

## Guide for Starting an Ecstatic Dance

This guide is a combination of suggestions from the Santa Barbara Dance Tribe core team as well as the Ecstatic Dance Oakland co-founder, Tyler Blank, and the Ecstatic Dance Corvallis co-founder, Peter Weinstein. Tyler and Peter together also founded Ecstatic Dance Fairfax in Marin, CA. All of these dances are thriving community gatherings. Each of us has had over 10 years of experience in running a thriving Ecstatic Dance business. We hope that our shared wisdom supports you in creating and growing your own ecstatic dance community with fun and ease.

Blessings on your journey,

**Santa Barbara Dance Tribe's Core Team**  
[www.sbdancetribe.org](http://www.sbdancetribe.org)

### What is Ecstatic Dance?

**From Wikipedia:** Ecstatic dance is a form of dance in which the dancers, sometimes without the need to follow specific steps, abandon themselves to the rhythm and move freely as the music takes them, leading to trance and a feeling of ecstasy. The effects of ecstatic dance begin with ecstasy itself, which may be experienced in differing degrees. Dancers are described as feeling connected to others, and to their own emotions. The dance serves as a form of meditation, helping people to cope with stress and to attain serenity. Ecstatic dance has been practiced throughout human history. In the ancient and widespread practice of shamanism, ecstatic dance and rhythmic drumming are used to alter consciousness in spiritual practices. Ecstatic dances are known also from religious traditions around the world. Modern ecstatic dance was revived by Gabrielle Roth in the 1970s and formalized in her 5Rhythms practice; it is now found in variants across the western world.

It is beneficial to intentionally create the dance space as a sanctuary for the dance - a place where dancers can let go of the outside world, drop into their body, surrender to their experience, and open up to connect with their true nature in community. By intentionally creating the sanctuary for the dance you let attendees know that your event is different than the outside world and your dance is not a "party" but, rather, is a sacred space where people may come to deeply, authentically connect with themselves and each other through a presence centered movement practice.

Here's our agreements for creating an intentional container:

### **Santa Barbara Dance Tribe Agreements**

1. Be **aware** and **respect** the space of fellow dancers
2. Obtain **clear consent each time** before making physical contact with another
3. Refrain from talking
4. Attend in a **sober state**
5. Refrain from explicit sexual activity
6. Be **barefoot**, if possible

7. No cell phone use or taking photos/video
  8. Avoid wearing strong scents (Be clean!)
- Dance Tribe is a ceremonial space.

## STEPS TO CREATING YOUR ECSTATIC DANCE

### 1. Develop your Vision

Make sure you understand why you are starting the dance and what your intentions are.

- Create a vision statement or mission statement. For Example: “We Desire a Safe and Sacred Space for Freeform Movement, on a Weekly Basis, in an Wonderful and Expansive Environment.”
- Get to know Ecstatic Dance History, World Music Genres and Modern Electronic Music
- Read the Origin Story of Ecstatic Dance found on [www.Edance.org/Origins](http://www.Edance.org/Origins)
- What are the health benefits of dance? Why people dance, why you dance.
- Learn about the relationship between dance and world music genres. What distinguishes each of the dozens of different electronic and world music genres? What are their tempos? How do they make you feel and move? What do you like for dance, and not like, and why? This will also help you to be able to speak to DJs about the type of Music Journey your community desires.
- Research the history of dance in modern and ancient times for your own knowledge and understanding of the movement you are co-creating. Here are three lineages of the Ecstatic Dance movement to familiarize yourself with:

#### **Gabrielle Roth's 5Rhythms** **5rhythms.com**

Wikipedia defines **5Rhythms** as a movement meditation practice devised by Gabrielle Roth in the late 1970s. It draws from indigenous and world traditions using tenets of shamanistic, ecstatic, mystical and eastern philosophy. It also draws from Gestalt therapy, the human potential movement and transpersonal psychology. Fundamental to the practice is the idea that everything is energy, and moves in waves, patterns, and rhythms. Roth describes the practice as a soul journey, and says that by moving the body, releasing the heart, and freeing the mind, one can connect to the essence of the soul, the source of inspiration in which an individual has unlimited possibility and potential. The 5Rhythms Website says “– Flowing Staccato Chaos Lyrical Stillness® – are states of Being. They are a map to everywhere we want to go, on all planes of consciousness – inner and outer, forward and back, physical, emotional and intellectual. They are markers on the way back to a real self, a vulnerable, wild passionate, instinctive self.”

## **Soul Motion: A Conscious Dance Practice** **soulmotion.com**

Vinn Arjuna Martí, award-winning choreographer, global performer, master teacher, founded Soul Motion® a Conscious Dance Practice. Soul Motion® Conscious Dance Practice was born out of Vinn Arjuna's inspired synthesis of his many years of dance training, his work in New Thought Christianity, as well as his extensive experience with meditation and yoga. Some of the world-class dance teachers he studied with included Barbara Dilley, Terry Sendgraff, Deborah Hay, Wilber Alix, Douglas Dunn, Eric Hawkins, Jose Brown, and Gabrielle Roth. Each of these teachers contributed their unique insights and perspectives, shaping Vinn Arjuna's views on movement language, interior worlds of inspiration, and the power of truth in motion. In a Soul Motion® class, the dancer moves through four relational landscapes, using three core movement platforms.

### The Four Relational Landscapes

- Dance Intimate... we move alone
- Dance Communion... we move with one other
- Dance Community... we move with everyone
- Dance Infinity... we move our practice to everyday life

## **Open Floor** **openfloor.org**

Open Floor International was created by a number of seasoned dancers and teachers of movement mediation practices, conscious dance and many other embodiment practices, like somatic psychology. They came together to form the Open Floor school that teaches embodied movement meditation and conscious dance.

The OFI website says, "Open Floor International is a creative collaboration of seasoned movement teachers from all corners of the globe. Most of us grew up on the dance floor with Gabrielle Roth and consider her one of our most honored teachers. At Open Floor we believe that all creativity requires influence. Invention springs from a meeting of inspiration (teachers, artists, cultural trends, discoveries) and our own unique imagination. The Open Floor curriculum is Open Source and registered with the Creative Commons." Open Floor International (OFI) has developed a curriculum, a framework within which to explore what it means to be an embodied being, using a wide range of exercises, music, movement, reflections and inquiries.

## **2. Get to Know Your Community**

Ecstatic Dance is all about community. To thrive, Ecstatic Dance needs an active, supportive, connected community that feels it is being served by the dance. Some of this community may come from other established conscious dances (such as 5Rhythms, Soul Motion and Open Floor), while a lot of the community will develop organically.

Ecstatic Dance is similar in many ways to other conscious dance modalities, but it has some characteristics of its own. It's important to understand other local conscious dance practices and what they offer.

Ultimately, it will help greatly for the community to have input to the dance. Be sure to take community preferences and needs into account at every step and whenever you make important decisions.

**Attend all types of Conscious Dances in your area:**

- What do you (and other people) enjoy about these dances & communities?
- What aspects of these dances & communities can be improved?
- What aspects of these dances do you see serving your vision of Ecstatic Dance?

**Start dialoging and networking with community members:**

- What demand is there for a new Ecstatic Dance?
- Is Ecstatic Dance known or will you have to educate most of the community from scratch?
- Start identifying community members who could be good allies, ambassadors, and even partners.
- Who seems enthusiastic about a new Ecstatic Dance? Collect names and contact info.
- Who already has a leadership role among your target community? Cultivate those relationships.
- Are there good DJs locally who you think might be a good fit? If not, go to Conscious Dance Events, clubs, festivals, social media, and parties to find them.
- Send a community member to the Ecstatic Dance leadership training and/or DJ training. Visit the website here: <https://www.ecstaticdance.com/training/>

### **3. Pick the weekly day/time for your dance**

Ecstatic Dance is both a practice and community web: consistency is key! If at all possible, holding dance once per week is preferable to once or twice per month.

\*Note: Scheduling may be limited by venue availability (see Step 6). You may need to pick your second or third choice of day/time to get the best venue.

Keep in mind that you will need time for setup and breakdown for each dance. We recommend planning for roughly an hour before and after. When setting your weekly event times, consider the implications for community members:

- How it fits in with meal times
- Travel time required after work
- Availability of public transportation
- Ease of parking at different times

### **Guiding questions:**

- What days and times are under-represented in your Dance Community?
  - Will it work better to pick a day/time that doesn't compete with any other dances, or is the regional population big enough where you can pick a day/time when there's already a dance? (note: It's common courtesy to reach out to other dances who may be affected by your dance. It's also good to have the good will and support of other established leaders.)
  - Will you have a warm up class before dance (Yoga/Contact Improv/etc)? That will affect your dance & rental timing.

### **Here are some suggestions:**

- It's best to start with one new dance at a time (and in one city).
- Sunday is the most popular morning for Ecstatic Dance. Saturday morning is second.
- Tues/Weds/Thurs are usually the best value for evening dances.
- Fri/Sat are great nights if you can get them without paying too much (though dance can take on more of a "party vibe" on these nights).
- Sun/Mon nights are often more challenging for the community to attend, though venues often have space at that time and can be cheaper to rent.
- Weekday mornings and afternoons are difficult times for Ecstatic Dance as many people are working then.

## **4. Start Developing Your Team**

Most successful dances have a team of support to help carry out the various duties and tasks to make it all happen. Some of these roles are paid, while some are done in exchange for free dance passes. You will have to **Promote, Advertise, Market, Navigate Social Media, Decorate, Design, Negotiate, Hold Space, Hold Circles, Mediate, Move Gear, etc. etc...**

- Decide if you will be the lead sole owner of the dance or if it will be an equal partnership among two or more people. Keep in mind that producing a dance takes perseverance and reliability as much as passion.
- List all of the specific roles, responsibilities, and tasks you will need to launch your dance and then run it weekly. To fulfill each one, consider:

- How much time and effort will it take?
- How will you compensate? (pay, free dance entry, etc)
- Whom do you Trust to do this?

Get the basic team members in place to proceed with planning and launch, and start organizing the weekly team you will need after launch.

At Santa Barbara Dance Tribe all of our team members are compensated for their service plus they receive free entrance to all dances (i.e not just when they're working). Our production team consists of:

- **Guardians:** Are the point person supervising the dance. If an issue arises during the dance it is their job to attend to it. They also facilitate the closing circle that brings the dance to a close.
- **Ministers of Music:** We have developed a crew of local DJ's and also draw upon the international circuit of ecstatic dance DJ's and professional musicians to provide our dancers with a weekly rotation of top quality music facilitators. View our Ecstatic Dance DJ list [here](#).
- **Sound Crew:** Some of our sound technicians have professional experience in sound design; they guide us on creating a high quality sound experience and they also train novices to become adept at managing sound.
- **Front Door Crew:** Because this position is the first point of contact for new attendees, we seek for individuals that can provide a warm, welcoming, and friendly energy at the front door. They also need to be adept at handling money and basic math/ accounting skills as well as communication skills as people often report to the front desk if they are having an issue.
- **Altar Crew:** At the entrance to the dancefloor we have a low table where a member of this crew designs a new altar each week. The purpose of the altar is to remind dancers to connect with the sacred and their spirituality. Dancers will often pause at the altar to set an intention or pray or draw upon a meditation card during the dance.
- **Floor Champions Crew:** Service is the greatest form of spirituality and members of this team have the role of tending to the dance floor after the dance. We lightly clean the floor after each event in an effort to leave space cleaner than we found it, and as a way of purifying what has been released during the dance through the dancers.
- **Assistant Crew:** It's a lot of work to set up the room for the dance and members of this crew assist the sound crew and front desk with their tasks.

## 5. Business and Money

Know that starting an Ecstatic Dance may be a costly adventure. Even though this feels like a community, which it is, it is also a business proposition with required investments, weekly costs, and significant responsibilities. If making money is your primary reason for starting an Ecstatic Dance, please consider another line of work. Ecstatic Dance is a passion. A need. A dream. You, your partner(s), and your community must come together to procure an amazing space to dance in, decorate it, entice DJs to play music, acquire equipment, spread the word, and keep it going until enough people are attending to cover expenses.

Be prepared to invest about \$10,000 and allow a year or two for that initial investment to come back to you.

If you do not already have experience launching and running a business, please do some research and learning about basic budgeting, accounting, management, and leadership. There are lots of good books and online resources on these topics. It's also a good idea to identify business mentors who can guide you along the way.

### **Guiding questions:**

- What kind of business structure will you employ for your dance organization? Sole Proprietor/Partnership/Community Owned/LLC/C Corp/Non-Profit 501c3/Charitable Organization.
- What kind of liability insurance will you use? (Note: the need for this varies depending upon your country). We recommend having a liability waiver at the front desk for all first time participants to sign before entering.

Realize that you will be birthing a Community. This can be both a rewarding journey, and an intense responsibility. If it fails, it may cost you many thousands of dollars. If it succeeds, it can provide you with meaningful employment and a dancing community that is a loving, supportive family.

## 6. Find the Dance Temple

When it comes to dance, the venue is of utmost importance. Even if you get everything else right, it's very difficult to build a dance in a space that doesn't offer the right container. Ultimately, it needs to feel like a sacred space to gather for dance & movement.

Here are some characteristics of a space that we feel are critical:

- The space is large enough to grow into and hold the abundant dance you envision a year from now. Will it comfortably hold at least 100 dancers (or a lot more if you are in a big city)?

- The space has wood floor comfortable for barefoot dancing (ideally “sprung floor” or well-worn wood, not sticky or laid down directly on top of concrete - that will be too painful or be injurious for some).
- The space is available every week (ideally), 52 weeks a year. It’s not good if you have to cancel your dance more than a few weeks per year. In Santa Barbara we have continued our dance on major holidays such as Christmas and New Year’s day as it creates an alternative community space to gather and has worked well for us.
- The space has easy access to public transit, parking, etc.
- The space offers affordable rent (keeps costs down for dancers, and allows DJ’s & facilitators to be paid for their time and energy).
- The space does not have sound level issues (if you can’t turn up the music, it may not be worth it).

Here are some characteristics of space that are very important, but may not be critical for you:

- High ceilings (adequate head space for the energy).
- Big windows (especially for morning & afternoon dances).
- Has its own epic sound system (or availability for you to store your system on site). There are a few dances that cart in their own sound system each week but it’s a lot of extra work.
- Has storage onsite storage for altar gear, décor, and any needed equipment.

## **7. Find the right DJ’s**

DJing for Ecstatic Dance is different than DJing at a club, party or festival because it requires playing an “open-format” music journey that travels through an interconnected but wide variety of genres, tempos, and feelings to create a somatic shamanic experience that moves dancers into a greater experience of their own self-embodiment.

Gabrielle Roth (5Rhythms) describes the dance as a movement meditation practice, a soul journey. She taught that by moving the body, releasing the heart, and freeing the mind, one can connect to the essence of the soul, the source of inspiration in which an individual has unlimited possibility and potential.

At Santa Barbara Dance Tribe we inform guest DJ’s that our dance is two hours long and dancers prefer “two waves/arcs with a big Chaos peak release in each (about 40 minutes into each hour) with a deep inward breath between the two waves.” In the language of the 5Rhythms; Flowing Staccato Chaos Lyrical & Stillness are archetypal states of being that when played in sequence constitute a “wave” of energy.



Most experienced DJ's have an intuitive understanding of what is meant when a wave/ arc of music is described but unless they've practiced 5Rhythms their interpretation of a wave may be more like an airplane flight pattern: slow build up, take off, attain maximum altitude, maintain BPM's/genres for the duration of dance, descend, land.

- Learning how to mix music from one tempo to another, between genres, moods, intensity, or beatmatching to continue a vibe are important aspects of being an Ecstatic Dance DJ. There's an ecstatic dance facilitation training program here: <https://www.ecstaticdance.com/training/>
- There are many Ecstatic Dance sets available to listen to (for your DJ's to learn from) at: **Santa Barbara Dance Tribe MixCloud:** <https://www.mixcloud.com/santabarbaradancetribe/Ecstatic-Dance>. **Santa Barbara Dance Tribe SoundCloud:** <https://soundcloud.com/official-ecstatic-dance> <https://www.mixcloud.com/discover/ecstatic-dance/>
- "DJ speak" includes talking about genres and tempos. For example:
  - Start out Ambient music, without any beats, for at least 5-15 minutes, and slowly introduce Spacious Downtempo (slow dreamy beats around 70bpm), building over 30 minutes to more playful and funky Midtempo (100bpm), slowly increasing the Intensity, with tribal beats and rhythms as well as weaving in playful, sexy, and introspective songs, through the 110's, all the way up to House Music (120-128 bpm), and possibly even Trance (130's) or Drum & Bass (160's), before returning down to Midtempo (100bpm), Dubstep (70bpm), or Trap (80bpm), etc... going up and down the scale or tempos, with 2 to 4 tracks maximum in a row of the same feeling before moving to another on the Journey. Equal time should be given to instrumental tracks and vocal tracks.
  - At Dance Tribe, our dancers prefer dance journeys that are not heavily EDM but incorporate a wide range of genres with lots of world-beat rhythms in the mix.
  - Pop music may be played, or Remixes, as long as they are conscious (not rude or lewd). Keep in mind that lyrics will engage the thinking brain and may pull people out of their trance, because of this it is recommended to limit the amount of songs with discernible lyrics. Pop should be a very small portion of the Journey (1 or 2 tracks max), just enough to bring people together, a type of reminiscing, and celebratory vibration.
  - Proper amount of time should also be dedicated to the Cooling Down portion of the Journey (15–30 minutes), ending as we began, eventually into Ambient Sounds, or a Sacred Drone.
- Check our our Ecstatic Dance DJ list at <https://www.sbdancetribe.org/dj-list>.

- Go to Conscious Dances, Clubs, Parties, etc., and find DJ's whose music you love, and see if they are willing to play a wider variety of Tempos, Genres, & Emotions for an Ecstatic Dance Journey.
- Find Conscious Dance Class Facilitators (such as 5Rhythms) who want to learn to DJ.
- Ask nearby communities what DJ's are coming to their event and see if that DJ will come to your event as well. Use this website to find other dances in your area: <https://www.ecstaticdance.com/find-a-dance/> . You can also find regional events through the Conscious Dancer Movement Map: <https://consciousdancer.com/events/map/>

## 8. Use a Great Sound System

A great sound system makes it easier for dancers to enter into transformational states of being while dancing. High Quality Speakers are worth the money including:

- Separate Bass Cabinets (Bass roots us to the Earth, and it's the Sub Woofers that provide the grounding force of these lower frequencies. It makes it possible to "feel" the music in our bodies. Otherwise, the music only hits us from the neck up.)
- The Mid / High Range Speakers (Tops) should be above head level, on a sturdy speaker stand, so that everyone can hear them clearly (not just the front row of dancers)

### Options for speaker locations:

- **All up front: Concert Style**
  - Pros: Good for big sound up front - quieter space in back
  - Cons: Can create a forward facing dancefloor - too quiet in back
- **Front and Back (& perhaps with sides): Surround Sound**
  - Pros: Being Immersed in Sound – Non directional Dancefloor
  - Cons: Sound waves can clash – Hard to find quiet space
- **Front and Sides: Bowl Style**
  - Pros: Good sound front and back (though perhaps some echo)
  - Cons: Directional dancing - no quiet space

Surround Sound is the most preferred for dancers, but can create challenges if the levels are not right (backs should be a little bit lower volume), or if people are looking for quieter spaces.

The basic sound equipment needed for an ecstatic dance set up includes two 15in powered speakers (with built-in amps), speaker stands, a mixer, surge protection power strips , a mic and all the essential cables.

- **Powered speakers:** if you're only going to use a pair of powered speakers for your medium sized room, I'd advise buying a pair of 15 inch speakers for a more full sound. Beyond this, if your budget allows it, add a pair of powered subwoofers to your speakers for an even bigger sound. If your dance space is large, like say the size of a basketball stadium, you may want to have 4 powered speakers at each corner of the room or dance space. For an even more brilliant sound experience, you can add 4 subwoofers, one for each of your speakers.
- **Mixer:** I would suggest purchasing at least a 6 channel mixer. You will need the channels for mics, controllers / laptops and instruments. If your DJ's are just using laptops and controllers you can make do with a 2-channel mixer.
- **Essential cables:** Use XLR and balanced cables, when possible. They prevent your cables from bleeding into each other which will cause a buzz or humming sound to come out of your speakers.

Further help and resources: Google and YouTube are great resources for reviews and how-to questions. Also at your local music center store, like Guitar Center or Sam Ash, you can listen to a variety of speakers and subwoofer brands to see what sounds good to your ear. The guys that work in the Pro Audio section are usually DJs and musicians themselves and can guide you with further questions on setting up your sound system for your dance.

## 9. Develop your Marketing Strategy

### Use Word of Mouth

Most people come to Ecstatic Dance through friends who have already discovered it. So “word of mouth” is the best marketing tool. When you first start your dance, and are looking to build traction in the community, there are ways to encourage existing dancers to bring friends:

- Give dancers Entry Passes to share with their friends.
- Offer a special promotion, “Bring a First-time Friend for Free”. The idea is to get as many people as possible to try out the dance, knowing that you have little to lose by giving free entry to try it out and that some of them will become regular dancers.
- Have existing dancers add their friends to your Facebook group and Facebook events

### Make Your Dance Known

Another important strategy is to spread the word about Ecstatic Dance to draw people who might be interested but do not already have friends attending. The goal is to make

people curious enough to follow-up and try out the dance. Use friendly language and graphics that stand out. Here are some key ways to spread the word and establish your brand locally:

- Print cards, flyers, and posters. Post them at other dances, local festivals, community boards, cafes, and yoga studios.
- Create a website with lots of information about Ecstatic Dance (in general) and your local dance (specifically). Get your website listed at Ecstatic Dance.org
- Create a Facebook page for your local dance. Use Facebook ads to get people to “like” your page.
- Create a Yelp page to attract attention.
- Once you get going with enough attendance, contact local newspapers and bloggers. Explain the value of Ecstatic Dance and invite them to come check it out. It makes a great story!
- Use Facebook events to remind the community about the dances—this can be weekly or just for special events. Use Facebook ads to draw attention to the Facebook events.
- Print advertisements in alternative newspapers could work well in the right community

### **Build the Relationship**

Once you have a community forming, it's important to have a way to build and maintain communications. Facebook is good for some folks, but not everybody uses it regularly and some Facebook posts get quickly lost in that sea of over-information.

- **Build an email list.** Gather emails of everyone who attends dance, and incorporate a weekly or monthly email newsletter. Using a service like Mailchimp, you can easily provide community information and dance scheduling.
- **Create a Facebook group for your local Ecstatic Dance tribe.** Encourage everyone to use it to build and deepen the community. It's not only a great place to announce the dance each week, but have people post inspirations, requests/offers for support, and a place to find info on other community happenings.
- **Use other social media channels to stay in touch with the community:** Twitter, Instagram, Meetup, and so on.

### **Learn What Works for You**

Marketing and promoting your dance are critical for success, but they could become an endless time sink. It's important to figure out what works for you in the particular community you serve. What gives you the best return on your investment of time and money? Try different approaches, and then focus on what works for you.

## **10. Intentional Ways of Opening and Closing**

### **Setting Up the Space**

Keep in mind that this is not about a DJ performance and is not a festival. While the DJ is leading the journey, it's not about people paying attention to or facing the DJ. The room setup and lighting should not overtly direct attention to the DJ. Encourage people to dance in all directions.

### **Pre-Dance Classes**

These classes help set the space, and prepare dancers mentally and physically to enter into the sacred journey of dance.

- Contact Improv - Encourages touch and physical connection in the dance
- Yoga - Promotes flexibility and internal harmony before the dance
- Facilitated Dance Class - Soul Motion®, Dancing Freedom®, 5 Rhythms®, or Blues/Swing/Tango/Fusion offers a chance to say a few words about how we can dance with each other, and the universal energies involved in our practice.

**Opening Circle:** Sometimes gathered with the volunteers before the movement class to set intentions and give thanks. Other times a circle can be offered after the movement class, before the dance starts. If you are sharing guidelines with the community, you may want to do so at the “Mid Circle”, as many dancers arrive after the start of the music.

**Mid (“Opening”) Circle:** This is often called the “Opening Circle”, as it can be the first Circle, though it usually starts after 20-30 minutes of gentle music “warm-up”. This can be a great way to connect with dancers, state the guidelines, and offer an invocation. It does create a noticeable “break” in the flow of the dance, which some enjoy, but others find it challenging (Big Island Ecstatic Dance always has this as their Opening Circle).

**Closing Circle:** This circle gathers after the music, or after a live music “sound healing” at the end of the DJ set. Often times “Names” are spoken (each person in the circle shares their name), then “Shareback” occurs (people share their experience of the dance - not a time for world musings, or invocations, but actual experiences during the dance), and finally “Community Announcements”. This last one can really drag on if not kept brief. It is great to know more about what people are doing in the world, and helps build community, but has a real danger of becoming a sales pitch to end an otherwise Sacred Journey. “Final Moments” can involve an OM, Moments of Silence, Ringing of a Bell, Giving Thanks, Sounding, Clapping, etc.

### **Sound Healing**

Live music and or singing can be a wonderful way to end the Ecstatic Dance Journey. This is usually ambient music. Singing Bowls, didgeridoo, chimes, piano, or harp are common instruments for “sound healing”

## 11. Ask for Guidance

Here are some top tips from our 10 years of run an ecstatic dance business at Santa Barbara Dance Tribe:

- CONSENT- very important to regularly encourage in the closing circle for people to get non-verbal consent before making physical contact with another dancer (this is the most sensitive/ significant issue that comes up to be addressed)
- Different age groups often like different styles of music - be aware of the different music trends for older vs younger generations and ask DJ's to play to a mixed crowd.
- Use a loudness (dcb meter) to regularly measure the loudness of the volume in the room. Sound about 85 dcb can cause harm to people's hearing.
- Have a clear council of decision makers - do not try to please everyone!!!!
- You will find that there will often be very mixed and highly subjective feedback to your DJ's. At SBDT we have instituted a practice of gathering feedback from our staff/volunteers after each dance. We ask them to share what the journey was like for them as well as feedback they heard from other attendees. This collection of allows us to have a more objective, holistic, review of the DJ and we then provide this feedback to the DJ for their review. (We exclude the DJ from the feedback gathering process so that people feel free to share how they honestly feel and when feedback is given to the DJ the names of contributors are omitted to insure privacy)
- MONEY- people's relationship to money can be played out at the front desk, take note if someone truly wants to dance and doesn't have the funds vs. someone doesn't "feel like" paying \$15. We have an unannounced policy that nobody is turned away for lack of funds and we recommend half off for students and children under 10 for free.
- Liability waiver- it's very important to have first time dancers sign a general liability waiver before they enter the dance space so that each person takes responsibility for their safety
- Temperature - monitor the temperature during the dance so that it isn't uncomfortable. As the dance picks up in momentum people will begin to sweat and the room may need air conditioning for cooling and ventilation.

- Dealing with conflicts. At SBDT our Guardians supervise the dancefloor and intervene whenever there are situations that are causing conflicts in the room. Since implementing the Guardian role we have noticed fewer incidents on the dancefloor, we have also developed protocols for dealing with individuals in conflict including asking dancers to leave the space and inviting them to a mediation at another time outside of the dance.
- People can push boundaries in the following ways: dancing “out of control” such that it impacts physical safety, having conversations, wearing shoes, etc... always have a guardian in the dance to help with this.
- Contact Improv- encourage any lifting to happen on the perimeter of the room.
- **Get advice from Ecstatic Dance Producers in other cities!** Become Friends with your peers in other cities, and ask what works for them! You can visit Tyler Blank’s site at [www.ecstaticdance.org](http://www.ecstaticdance.org) to see the directory of all the other dances in the US. Once you have launched your dance community, you can send them your information and they will add you to the dance directory at [info@EcstaticDance.org](mailto:info@EcstaticDance.org).

You can visit [sbdancetribe.org](http://sbdancetribe.org) for an example of how to set up an ecstatic dance website. And, if you’d like to ask us any questions, you are welcome to contact the Dance Tribe manager at: [marcelino@sbdancetribe.org](mailto:marcelino@sbdancetribe.org).

**Thank You for Helping People to Dance & Move Freely!!**

