

## Megan Flood - Exploring easy pathways in and out of the floor

Here is what I taught last night--

We began with a long solo warmup, following a rolling point of contact between ourselves and the floor, then worked with a partner to practice taking and giving weight at low level (lying down), medium level (kneeling or sitting), and high level (standing).

Now we begin walking--moving through space, forwards and backwards, feeling the floor easy under our feet.

I ask everyone to pause, and to watch, as I hold a shirt in my hand.\*\* I hold it by one sleeve, so that it dangles down from my hand to the floor. I move my hand slowly towards the floor, allowing the shirt to easily fold into a small pile on the floor. I do this several times. I ask the dancers to use this visual image as they practice finding easy, available pathways to the floor, allowing themselves to find the folds in their bodies which make this possible. We move into a falling/folding dance, interspersed by walking--people are on their own timing, walking, finding pathways to the floor and back up again, spending time on the floor if they like, finding slow or quick pathways in and out of the floor.

Now we divide into two equal groups. one group (A) stands spread around the room, with their eyes closed. the other group (B) moves among them, and with their hands (or other body parts), gives them "brushes down"--quickly running their hands down a person, giving them a kinetic pathway to the floor, which the standing person,A, immediately follows.

It is a natural impulse for B person to follow A down to the floor--I encourage this, so that each time a "brush down" happens, both people end up on the floor, then both people get back up. A still has her eyes closed, and stands waiting for the next

"brush down", while B walks away, looking for a new standing person to approach.

We do this for several minutes, then we switch roles.

We pause, and I ask everyone to have their eyes open, but in a soft, fuzzy way; now when person B approaches standing person A, she brushes A down, follows A to the floor, and finds a way into contact-- so the two people can begin a dance together. I ask them to keep their focus, in this dance, on following a rolling point of contact, and to know that eventually they must make their way back to their feet...but there is no hurry. Once they are standing, they switch roles, so now A becomes the walker, looking for a new person to approach, and B remains standing, waiting for someone to approach her.

Gradually we allow the shared dances to become longer and longer. If someone is standing alone, not dancing, she can watch the dances around her, taking in information by seeing.

This is one way to take away the fear/hesitation I often observe (and feel) when dancers are trying to move easily from standing, to the floor, and back up again. By first finding those pathways in ourselves, it becomes easier to stay relaxed and available when dancing with another.

The next step, which we did not get to last night, would be to practice descending to the floor while another person rides down with you--so someone is descending and taking weight at the same time, while the other person is descending and giving weight at the same time.

\*\*i learned this "shirt" exercise in a Skinner class