My bright idea
Can you dance your way to a healthier mind?

Dancing can help people with problem-solving and self-esteem issues—and researchers are looking at its effects on people with Parkinson’s, says Peter Lovatt.

Peter Lovatt has been a psychologist at the University of Hertfordshire since founding it in 2006. Prior to this he trained in ballet, tap and jazz.

This summer he wrote, produced and performed in Dance, Doctor: Dance! The Psychology of Dance Show as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. In March he gave a talk at TEDxHertfordshire.

How can dance change the way people think?

We’ve all had those days when we feel stuck. Sometimes we can’t seem to get our creative juices flowing. When we shut ourselves off, we can even find it hard to think clearly. But what if you could use dance to help you unlock your mind?

Dance is a form of physical expression that can help us process emotions and ideas. It provides a safe space for us to explore our creativity and express ourselves without feeling judged. By focusing our energy on the movements of our bodies, we can release pent-up emotions and thoughts. This can lead to a clearer mind and a more open perspective.

Dance can also help improve our cognitive function. When we dance, we engage our whole body, from our feet to our hands. This helps to increase blood flow and oxygen levels to the brain, which can improve our concentration and memory.

But what about those who can’t dance? Can they still benefit from dance? Absolutely! Even if you don’t consider yourself a dancer, you can still experience the benefits of dance. As long as you’re willing to put in the effort, you can learn to move your body in ways that improve your mental and physical health.

In conclusion, dance is a powerful tool for self-discovery and personal growth. It has the potential to transform our thoughts and feelings and help us connect with our inner selves. So why not give it a try? You might be surprised at what you can achieve.

Peter Lovatt is a professional dancer and psychotherapist. He has worked extensively in the field of dance therapy and psychology. His presentation at TEDxHertfordshire focused on the healing power of dance and how it can be used to improve mental health. His talk was a hit with the audience, who were inspired by his passion for dance and his ability to communicate complex ideas in an engaging way.

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**LAB NOTES**

Dispatches from the world of science

"Washed plasma offers hope for transplants between blood groups"

Usually, or when transplanting the same blood type, most people have natural antibodies in their blood that cause the immune system to reject the organ. However, St. Michael’s hospital in Ontario has done the transplant between the blood types and without any problems. This is because they removed the antibodies and infused them with plasma from another person. This is an exciting development in the field of transplantation.

Andy Cossette, who has Type A blood and antibodies against Type B, is scheduled to receive a kidney transplant from his brother, who has Type AB blood, in the next month. The procedure is called plasmapheresis and works by separating the plasma from the patient’s blood, then trapping the antibodies in the device containing synthetic carbohydrate beads, before returning the "washed" plasma.

So that’s why you pay away

Research conducted by the University of Guelp in Canada has found that people with visual performance anxiety are more likely to cheat on their partners. The study, published in the journal Archives of Sexual Behaviour, is the first to look at how demographics, interpersonal factors and sexual activity influence the likelihood of cheating. The results suggest that visual performance anxiety is a significant predictor of cheating, with those who are more anxious about their visual appearance more likely to cheat.

**NEW TO NATURE**

No. 48 Bougainvillea fischeri

Cécashers are among the most unusual amphibians and Bougainvillea fischeri is perhaps the most unusual of the species. Known as "living pink shrimp", these creatures have about 200 vertebrae and attain lengths up to 400mm in spite of their small size. It was known from a single specimen for 20 years and is only recently described.