

# shall we dance?

Through tango, a spiritual seeker finds the essence of yoga.

My yoga practice is old. Which maybe is why I feel young—well, much younger than 57. My practice goes back to a book by Yogi Bhaṭṭa, which fell into my hands from a remainder pile more than 30 years ago. As they say, when the student is ready, a teacher appears.

I'd always trusted in my own divinity, probably the legacy of my Catholic upbringing. But yoga was my bridge from the monotheistic split of body and soul to the experience of body and soul as one. Yoga helped me locate the Divine in my own body, in a place beyond word or thought. Over the years, under the guidance of many teachers, I gradually awakened to my one little body as the universe with all its finite and infinite boundaries. To use a Zen metaphor, I became like a dewdrop that reflects the entire moon.

Yoga and meditation prepared me in a way that no other discipline could for my passion for Argentine tango, which I discovered much later in life, under similarly fortuitous circumstances. My well-oiled joints and limber spine gave me solid physical grounding for a dance that I have come to consider part of my yoga practice. And yoga's spiritual centering prepared



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me for tango's demand for total presence and surrender of ego.

Argentine tango was born among 19th-century immigrants of their desire for intimacy, or connection, with others, the way that yoga was born of an urge to connect with the energy of the cosmos. In tango, the leader and the follower share a fluid balance that emanates from the spine, or axis. When I lean torso-to-torso with my partner and we step in sync to the music, I leave artificial time behind. My breath is deep, boundless, and effortless; my heart chakra blossoms like a thousand-petal lotus. The two of us connect, human props for each other, in a rapturous yogic flow.

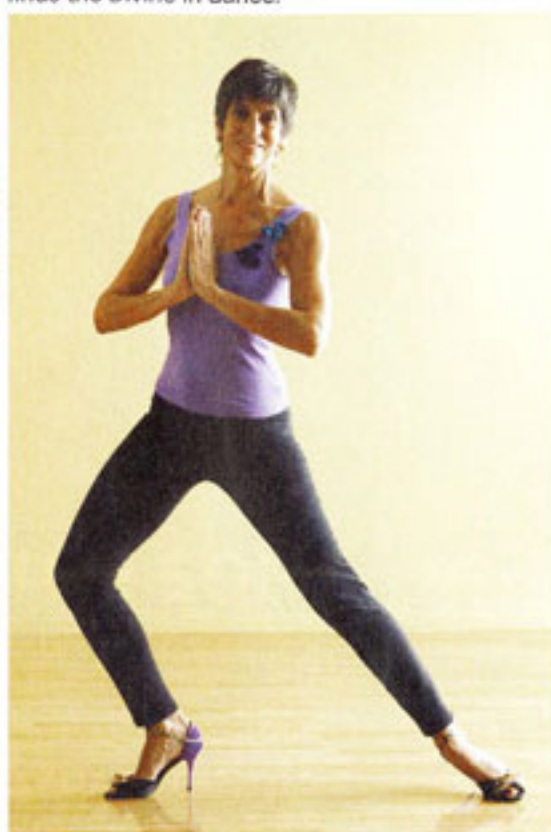
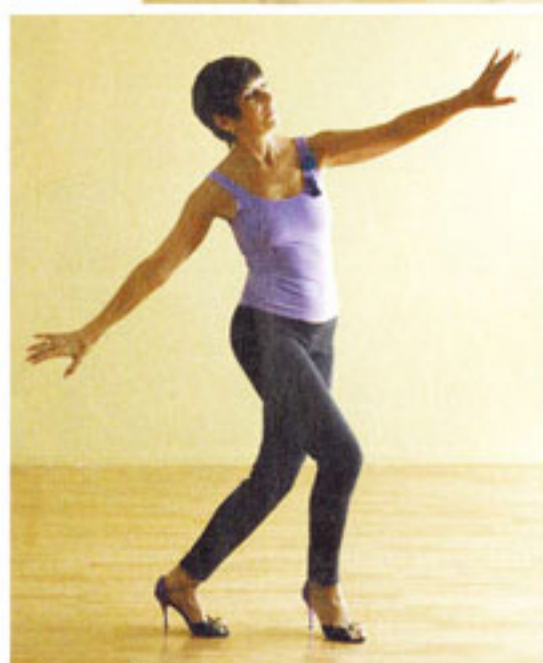
In Buenos Aires I assisted a teacher who admonished his students, "Not two. One!" His command for dancers to let go of the idea of a separate Self echoed the instruction of Zen teacher Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, whose "Not two, not one" similarly taught us not to count the world inside and the world outside ourselves as separate phenomena; in fact, not to count at all.

If it was on the mat that I first discovered these lessons, experiencing this union on the dance floor has taught me to be open to finding the Divine everywhere—in actions as humble as peeling potatoes, or as fantastic as walking a tightrope. In these moments, when you give all of yourself to whatever you're passionate about—when you find yourself transported to that inexplicable place of connection and delivered back, renewed—I think you discover the true meaning of yoga.

*Camille Cusumano is the author of Tango: An Argentine Love Story.*



It takes connection to tango: Camille Cusumano finds the Divine in dance.



## feeling footloose?

Many have found common ground between dance and yoga as forms of self-expression and connection with the Divine. Want to explore the link for yourself? Check out one of these yoga-dance experiences.

### SHIVA REA'S YOGA TRANCE DANCE

One of the best-known yoga-dance hybrids, Yoga Trance Dance is a seamless mix of yogic philosophy, body appreciation, and personal exploration. Find information on upcoming Yoga Trance Dance dates and on the program's instructional DVDs at [shivarea.com](http://shivarea.com).

### KRIPALU YOGADANCE

Known to many as meditation in motion, YogaDance is all about finding your personal rhythm and movement. It's taught at the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health in Massachusetts, but you can find a class near you by using Kripalu's Find a Teacher feature on [kripalu.org/find\\_a\\_teacher](http://kripalu.org/find_a_teacher).

### DANCE OF LIBERATION

Developed by Israeli-born Parashakti, this workshop engages both the body and the mind in an experience that includes a blind-fold, breathwork, and modern shamanism. For scheduled events, including a monthly workshop at the Jivamukti Yoga School in New York City, go to [parashakti.org](http://parashakti.org).

### YOGA MEETS DANCE

Imagine a gentle aerobic workout with guided visualizations—that's the heart of Beth Rigby's trademarked style. Find a certified instructor in your area as well as Rigby's own calendar of classes in Tucson, Arizona, at [yogameetsdance.com](http://yogameetsdance.com).

### LIQUID ASANA

This DVD by Zen Dancing founder Micheline Berry applies fluid dance moves to modified poses for a free-flowing vinyasa practice, which Berry teaches at the Exhale Center for Sacred Movement in Los Angeles. For a schedule of events, visit [michelineberry.com](http://michelineberry.com).

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