

Hello everyone!

Last month I wrote about preparing for change and growth. I had thought the next logical step would be actual growth, but I have discovered yet another essential phase early in the growth process: space. This includes allowing space, creating space, and making space.

I am working on a new hobby of starting seeds indoors for my garden. I found I needed to make lots of space for this: mental space to learn something new; dedicated physical space for the supplies, trays, lights, seedlings, work area; allowing space and time in my life to try something new.

We need to make space in our lives for what is important to us, such as people, pets, hobbies, dancing. We can make space for the new by eliminating some of the old, creating a vacuum by emptying part of a closet or a room, for example. A plant can't continue to grow if it is rootbound, i.e., has no more space. In our lives sometimes it is desirable to leave space for something we don't even know about yet to have room to flourish. This is psychic or mental space as well as physical space.

When we stop in our cars and allow someone to cross the street in front of us, we are holding the space for them, making it safe and encouraging others to stop also. Allowing a friend to share their emotions and experiences with us is also holding the space for them. The concept of space is an important one.

One thing many of us have made space for in our lives is a regular folkdance club. This has many advantages. You don't have to think about whether you want to go dancing, it's just something you do so of course you go. You develop a community. You know people and they know you, to greater or lesser degrees. You get to know about one another's lives. You increase fun, confidence, and competence because for the most part you know the repertoire. You know how the dances relate to the dancers. Maybe you have a favorite partner for certain dances, or when the music starts and everyone looks around for the person who loves to lead that dance. We watch our friends at the dance grow. Increasingly, this is essential to keep the club and hence folkdancing alive.

There is still time this month to contribute to NFDI's Youth Scholarship Fund to help assure we get the matching grant. Let's help the future dance generation make space for folkdancing too.

Hope to see you at the Northwest Folklife Festival, a wonderful space honoring music, dance, and other folk traditions!