

# Stance-Dance: Integrative Movement Theory

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2016

Satir International Journal

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Original citation:

Haitoglou, D. (2016). Stance-Dance: Integrative Movement Theory. *Satir International Journal*, 4(1), 61–67. <https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/satir/article/view/16210>

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# SATIR INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

*Satir Around the Globe*

## **Stance-Dance: Integrative Movement Theory**

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In the world of stress and fast-pace communication there is a longing for tranquility and peace. STANCE-DANCE beautifully combines movement, stillness and rhythm to create an opportunity to release fear, relax from stress and move into more congruent behaviours and fruitful states such as joy, happiness, lightness, peace, confidence, strength and serenity.

The practice stems from Siberian dance, dynamic yoga and systemic family therapy (Satir, 1991). It is an easy to practice method of self-expression that helps create a healthy dialogue between mind and body.

### **Highly beneficial for people who:**

- lack movement in every-day life
- have low self-esteem
- are in need of self-expression
- suffer mood-swings
- go through a stressful period
- feel stuck in their life
- want to have more joy and happiness
- want to feel light and free
- seek confidence and inner-strength
- look for bliss and serenity
- want to raise self-esteem.

### **Principles & Theoretical Underpinnings:**

- Movement has two directions: contracting and expanding. With STANCE-DANCE we move towards the latter.
- Changing physiology we can change neurology.
- Non-verbal communication is involuntary.
- Phenomenological experience is underpinned by mirror-neurons.
- Information is stored in the body and can be transformed.
- Perception of behavioral models influences embodied experience, hence changing visual perception of relationship, changes our reality.

- Relational Map is not a Territory. Inquiry into a broader perspective is needed.
- Space & Time are mental constructs. By being 'here & now' we increase chances of 'healing' the past and making effective choices in future.
- Projected visualization of past-experienced relationship models opens a possibility to look at them from a distance. This process raises awareness of what is, and is healing on its own.
- Dancing from incongruent stance towards a better stance is therapeutic.

## 5 Stance-Dances:

### 1. Blamer – Peaceful Warrior

**Stress:** A blaming stance or 'Blamer' is a stance when a person takes a position of blaming someone or something else, without taking responsibility for themselves. The underlying need is to be protected, safe and respected. Physically this stance would be represented by a person pointing a finger with a stretched arm leaning forward on one front leg. Front leg is one and a half shoulders' lengths apart and slightly bent. Back hand is on a waist. The feeling in this position is not balanced and strain on the shoulders.

**Flow:** Peaceful Warrior is an anti-dote to the Blamer. It is a position that is driven by the need of protection and safety, similarly to 'Blamer', but more congruent. Physically, the stretched arm goes up above the head, with a palm open, tip of fingers facing up. Looking above, the position quickly turns to be more resourceful and peaceful albeit strong and energetic.

### 2. Placator – Power Tree

**Stress:** Placating stance or 'Placator' is a stance when a person takes a position of a victim and takes full responsibility onto themselves. The underlying need is for love and care as well as strength and stability. Physically this stance would be represented by a person bending one knee and putting it on the ground. Looking from down up, making a begging sign with their hands, as though asking for forgiveness. Upper body and head slightly bent on one side, palms are open facing up. A position is not comfortable and strain on one side of the body, which is bent.

**Flow:** Power Tree is an anti-dote to the Placator stance. It is a position that helps create balance and brings stability and strength to the body. Physically it would be represented by standing up from a placating stance and raising both straight arms above the head. Feet: shoulders' width apart. Head: looking straight with a light smile. For an advanced position, one can bend one leg and put a foot on the inner thigh of the other leg.

### 3. Super-Reasonable – Humble Monk

**Stress:** Super-Reasonable stance or 'Computer' is a stance when a person hides real emotions behind logic and facts. A 'Computer' generally prefers to use a monologue or a critique when under stress. The underlying need is for understanding and wisdom as well as for being in peace. Physically that is represented by folded arms and one arm's pointy finger touching a cheek, or a finger pointing towards the ceiling. The body weight is on one leg creating an unbalanced position for the body.

**Flow:** Humble Monk is an anti-dote to Super-Reasonable stance. The body becomes straight and palms touch on the heart's level in a 'Namaste' sign. Head: facing straight with a slight smile.

4. Distractor – Core Harmonizer

**Stress:** Distracting stance is a position when a person doesn't want to face a tough reality and prefers to deviate to a different topic and hides the feelings behind the other agenda. A person generally brings humour or skips difficult subjects, even adds chaos, in order to create emotional stability and harmony without initiating a conflict. Physically that would be represented by a person moving arms in front of other people's faces to distract their attention. Slightly bent on one side and looking from down up laughing.

**Flow:** Core Harmonizer is the anti-dote to a distracting stance. It is a stable and harmonious position that helps a person feel courage and peace with a tough reality around them. Physically arms relax, palms open up, body strengthens and finds its core (similar to a Tai Chi neutral position) with slightly bent knees and straight spine.

5. Withdrawer – World Hugger

**Stress:** Withdrawing stance or 'Withdrawer' is a stance when a person moves away from discussing a difficult situation and stops talking, 'shuts down' from external reality. The underlying need for this stance is trust, openness and touch, the very things a person moves away from, which is counter-intuitive. Physically this stance is represented by folded arms and turning away from the other person.

**Flow:** World Hugger is an anti-dote to the withdrawing stance. Instead of moving away, the 'World Hugger' moves in and opens the arms as though they want to hug the whole world. It is a resourceful stance of hugging is considered to be connected to a 'hug' hormone, oxytocin.

**Table 1. STANCE-DANCE: Integrative Movement Therapy FROM STRESS TO FLOW<sup>1</sup> CHART**

Stress Stance	Behaviour	Neurology <sup>2</sup>	Need	Flow Stance
Blamer	Blaming/Fighting	Testosterone	Protection Safety Respect	'Peaceful Warrior'
Placator	Placating/Begging	Estrogen	Love & Care Peace Stability	'Power Tree'
Super-Reasonable	Monologue/Critique	Serotonin	Acceptance Understanding Wisdom	'Humble Monk'
Distractor	Distracting/Adding Chaos	Dopamine	Harmony Stability Courage	'Core Harmonizer'
Withdrawer	Withdrawing/Moving away	Oxytocin	Touch Openness Trust	'World Hugger'

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**Process:**

1. Experience of Stress Stances: 20 seconds per each Stance
2. Sculpting Family of Origins and work in triads: a mother, father and child. A Child representative explains to Mother and Father, what Stance their mother and father of origin utilized when under stress between each other.
3. Dances in triads: a couple spends 20 seconds in Stress Stances while a Child is sitting on a floor watching and then they move towards the Flow Stances.

<sup>1</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2008), *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (Harper Perennial Modern Classics)

<sup>2</sup> Neurological correlations need more testing and research, to imply scientific significance.

4. Feedback: Mother, Father and Child give their feedback focusing on internal feelings and sensations of the Stance-Dance.
5. Change the roles: Child – Mother – Father swop roles and the replay the process 1-5.
6. Reconstructing Current Relationships: A person who played a role of a Child now can reconstruct their current family dynamics. One person takes a role of their partner and another - their child, if any. Same process as above.

### References

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2008). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

Satir, V. et. al. (1991). *The Satir Model: Family Therapy and Beyond*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books.

Visuals from a Stance-Dance practice in the  
UK, Israel, Greece, Switzerland, Russia & Canada



