

## The Non-Negotiable Moment of LET and Tango

by Tom Lewis  
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*There is a profound wisdom in the body, in the pulsing of the blood, the rhythm of the breath, the turning of the joints. Once we are aware of its subtle power, the body becomes a sensitive antenna for tuning into nature and other people. It can serve as a metaphor for every human thought, emotion and action. It is the royal road to the unconscious...* -George Leonard and Michael Murphy from *The Life We are Given*

*The man who dances tango is a polymorphous animal; he is a composite of the animals that historically preceded him.*

*His step is soft and energetic like an elephant.*

*He glides like a panther, sensually transferring his weight to his hips.*

*Like a cat, his back and neck are supple, as he projects his energy from his chest, making his stride long and dynamic.*

*His upper body 'flies' like a bird.*

*His glance is projected forward like that of an eagle, giving a precise direction to his steps.*

*His arms entwine the woman's body like a serpent, in an embrace that is non-negotiable.*

-Susana Miller, *Tanguero*



These two quotes exemplify for me the hidden and manifest qualities of the human potential. The body is our most powerful expression and our most direct link to the divine. Our bodies provide us with immeasurable qualities which when combined with intention can transform our entire being to levels of consciousness and activity only limited by our imagination.

Listen to the qualities manifest and hidden in our bodies in just the two paragraphs above: profound wisdom, pulsing, rhythmic, turning, subtle, power, sensitive, natural, royal, soft, energetic, gliding, sensual, supple, projecting, long, dynamic, precise, entwined, non-negotiable.

I like “non-negotiable” because it most describes what happens in the moment when I am blending with my partner during a tango movement or when I am blending with my opponent experiencing the “aiki” of my aikido practice. George Leonard’s Leonard Energy Training (LET) exercises allow us to experience moments that are non-negotiable. We are holding each other in moments through eternity where there is no space or time for “thinking about how you should be” or “how we think we should look, feel, or be.”

I have been on a path of learning tango (the Argentine form) for the past eleven years. I began

teaching the art of tango on a regular basis in my San Francisco dance studio five years ago. My studio, La Pista, is now eight years old. I have hosted the best tango performers, instructors and choreographers in the world, both legends and rising stars from across the United States, Argentina, Germany, Italy, England, France, Turkey, Canada, Brazil, Columbia, Mexico and more.

When I was invited to join ITP and host a LET workshop at my studio, I immediately purchased the LET manual. I could not put it down. I absorbed the whole manual. It was a gateway to many of the subtle and finer qualities that I was looking for in my tango instruction. With the various exercises I was able to transform beginners from not having a sense of their own body into dancers who could feel what it's like to be balanced, centered and connected with another body. They put down all the images of what they thought a tango dancer should be doing and began to enjoy the simple exercise of blending with their partner and being in the non-negotiable moment.

Being held together in the non-negotiable moment as in tango, an LET exercise or Aikido, allows us to experience a "unified state of being" (LET pg. 19). Being centered and blended in the moment allows us to be on the "dao," "the Way," or path of eternity where immeasurable happiness resides.