

(Download) The Tao of Tango

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Johanna Siegmann


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Johanna Siegmann : The Tao of Tango before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Tao of Tango:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Compelling Page-TurnerBy Mostlywater"I went home consumed with the desire to relive those emotions, to live perpetually in that empowered state, and to find out why this 100-year

old dance had this effect on me. And from that point forward I became a certifiable Tangomaniac". (The Tao of Tango, Pg. 3) I found myself nodding in affirmation when I read this passage in Ms. Siegmann's book. I recognized her at once as a fellow traveler. Even though I'm a man and a leader, our early experiences with the dance followed parallel paths. During my first lesson, I didn't just discover the Tango, rather it swallowed me whole. I've been its willing and enthusiastic captive ever since. Once Ms. Siegmann reeled me in, I didn't just read her little book, I devoured it. Seriously--the "Tao" is a compelling page-turner. I found her tome full of paradoxes, not unlike the Tango itself. Her style is bold, yet nuanced. She shares her most intimate thoughts by shouting them from a megaphone. Her philosophy about the dance and about male and female energies is simple, yet profound. Her story includes difficult, unpleasant personal failures as well as gloriously uplifting victories. If you are a Tango enthusiast I highly recommend this amazing little book. Whether you are a follower or a leader, you will find something useful in it. As a male leader, I value the insights she shared on the struggles, fears, and difficulties she experienced as a woman and a follower. I think it will make me a more patient considerate leader. I also enjoyed her thoughts on the interplay between male and female energies and on Tango as an analogy for life. Ms. Siegmann has bravely and boldly shared her very private revelations with us in a straightforward, uncompromising manner. If you love the Tango, you will love Ms. Siegmann's story. If you are not a Tango dancer, you should be. Read this book and I guarantee you'll want to get out and try it.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Charming and delightful book! Insightful too - it will enrich your tango!

By SeaGoat under Sirius "All the technique and classes in the world did not address the real problem ... as long as I placed my attention outwards [whilst dancing, I ignored] the inner connection." (pages 94-95) The American .com website has, at the time of writing (mid-May 2011) 29 reviews, nearly all of which are graded as 5-star (excellent). For tango dancers, this may be the best book on the market! The book has been published in Spanish and English and both versions are currently available. I bought two copies of the book, over 3 years ago. The first was mine. I was so impressed I ordered a second copy as a gift to a friend. Of over 40 books on tango that I have bought, read and own, this is one of the most important, and it is one of my top-5. It may well be my desert island number 1 tango book. Siegmann is not a writer of obscure or esoteric nonsense. This work is clear and insightful and it is pure tango, though her language is often very beautiful, it is always personal and felt. When she discovered tango, she felt that she... " ... [had] found the Holy Grail... I was conversing in some language of the soul that resided in a part of me I never knew existed ... I was consciously experiencing my female energy for the first time." (Pages 2-3) I am partly inspired to write a review of this intelligent and heart-warming treatise on tango because, at the time of writing, justice has not been done; there are no reviews on the English website, my home site, and, I hate to say it but I have heard awful and nonsensical hearsay, from a tango 'teacher' in the Welsh borders, that this book has nothing to do with tango. How far from the truth some will go to peddle jealous, spiteful lies! This book is absolutely at the heart of tango, and its content is sparkling: tango can be even more than a thing of just beauty and elegance - two fine assets indeed but in developing our connections within the dance, by understanding how masculine and feminine energies work, in both men and women, we can vastly improve our tango. "All of tango's fancy steps are the artful rearrangement of three basic movements: the basic [walking] step, the ocho and the molinette. Everything else is a derivation or combination of these elements" (Page 7) This fine book is not intended as a guide for assisting absolute beginners to master basic steps, though it will inspire them towards better tango, one day; nor is it about teaching fancy figures. There is a lot more to tango than that! For absolute beginners, and 'improvers', even though this book is written from an advanced point of view, it is very accessible and an easy read. For neophyte, improving and/or intermediate dancers this tome is a tasty teaser of what pleasures lie ahead. Their tango dancing will benefit, one day, due to this work. It is best suited to intermediate and advanced dancers, upwards, and to teachers. It is from somewhere around that point that the author writes, from a time of saturation within tango, with years of classes and dancing behind her she found she wanted something more. "Tango helps us get balanced because it requires the highest level of communication - without words. It also requires us to use both [female and male] energies and so develop them." (Page 13) Johanna Siegmann's book is a wonderful and touching treatise on tango. She calls it The Tao (pronounced `dow') of Tango because she treats the reader to a blend of the tango he or she already knows with an introduction to how male and female energies work, in both leaders and followers, during the dance. Eastern mysticism is not a big part of this book - in fact it hardly shows itself - so do not let that put you off. It is essentially a book about dancing tango but Siegmann has found a useful tag (as did Chan Park with "Tango Zen", another very worthwhile read Tango Zen: Walking Dance Meditation) that fits well with her psychoanalysis and spiritually-tinted presentation. "In tango you move back and forth between both energies [male and female] almost unconsciously..." (Page 13) [and] "for the follower, to move correctly, she has to maintain her own balance, her own space, and her own independence - all of which are expressions of male energy in the follower" [whereas female energy in the leader manifests by allowing him to wait for his follower, by giving him the connection to her, and through lending him to imagination to lead the next step]. (Pages 48-49) It is clear that Johanna Siegmann has a lot of experience in tango, for she writes of it well, and knowledgeably. She honestly reveals her own flaws and facets; her obsessions and neuroses on and off the dance-floor. She writes openly of her years of development within tango. This is not a book by a doctor-psychologist who talks down to his patients, nor is it by someone talking egoistically of him- or herself. Siegmann is

among the most humble and thoughtful of tango writers; her thoughts are touching and incisive. She rightly addresses one of tango's key psychological challenges, the need to listen to one's instinct not one's ego (pages 51-52) but she also never loses sight of what's happening on the dancefloor, nor within the music. She reminds us that tango has more than one rhythmic layer, unlike simpler ballroom beats, in tango the leader may dance to a bass-line or a melody ... or even through an adagio (pages 25-26) or to the voice - as Carlos Gavito (RIP), the legendary tango dancer, also always stressed. Siegmann talks of the intrigue and social life in tango. She writes of the milonga scene, the classroom and the lessons and how they do nothing to combat a major obstacle to development within tango: "All the technique and classes in the world did not address the real problem ... as long as I placed my attention outwards [I ignored] the inner connection" (pages 94-95) She never loses sight of the basics of tango - always a good sign in an advanced dancer - and she reminds herself and her readers that the first keys to tango are the change of weight, "...even if it is extremely subtle it must be absolute" (page 54); and of the embrace, "...communication can only be accomplished through a close physical connection" (page 141), again echoing Carlos Gavito's words, "The embrace contains all of tango." The author reminds leaders that while they may lead steps, they must wait for the follower to interpret them - as long as she stays with the music! At this point the follower is in control and the leader must submit but, once again, for emphasis, as long as the follower stays with the music! "When the lead is done correctly, the leader creates a space for the follower to flow into" (page 47) One of the bravest parts of the book is the author's treatment of the drama, the passion, the intrigue between two dancers; the 'look', that exists between two people whilst in the 'zone'; and how not to mis-read passion in the dance for intentions off the dance-floor; but, also how to benefit from the frisson of passionate drama during a dance ... and, what not to do whilst dancing! Siegmann has an enchanted mind's-eye as well as a wonderful way with words. She recalls ephemeral moments from her tango memories and transcribes them well in memoir-style. She is a salient observer and notes how one thing never changes in tango: no matter how many lessons people buy, how the elegant swans of the dance, once they have finished dancing, leave the floor as ugly ducklings; grace to chaos in 1 second flat, without fail, at every milonga. This is a charming and delightful book. It will warm your spirits. As a male tango leader I found these insights from a female follower invaluable. Every man, or leader, in tango should read this tome; and every follower in tango needs Siegmann's distillation of her years of experience too. Priceless. The best book on tango in years! See my list, in 's listmania, for brief reviews of over 20 other tango books. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Profound! By Susan C. Munoz This deliciously light, but yet profoundly deep book should be required reading for individuals entering into, or struggling with relationships, whether in life or on the dance floor. The author richly captures the essence of the authentic Argentine Tango dance and the diverse energies that make it the communion between the souls. By taking the metaphor of this beautiful language and applying it to life and lessons learned and then completing it with exercises, she has aptly taken education to the next level through application. I have shared this gem with my partner and will be ordering more as gifts. I look forward to more writings from this very talented author. Susan Munoz

I'm meeting all the wrong people. Nobody listens to me. My temper is out of control. Men find me "intimidating". Women think I'm a "wuss". I can't seem to finish anything. How can I be a better friend/lover/boss/whatever? My male/female energies are out of balance. What the heck are male and female energies? And what does Tango have to do with any of this? With its thoughtful, light-hearted insights and simple physical exercises this book will help you achieve the coveted "balance" that affects every aspect of your life. Discover how this 100-year-old dance can lead you to a more balanced life. Even if you can't dance.

"Tango is an art, a physical discipline, and a philosophy ... Johanna Siegmann calls The Tao of Tango." -- Kathryn Eastburn, Contributing Editor, Colorado Springs Independent "The Tao of Tango is one of the most compelling, thought-provoking, informative and sensitive books I have ever read. -- Nick Lawrence, "Using Tango as a metaphor for communication ... this book helps people find balance and harmony in their own lives." -- Fictionsearch.com... [T]he ultimate self-help book ... Siegmann compares male and female energy, to archetypal Tango dancers. Fresh, unique... -- James A. Cox, Midwest Book , Oregon, WI It is not a still, frozen picture, but an intense, dynamic and vital image... [T]his book has heart. -- Gabriel Espinosa, Historian, Mexico City [N]early every sentence is a deep and profound truth about Tango and real-life relationships. A wonderful book!!" -- Peter Ripota, PM Magazine, Munich, Germany From the Publisher With its thoughtful, light-hearted insights and simple physical exercises this book will help you achieve the coveted "balance" that affects every aspect of your life. Discover how the lessons from this seductive, complex and intimate 100-year-old dance can lead you to a more balanced life. From the Author I found the answers to all of life's lessons in the arms of a total stranger. And now you can read them in the pages of this book. The very first time I was held in a Tango embrace, my life was transformed. In one of those mythical epiphanies of biblical proportions, the light of understanding flooded down upon me, the clouds parted, and the angels sang. In fact, this book was born that very same night. The depth of my life lessons through this marvelous dance were so important and life altering, I felt compelled to share them with people who were not necessarily attracted to the dance itself. Because

even if not everyone struggles with "ganchos" and "molinetes", they do with life and relationships.