

OLFA - Interview with DASA HORVATHOVA

J: Hello, I'm Jana Kyriakou. I'm greeting you from Prague, Czech Republic, heart of Europe. I'm sitting here today with Dasa Horvathova, my dear friend and colleague. She is a professional dancer, musician and singer. We are talking about self-respect, about the relationship with have with ourselves and about the body.

Dasa, you are in the professional environment of dance, music and signing. How do people speak about the body there ?

D: I think there is a difference between the world of dance and the world of music. Especially because in dance, the body is used as a certain medium. Between what the choreographer or creator wants to express and what the viewer receives. So I would say that the human body is really the base of the whole process. Respectively the dancer's body. So since the attention is really focused on the body, you talk about it all the time. The way "how" you talk about it, is the question. There are people who are on the right wave and they only see the functionality of the body or the message the body is supposed to express. That's what I feel is right. But unfortunately there are still people in the dance world who discuss the esthetics of the body, which is not something you can really work with. It's not something you can change much. In the world of music, as a singer and musician I've never discussed my appearance or body with anyone. Rather the functionality again, if my voice is prepared or if I can play something. That was the only thing. But my appearance, never.

J: Which is quite encouraging

D: Yes, start playing a music instrument!

J: And on a general note do you think that Czech and Slovak women love themselves as they are? How do they talk about themselves, about how they look, or if they are good enough. Or if they respect themselves ? How do you see that ?

D: I wouldn't categorize it as Czech or Slovak women. But women generally. I think a high percentage of women still see themselves as an object, that should be better or different. Which is of course a mirror of media, Facebook, Instagram and so on. So I think a lot of women care about the appearance side, instead of the inner side which is the substance and beauty. I try not to talk with people about the appearance and the outer beauty or esthetics, because for me it's absolutely distant to "beauty".

J: Dasha, the way you look at the outer versus inner beauty, has always been the same for you? Or did the relationship to yourself and the way you saw your appearance change over the time of your life ?

D: Yes, that certainly has been changing. An important period was in my teenage years. That's when I also started the dance conservatorium. So in the dance school the attention on the body

was big. Also everyone has a certain programming from childhood. What we take from our mums, what our mum cares about, what she reads in magazines or what she watches on TV. It's completely normal, I don't judge it as good or bad. It's just how it is. So I did care about my appearance a lot. I wanted to be pretty, the prettiest in the world! Well in puberty probably everyone wants to be the prettiest in the world. And I think that it stole my attention far from something, that I wish my potential daughter in future would think about earlier. I think I'm now in a good place regarding beauty and esthetics, the visual versus the inner rich world. But I would like to see the young girls starting earlier with the inner world. It's so much more interesting and much more beautiful.

J: Dasa, you participated in the workshop about the self-respect, body-image and beauty, that is based on the work of the organisation Embody Love Movement. And you went through the workshop three times. The first time as a regular participant and the other two times as my assistant, which I'm really grateful for. When you look back at these workshops, do you think they changed or developed your relationship towards your self or to others around you ?

D: Certainly. I don't think it was a starting point for me to think about this issue. The issue of how I see myself and how women around me see themselves. But it was certainly a big mirror. In the sense that in the workshop there were a lot of people and the energy of self-destruction process, the comparisons that we are not as pretty as the women in the magazine etc... So the energy accumulated so much, that one could really feel there was something wrong. That there are still so many things we need to change. When I went through the workshop as a participant the first time, it has been really enriching. I have been part of the group and we discussed various opinions and feelings. And it confirmed my feeling that there are still stereotypes which are difficult to change.

And when I was your assistant, it was even deeper for me. If you remember there is this exercise where one person is standing and all the others are sticking post-it notes on her body, all the terrible things people think about themselves. So I was the "martyr". The one that was holding all the post-it notes with all the negative comments. That was really strong and really transformational for me. Really from that moment I don't talk about the appearance with others, because it's unnecessary.

J: Yes, unnecessary, it eats time and energy...

D: Just yesterday I talked with a friend about jealousy. And I reached an opinion that the jealousy really comes from us caring about the external world and the external phenomena in people. And when we are not well inside the perfect Instagram world really shakes us up. When we are well, one doesn't really observe it as much. Because we have so much more beauty inside of us that we can be interested in. So the external world is not so interesting. But when someone is not mentally or emotionally well, the fact that someone is perfect (in parenthesis) can totally destroy a person. So we agreed with my friend that when we are not well inside of course we are jealous of pretty people, because they appear prettier and better than us. But when our inner state is well set, the inner beauty really shines out through the visual cover.

J: That's beautifully said. So the self-care is really important and then it might all start slowly working out by itself.

D: My favorite slovak opera singer Edita Gruborova shared that when she starts singing, which she loves, a cut, an opening appears on her chest and all that inner beauty can flow into the audience. And I think this is exactly the definition of beauty. When we have the beauty inside, it shines through the skin, through the eyes, through the way we talk with each other. And it's not at all about perfect ears or something else or that we have to change something on us.

J: That's wonderful. Thank you very much.

D: Thank you for your invitation.

J (towards viewers): And you take care of your inner wellbeing. And if you would like to know more or also try to transform your relationship to your body...it's quite normal, as Dasa said, that we compare ourselves with others and that sometimes we don't feel good enough and pretty enough. It's human, it's normal. What's great in our workshops, as Dasa also said, that in the group we all realize together that we all do it.

So have a look at the website www.embodimentmovement.org. It's a website of American organisation that helps organising these workshops. It's a non profit organisation, so if you find this work meaningful, you can send ELM some money. On their website you will find the schedule of their workshops all around the world. Or come here in Prague to a workshop that I facilitate.

D: The best is to experience it

J: Maybe Dasa will be there too again.

You can also check my website www.bewellinstitute.com. Or find me on Facebook Jana Kyriakou. You can also check the website of the Czech Mindfulness Club www.mindfulnessclub.cz. Mindfulness club organizes a lot of great events, not only about body-image, but also various other courses about how to be kinder to yourself and how to take care of the inner wellbeing. And Dasa, where can viewers find you ?

D: Certainly through your Facebook, people can click through to me too. Or you can find me on Facebook under DASHI music, as well as Instagram and Spotify.

J: So be kind to yourself.