

"All the flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today."

Happy April!

Continuing my seasonal themes of progressing through winter into spring, moving from lying fallow through changes and resilience, this month my topic is preparing for growth.

I like the quote, "All the flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today." This reminds me to include those seeds in my daily activities. If there is a skill or a habit I'd like to develop, I'd better take those first steps today. For gardening, the first steps could be to wait for warmer weather while preparing the soil. Plants do better with fertile ground and a favorable environment.

In terms of learning, generally we learn in a stepwise manner, building a foundation and growing at the edges, gradually pushing those edges outward. Richard Feynman's sister Joan once asked him how he could read difficult technical articles. "Well, I asked him, "How can I read it? It's so hard." He said, "You start at the beginning and you read as far as you can get, until you are lost. Then you start at the beginning again, and you keep working through until you can understand the whole book." Hardly anyone gets everything the first time around. This is again where persistence and successive approximations come in.

When learning a dance or a tune, you can prepare by analyzing it, identifying the structure, comparing it to something you already know in the genre. We can set the stage for learning a tune by listening to it a lot. In this way, it becomes easier to recognize patterns.

Some say to form a habit, simply do the action every day for 30 days. If you're trying to add five new things, pick one and start there. You can also prepare for success by making it easier to do the new action, such as leaving a musical instrument visibly accessible to encourage you to pick it up.

Speaking of seeds and growth, to encourage NFDI's growth, we are happy to announce a special short term offer: a free full page dance related ad to any NFDI club or other international dance type club who brings five new NFDI members by the end of July 2018, or a half page ad for three new members. These can include a new club membership too. Surely you know some dancers who are not yet NFDI members. By

encouraging people to join, you will be able to share news of your event free! Your new habit might be recommending NFDI membership to fellow dancers.

Getting ready to burst forth is a matching grant for youth scholarship fund. We received a generous donation if we can match it by May 31. As of early March, thoughtful donors have matched all but \$550. Let's chip in toward this. Every amount helps and goes to support a most worthwhile cause, young folkdancers being the seeds today for a flourishing folkdance scene.