, self-compassion, and a number of 5 Rhythms-specific transformative factors and processes. The present findings resonate with Hart’s (2000) concept of transformation as both a process and an outcome. He held that transformation naturally takes place on its own and that one has the choice of engaging with this innate, ongoing process through awareness. Although cases of sudden transformation are known, in which all aspects of the person goes through a dramatic shift - especially in near-death or other traumatic experiences (Taylor, 2017) - transformation is more commonly experienced as a continuous and gradual process (Hart, 2000). In line with this notion, the present findings highlight that transformation is more often a slow process.
Table 1
*Lens-by-lens comparison of primary and interpretive lenses*

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<tr>
<th>Primary Lenses</th>
<th>Interpretive Lenses</th>
<th>Expanded Lenses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The body has its own wisdom, which can be tapped into through practising the 5 Rhythms.</td>
<td>1. Waking up to the embodied nature of human experience.</td>
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<td>2. &quot;The body is the physical aspect of the personality and movement is the personality made visible. The distortions, tensions and restrictions are the distortions, tensions and restrictions within the personality&quot; (Whitehouse as cited in Kubny, 2013, p. 131).</td>
<td>2. Dancing the 5 Rhythms fosters an embodied mindful presence with multisensory anchors of awareness to the present moment.</td>
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<td>3. 5 Rhythms dancing can be a complementary practice or a viable alternative to seated types of meditation in cultivating a mindful presence and self-awareness.</td>
<td>3. Dancing can open up doors to non-ordinary states of consciousness, through which other sources of knowledge become accessible.</td>
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<td>4. Dancing the 5 Rhythms can be transpersonal, meaning that it might carry people beyond their everyday sense of self by entering non-ordinary states of consciousness and the realm of the subconscious.</td>
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<td>5. The practice of 5 Rhythms provides a potential gateway to glimpses of a larger, intelligent, divine force.</td>
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<th>Changed Lenses</th>
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<td>4. Transformation in 5 Rhythms dancing is characterised by the on-going tension and oscillation between seemingly opposing forces (e.g. control and surrender).</td>
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<td>5. The experience of interconnectedness is central to transformation in the 5 Rhythms, but so are autonomy and boundaries.</td>
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<td>6. The order of the rhythms represents and facilitates the necessary steps for accessing authentic creativity and playfulness.</td>
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<td>7. The experience of 5 Rhythms is saturated with a sense of freedom and is accompanied by an on-going process of self-liberation through acceptance of change.</td>
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<th>New Lenses</th>
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<td>8. Accessing the authentic self involves embracing both light and shadow with courage and self-compassion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Being exposed to a diversity of people in the dance provides an opportunity to transform the way one relates to others.</td>
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Hart (2000) further asserted that transformation is maintained by the dynamic interaction of paradoxical opposites including control and flow, masculine and feminine or intention and surrender; a theme that closely reverberated in the current data. The findings also support his view that transformation involves facing challenges, growth of inner freedom through discipline, and a shedding of old attachments, identities, and knowledge.

Moreover, the accounts of the participants echo the conceptualization of spirituality as a sense of connection, oneness, or closeness with the Sacred (Worthington, 2012). In particular, the following sources of spirituality were mentioned: nature/universe, a transcendent power, other dancers, the body/heart, and the authentic self. Many dancers linked their spiritual experiences on the dance floor to a sense of interconnection or unity which was reminiscent of experiences shared by mystics from diverse spiritual traditions (Schlitz et al., 2008). More than this, a number of themes were distilled into the interpretive lens of interconnectedness with its multidimensional aspects of connection to self, others, and the world at large. Although connectedness was revealed to be a key process and outcome of the transformative experiences in 5 Rhythms and by previous research (Vieten et al., 2006), scholarly work on the construct of connectedness is scarce in psychology literature, apart from the recent proposal of an interconnectedness scale (Yu et al., 2020). Few of its aspects have been validated separately, such as social (Lee & Robbins, 1995) or nature connectedness (Mayer & Frantz, 2004), nevertheless, a comprehensive concept encompassing all the mentioned dimensions is still to be explored and is recommended for future research.

The current findings reflect the notion that an attitude of acceptance and openness are vital aspects of self-transformation (Lancaster & Palframan, 2009) and well-being (Lemon & Nunnery, 2016). Neff’s (2003) model of self-compassion appears to offer an appropriate framework to account for the non-judgemental awareness practiced by the participants on the dance floor. She conceptualised self-compassion as self-kindness, mindfulness, and an acknowledgement of our struggles, as part of a shared human experience. Cultivating these skills was integral to the transformative journeys of the dancers. According to a meta-analysis, self-compassion was a strong predictor of well-being (Zessin et al., 2015) and consequently it could inform therapeutic interventions if more research is conducted.

The findings reiterate the emotional healing potential of dancing, which has been found by previous studies (Hurst, 2010; Kubny, 2013; Payne 2006). One of the possible mechanisms behind this impact is the idea that through movement, memories and emotions that are located in the body might become conscious and lead to some level of integration (Leseho & Maxwell, 2010). One particular area which was illuminated by the current study was the transformation of body image from negative, self-critical, and disconnected to a positive, loving, accepting, and connected one. Hence, further studies are recommended into the ways 5 Rhythms could be utilized to prevent and address the increasing instances of body dysmorphia and eating disorders. In view of
the growing cases of mental health difficulties within the UK’s adolescent population (NHS Digital, 2020), the implementation of 5 Rhythms dancing or related movement-based practices into secondary provision might be worth considering.

Roth (1998) asserted that 5 Rhythms is a form of meditation as it invites the dancer to embody the present moment through cultivating and grounding awareness in the body, breath, and the subtleties of movement, while also keeping a wider awareness of the space, music, other dancers, thoughts or emotions. Kubny (2013) argued that while awareness of the body and the breath is a characteristic of many meditation practices, the combination of these with the expression of emotions through movement is one of the unique qualities of 5 Rhythms. Tantia (2013) differentiated between mindfulness as attention to the body, and embodiment as attention with the body, or an “enlivened sense of oneself in the world” (p. 96). She held that dance therapies foster embodiment of mindfulness, by guiding individuals to engage with their memories, emotions, and sensations through their kinaesthetic sense.

Consistent with the literature, the current findings provide a number of real-life examples of how the dancers engaged with the 5 Rhythms as a form of embodied mindfulness meditation. Nevertheless, movement based practices are still underrepresented in mindfulness research, in comparison to the more common seated practices (Payne & Crane-Godreau, 2013). Although a limited number of studies explored the positive cognitive outcomes of mindful movement practices, they mostly focused on yoga, tai-chi, and Qigong and did not explore dance-based practices (Converse et al., 2014; Mak et al., 2018; Teng & Lien, 2016; Sakuta, 2018). Consequently, further research is needed to gain a better understanding of the way 5 Rhythms and other dancing meditation practices foster embodiment and mindfulness. More generally, the present study draws attention to the importance of reviewing the concept of mindfulness to incorporate its inherently embodied nature and potentially move towards Caldwell’s (2014) proposed term of “bodyfulness”, as in a “deep state of somatic wakefulness” (p. 79).

The small scale and low generalizability of the study might be considered a limitation and future research is warranted with larger sample size utilizing mixed-methods, well-being measures and comparison practices to assess the impact of 5 Rhythms. All participants were from European countries which also limits the generalizability of the findings, so future research should aim to involve participants from more varied communities, ethnical, and cultural backgrounds. Although the current study showed a number of ways dancers transformed in the long-term regarding their attitudes, behaviors, values, and identities, longitudinal designs could be beneficial to assess long-term transformative changes more directly instead of relying on retrospective accounts. Although all efforts were made to reduce bias resulting from the researcher’s personal experience with 5 Rhythms in the form of bracketing assumptions during the Thematic Analysis, it remains a possibility that findings have been influenced by the positive predispositions of the author.
In terms of the transformative impact of this study, participant feedback was positive. They valued the opportunity to explore their dancing journeys and some even arrived at new realizations after reflecting on their practice in the interviews. The author’s understanding also evolved in the process of this research and participants’ experiences triggered insights related to her own 5 Rhythms practice and transformative processes.

In conclusion, this intuitive inquiry identified the qualities, processes, and conditions that facilitated and accompanied transformation from the experiential point of view of 5 Rhythms dancers. These revolved around embodiment, spirituality, interconnection, mindfulness, creativity, surrender and control, freedom, and self-compassion. Participant stories revealed a journey of embracing the shared human experience within and beyond the dance, letting go of the illusion of control and permanence, surrendering to the edges of awareness and the mystery of the unknown, while retaining discipline within intention and attention. At the center of these processes was the wise and creative body ready to become a teacher, spiritual guide, artist, therapist, instrument of assertiveness and connection, and source of authenticity and freedom. The evidence suggests that 5 Rhythms is a container in which all of these aspects of transformation can be explored and experienced safely with the right balance of external and internal guidance. Overall, the findings indicate that 5 Rhythms fosters psycho-spiritual transformation and has a potential to be applied in multiple areas (e.g. mental health, education) to enhance well-being in a holistic manner and to cultivate embodied mindful awareness, a vital skill in our modern high-paced, stress and information-loaded societies.

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