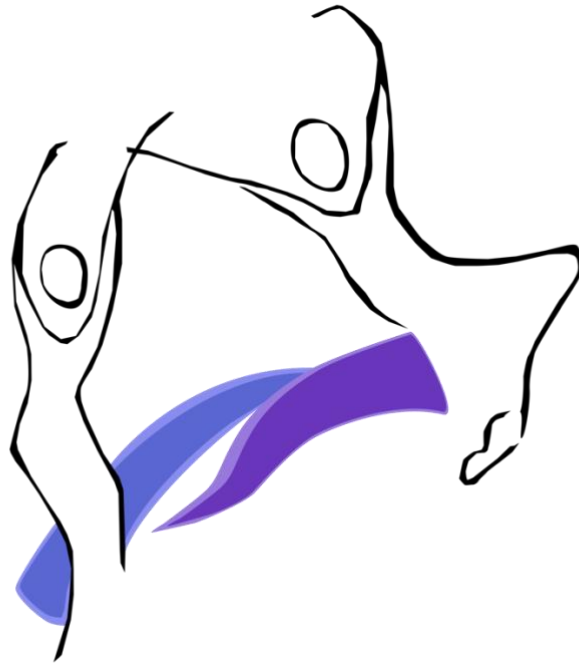


THE DAMTÌ METHOD



JILL AND AMNON DAMTÌ



TWO WORLDS DANCE THE DAMTÍ METHOD[©]

AN INTUITIVE GUIDE
BRIDGING CULTURAL AND PERSONAL DIVIDES
THROUGH DANCE AND MOVEMENT
NURTURING INDIVIDUALS TO DISCOVER THEIR
INNER LIGHT

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ILLUSTRATIONS: AMNON DAMTÍ

PUBLISHED IN COLLABORATION WITH  MUSIC & DANCE
Nurture. Inspire. Empower.

DAMTI METHOD - PHILOSOPHY, GUIDE STONES AND VALUES

THE VISION OF THE DAMTI METHOD is to enrich the lives of the people we encounter. We do not wish to change them, but rather accept them as they are, assist them in finding their inner voice and special light, and facilitate new ways of communication with their surroundings.

In this section, we discuss the philosophy developed over the years, the values that stem from this philosophy and the guidelines provided to facilitators for their everyday work with **The Damti Method**, which we call “**Guide Stones.**”

PHILOSOPHY

THE DAMTI METHOD PHILOSOPHY entails:

TREATING EVERYONE AS EQUALS. In the **Damti Method**, every individual is accepted with the abilities they naturally possess. Each person is treated as an equal, anyone can teach and learn from others, and everyone is heard and respected. There is no differentiation by individual dancing or movement abilities: participants with different abilities are integrated together in the groups, so they can learn from one another. We avoid making comparisons, as the objective is to encourage personal development.

LIFTING COMMUNICATION BARRIERS. All verbal communication is interpreted for the deaf and hard of hearing (referred to as D/HH) and sign language communication is interpreted for the hearing participants, to ensure complete comprehension by everyone and to create a common ground for communication and understanding.

Some participants may experience language barriers, and some may have movement impediments or both. **The Damti Method** acts to lift these barriers.

ENHANCING PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE. One of the key Guide Stones of **The Damti Method** is to empower each individual to discover their personal independence, letting go of ingrained patterns like over-protectiveness or dependency. For example, among family members, one often assumes responsibility for another. **The Damti Method** teaches that each participant attends to his or her own personal enrichment and growth. The facilitators and

the group are instrumental in providing the support and encouragement needed to achieve these goals.

EMPOWERING OTHERS BY KNOWING WHEN TO STEP BACK. Some activities can be led or conducted by someone other than a facilitator (guest artist or one of the participants who wants to introduce a new skill or share something). In such situations, the facilitator should step back and let them “do their job.” The facilitator’s role is to make sure that the activity follows along the values and Guide Stones. However, they should not interfere or control the activity, as this could convey a lack of confidence in the leader. The facilitator can gently and positively offer advice or guidance, as needed and when appropriate.

FINDING EACH PARTICIPANT’S PREFERRED FORM OF EXPRESSION.

Participants may sometimes be unaware of their strongest skills. They may think that a certain talent – such as dancing or singing – is their clearest strength, but with guided assistance and encouragement may discover they have another powerful or unique skill altogether. Lacking confidence to perform in front of others is a common obstacle for many participants. The facilitator can help them discover how they might best express themselves and find their own “inner voice.” With sensitivity, inquiry, observation and intuition, and without imposing, the facilitator can guide participants to find their preferred form of expression.

INTEGRATING ALL ABILITIES. The **Damti Method** encourages all facilitators and participants to be open-minded and remember that we all require special attention and encouragement to overcome our own perceived “limitations.” The **Damti Method** program integrates individuals with different abilities and levels and encourages everyone to work together through inclusion and mutual respect. The **Damti Method** focuses on paying attention to each person’s needs and assisting to set boundaries in situations that make participants uncomfortable. Many of these situations are opportunity for personal growth.

REALIZING PERSONAL POTENTIAL AND GROWTH. While quality dance instruction is an authentic value, **The Damti Method** conveys the message that everyone can achieve their full potential, regardless of perceived limitations.

Facilitators can play a pivotal role in helping participants to expand their own personal development. We believe this can be achieved by trusting one's intuition, an important element which is emphasized throughout the program.

TREATING ALL ACTIVITIES EQUALLY. We consider every day, every hour, every activity, including breaks, to be equally valuable. Often it is during the breaks where new friends are made, new languages are learned, and minds are forever changed regarding our shared humanity and our interpersonal similarities. Allowing participants free time in a safe space is an essential component the **Damti Method** methodology.

DISCOVERING YOUR INTUITIVE WISDOM. Throughout the **Damti Method Book** you will encounter the words 'intuition' and 'intuitive'.

Intuitive discovery is about seeing the unobserved in ourselves or others. The art of observation entails reading people and using empathy to discover talents and gifts that often we or the person being observed are not aware of.

The **Damti Method** creates a safe environment of unconditional equality and acceptance, allowing perceptions of limitations to be removed, enabling us to intuit and discover a better version of ourselves and others. We invite the facilitators, interpreters, and participants to be open to discovering their intuitive powers.

By using intuition, creativity and empathy you will identify "moments of light", life changing transformations revealing passions and hidden abilities just waiting to be realized.

Use your intuition to discover hidden gems, it will serve you in well.

ENJOYING THE JOURNEY. The objective is to enjoy every moment of the journey, not to rush to the next activity, but instead see everything as connected and transformational. The showcase at the end of a workshop is not the goal. The objective we focus on is the process itself. The showcase represents the culmination of the program's experiences, allowing participants to share with their families what they have done and how each individual and the group have evolved.



GUIDE STONES

THE DAMTÍ METHOD PHILOSOPHY introduces an important set of life tools. These guidelines, which we call “Guide Stones,” are integral for facilitators and interpreters conducting the workshops as well as for the participants themselves.

The Damti Method uses the analogy of stepping-stones, or “Guide Stones”, as guidelines rather than rules. Stones represent many of the attributes found in **The Damti Method** philosophy and values. They appear in nature in various forms and shapes depending on their surrounding environment. In a stream, they are shaped by the flow of water, in exposed areas they are molded by wind. Stones can be strong and durable, and simultaneously pliable and everchanging. The Guide Stones soothe and guide us on our metaphorical journey through the values of **The Damti Method**.



INCLUSION. Including everybody is at the core of all activities and actions. Inclusion makes every person feel wanted and we emphasize that no one is left out.



ACCEPTANCE. Unconditionally accepting every person is essential in order to establish equality amongst all participants.



PASSION. Being passionate will allow you to listen, see and feel with your heart. Discovering each person's passion will reveal what is unique about them and allow you to genuinely connect with them.



OPENNESS. Having an open mind and heart will help you to discover moments of light that can manifest and become wonderful growth opportunities.




DIALOGUE. Open communication is the bridge that connects between participants with different capabilities, needs and backgrounds.



INTUITION. Intuition is a higher level of emotional intelligence. Trust it. Empathy and sensitivity, attuned to each participant's needs, are powerful tools to assist in guiding and problem solving.



RESPECT. Respect is gained by modeling mutually respectful behavior and should be earned rather than be demanded.



CREATIVITY

CREATIVITY. While the Damti Method offers guidelines, the facilitators and interpreters should use their own creativity and flexibility to assess and respond to the needs of each participant and the whole group.



INTEREST
IN OTHERS

INTEREST IN OTHERS. Genuine interest in others will empower people to open up and bring out the best in themselves and others.



MEDIATION

MEDIATION. Mediating between participants and balancing group dynamics is a continuous process and often includes family members and aides accompanying special needs participants.

IMPROVISATION

IMPROVISATION is making or doing something without prior planning, using whatever can be found. Improvisation in performing arts is a spontaneous creation, without advanced preparation and defined script.

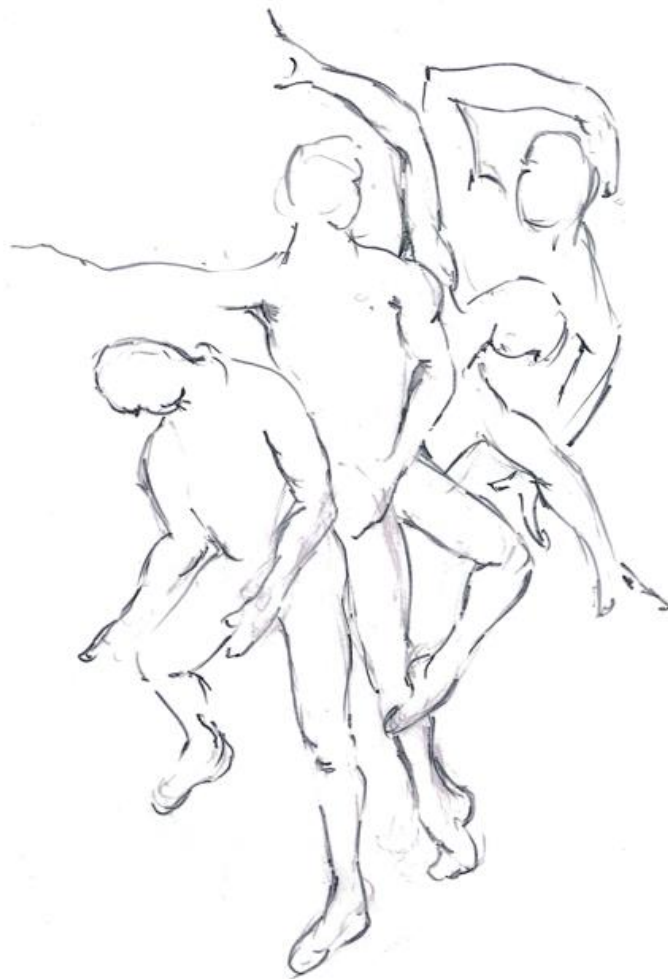
Improvisation doesn't have to be a dance or even a movement. Participants can sing, do a martial arts routine, pantomime, etc.

We typically use improvisation early in a workshop because it is a wonderful way to introduce a different form of communicating by using one's imagination.

Many participants might not be familiar with the term improvisation or its meaning, so we begin by asking them to explain what they think it means.

Once we are certain that everyone understands the meaning, we can actively start working on it.

We can help each other with ideas for improvisation, such as: Hearing participants can observe how different types of music (style, beat, volume) affect body movements. We can give deaf and hard of hearing participants examples of different rhythms, sensations or situations (such as walking in the rain, running on sand, or running away from something). This activity should be fun, creating the mood of children playing, each taking turns demonstrating different movements.



Improvisation can be used as a way to get participants from all backgrounds to independently create unique, creative movements.

OBJECTIVES:

- Learn to use the imagination to create movements and short routines
- Enhance individual and group creativity
- Be supportive of one another

DAMTI METHOD GUIDE STONES:

- Inclusion
- Acceptance
- Passion
- Openness
- Intuition
- Creativity
- Mediation

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship skills

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE:

1. All participants stand and face the facilitator and interpreter.
2. Facilitator introduces the concept of improvisation:
 - a. Start by asking “who knows what improvisation means?” Allow them to explain it, thus begin to understand and internalize the concept, by using the group’s collective wisdom.
 - b. Note that you may have to review the concept of improvisation if you repeat an improvisation activity during a later session.
3. Each participant creates a “motion statement”, which can be a short dance, movement or situation:
 - a. As needed, assist each participant in developing their motion-statement, or let the group members help each other.
 - b. It is also possible for the group to come up with a prompt or idea for everybody to practice using their imagination.

4. Each participant will present their improvised “motion statement”. The facilitator will decide whether to ask participants to volunteer, select participants at random, or allow the participants to propose another way to select the order of the presentations. Allow everyone a chance to improvise.
5. Everybody provides praise and positive feedback:
 - a. Encourage the participants to comment on the improvised movement in a positive and constructive way, as well as ask the performer any questions they may have.
 - b. It is possible to postpone such feedback to a later stage in the program, when the participants know and trust each other better.

HELPFUL TIPS:

INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENTS:

Be sure to allow everybody to participate in this activity, emphasizing that everyone is encouraged to do so independently.

IF SOMEONE IS HAVING TROUBLE GETTING STARTED:

Improvisation can be challenging for participants of all abilities. The facilitator or others in the group can assist a person who is struggling by suggesting situations from their imagination or closer to that person’s world, which they may be able to relate to. In one case, one participant was afraid of the sea, so we suggested that she imagine she is swimming in a small, shallow pool. She happily connected to this idea and was able to successfully improvise.

Remember, improvisation can be whatever they conjure up in their imagination!

FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO DON’T WANT TO SHARE:

Anyone can opt out! The facilitator can encourage in a positive and supportive way, but do not force anyone to share. Most likely they will open up at a later stage, when they feel more confident and then be ready to share.

Moments of Light

- ☀️ **D**, a sixteen-year-old deaf girl, was born with several physical disabilities. On the first day, she said she loved to dance, but also said “I am ugly, no one wants to look at me dancing.” We spontaneously paired her with a seventeen-year-old guest dancer, who fully understood and adopted the Damti Method principles of inclusion, embraced D, and helped her overcome her concerns. Their mutual dance brought out the best in her and made her feel wonderful.

Following this experience, she opened up, enjoyed dancing, and loved when everyone watched her dance. She felt free, surrounded by love, and expressed it with a special sense of humor.

- ☀️ **K**, a ten-year-old hearing girl chose, for her improvisation activity, to sing “Speechless” from the movie Aladdin. **J**, a fifteen-year-old hearing and very shy girl, who knew some sign language, was “pushed” by Jill to improvise and sign the song that K sang, without advanced preparation. At first she hesitated, but with Jill’s encouragement, and being convinced that no one will judge her ability, she agreed. The result was amazing for all: the participants were moved to tears and for J it was a truly life-changing experience. Using improvisation, J had no time to worry and fret beforehand. Through the program, J found her true passion and decided to major in sign language.

- ☀️ **L**, a fourteen-year-old deaf girl, has worked hard throughout her childhood and was able to speak very clearly. While she engaged in various sports and participated in a deaf cheerleading squad, L did not believe she could dance. Even though she was extremely shy, we observed beautiful changes in her ability to express herself through dance and movement.

When it was time for the showcase at the end of the program, she was reluctant to perform in front of an audience and chose instead to improvise. The Damti Method does not impose or force specific choices, and therefore we supported L’s decision. She stood in front of the audience and, with a strong voice and a clear speech, told how she joined the program, discovered her ability to dance, and learned to believe in herself:

“When I got here, it was amazing, and quiet and peaceful. Amnon and Jill changed my life to become more peaceful and have a positive life. Before I didn’t know that I could dance, and I thought I could only do cheerleading. But that’s not true. I can also dance. Dancing is my favorite. Dancing is amazing. If you guys want to dance, you should. Jill & Amnon would help you and become more positive.”



**“YOU ARE NOT JUST TEACHING THESE CHILDREN HOW TO DANCE,
YOU ARE TEACHING THEM HOW TO LIVE!”**

Teacher of deaf and hearing children in California

**“I WANT TO DIVE INTO THE DEAF WORLD, LEAVE THE HEARING WORLD BEHIND,
AND UNDERSTAND IT MORE. THESE PEOPLE DEAF AND HEARING ARE NOW MY
FAMILY,”**

9 years old participant in the Damti Method Program

**“WE WERE-- AND STILL ARE-- HUMBLLED BY THESE CHILDREN'S' ABILITY TO
TRANSCEND THEIR PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS THROUGH MOVEMENT. TOGETHER,
THEY HAVE TRULY BUILT A COMMUNITY AND FAMILY WITH ONE ANOTHER,
THEIR COURAGE, GRACE, AND TALENT ARE AN INSPIRATION TO ALL!”**

Josh Berger, Director of Development, Freedom Writers Foundation

**“TO ME THE DAMTI METHOD'S SPECIAL STRENGTH IS TO SEE INTO EVERY CHILD
AND ALLOW THEM TO SHINE IN THEIR OWN AUTHENTIC WAY THAT IS TRUE TO
THEM. DEAF, HEARING, EVERY LEVEL OF ABILITY OR DISABILITY.”**

Judith Freesberg, Mother of a program participant

**“KEEP SPREADING YOUR GREAT MESSAGE AND TRANSFORMING PEOPLE AND
PLANTING THE GREAT SEED OF INCLUSION, LOVE, ACCEPTANCE, EQUALITY, AND
MAKING KIDS BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE NO LIMITS AND AND CAN BECOME
ANYTHING THEY DREAM.”**

Oscar Ramirez, father of program participants

**“THANK YOU FOR FINDING ME AND FORCING ME TO EXPAND MYSELF. YOU
BOTH HAVE OPENED ME TO AN ENTIRE NEW WORLD AND FORCED ME OUT OF
MY COMFORT ZONE. WITHOUT THIS PROGRAM I MAY HAVE NEVER REALIZED
THAT I WANT TO BECOME AN INTERPRETER AND FOR THAT I OWE YOU BOTH SO
MUCH”.**

15 years old participant in the Damti Method Program

**“IN JUST 40 MINUTES OF YOUR PERFORMANCE, YOU CHANGED THESE CHILDREN
AND GAVE THEM CONFIDENCE THAT EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE!”**

Minister Drake, Founder, Bussi Island Orphanage, Uganda

**“YOU’VE SHOWN THAT THERE IS A SPACE FOR EVERYONE REGARDLESS OF
THEIR DISABILITIES’ THAT EACH CHILD BROUGHT THEMSELVES AND WAS ABLE
TO GROW FROM ONE ENCOUNTER TO THE NEXT/ THE STAFF LEARNED TO LET
EACH CHILD TO BE WHO THEY ARE AND NOT TRY TO MAKE THEM FIT INTO A
SPECIFIC BOX. IT WAS A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE FOR ALL US AND WE FEEL
EXTREMELY FORTUNATE THAT THIS PROJECT HAPPENED HERE”**

Dalia Dor, Principal of a School for children on the Autistic Spectrum