

# I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING NOW...

The Native Americans have an understanding that it takes around 4 years of committed study of a discipline before a student becomes truly teachable. At first we're looking for something to reach for, to save us or heal us. Then we go through a phase where we think we've got it; we feel little more empowered, less desperate and we like the comfortable position of knowing what we're doing.

If we continue studying there will then come a series of points at which we are seriously faced with ourselves in challenging and uncomfortable ways. If we have the discipline (meaning to follow, to follow the path we're walking that is) to keep studying, keep practicing, THEN we get to a place of much deeper humility than we started out with. A deep awe for the magnitude of the task of taking responsibility for oneself, a deep respect for the power of this simple practice, and a deep love and humour towards our human situation takes root, and in that fiery humility we begin to be truly teachable.

Most people get a little stuck in phase two. OK you've learnt the form of the rhythms. You've got some idea of their power, and of various different ways of practicing them. You've got your regular evening class where you meet friends, like the music, know what's likely to go down. You've got your way of warming up, your way of being in Stillness. It's easy in this place to begin to resent anyone telling you what to do, especially if following that instruction would involve doing things a little differently. As a teacher taking a guest slot within other communities I see this a lot. This unwillingness to learn more is truly a blind spot.

Don't give up learning: even if you're being told to do something you've done hundreds of times before. Take in the instruction as though it's the first time, and apply yourself wholeheartedly to doing it. And if it's not comfortable, well, do that dance. Don't give up!

One of the deepest experiences I've ever had on the dance floor was in a class that I absolutely hated. I couldn't stand what the teacher was doing. The music sucked too. I took that feeling and put it right back into my dance, and it took me so deep into a primal wound that when I came out the other side, tears streaming down my face, I knew that I had profoundly renewed my love for myself and my life.

Everything is an opportunity. If you feel rebellious in a class, take that feeling in both hands and do that dance to the max. Don't waste your time and money sabotaging yours and everyone else's experience. Take yourself on and be a brilliant dancer. It's the dance that's the real teacher; if you don't do those dances, how are you going to learn anything?

