



# Women who Follow their Dreams

*A collection of inspiring real life stories by women  
from the international bellydance and healing arts communities.  
They talk about dance, art, self, challenges and life in general  
and how they creatively followed their dreams.*

**Free E-Book – Stories collected by Keti Sharif  
[www.ketisharif.com](http://www.ketisharif.com)**

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## Loving my 'Cairo Thighs'

Thirteen years old, 5'7, 150lbs, feeling as if I had two left feet and looking horrible in pale pink. Ballet wasn't for me, but it was what all American girls did after school....and it was expected. At our dance recitals parents looked on proudly as their little ones parade across the stage in sequins, satin and tutus. I'm sure mine cringed as they watched their awkward, oversized daughter do her best to be one of the group, failing dismally to hide her bulk behind the petite silhouettes. Week after week in class I was reminded I was too big to be a ballerina, but I did love to dance - most of all when it was alone in my bedroom. There I could be the star I dreamt of being.

Thirty years on, I discovered a bellydancing – a dance that celebrated my body. One that allowed 'curvy' and 'husky' sized dancers to be beautiful. Through this dance I learnt to love myself and help others to love their bodies too.

Several years ago when I was complaining about the size of my legs, a dance teacher told me I had "Cairo thighs". At that moment, I realised my body was a product of this dance and that strong thighs were not to be despised but cherished. My belly, hips, arms and thighs help bring this dance to life and the dance has helped bring me to appreciate physical self as well as inner strength and beauty. This is something I hope to pass on to all whom I teach.

*Raheesha, Somerset, UK*  
[www.raheesha.co.uk](http://www.raheesha.co.uk)

## Dance Tribe taught me to Trust

I was born to a family with an alcoholic father, a co-dependent mother who died when I was 21 and a sister who was mentally ill and abusive to me. I grew up to be a very independent person. I truly felt that I could trust and rely on no one except myself.



At the age of 44, I decided that bellydance classes would be a fun way to stay in shape and work on being more sociable. I never intended to be a performer, but somehow I ended up doing a tribal fusion solo at the Earth Day Festival in St. Louis, in 2006. I was taking cabaret style classes but I was really drawn to American Tribal Style. The group improvisational dance appealed to me because I felt that it would help me develop my group participation skills. My entire life I had remained fiercely independent and all my efforts to be a part of a club or group were unsuccessful.

In 2010 I was invited to join Tandava Tribal Bellydance, an ATS Fat Chance Bellydance sister troop. ATS is a style that depends on the intimate communication of the tribe. A leader trusts that the tribe will follow her cues and the followers trust that the leader will give clear cues that they can follow. The leader and the followers try to make each other look good. The dynamic is for the tribe to communicate nonverbally and dance as one, improvising. I never would have guessed that a form of dance would teach me to be a part of a family, a tribe. Funny as it sounds, ATS Bellydance has transformed my life. I have finally learned how to trust.

*Katherine, St Louis, USA*

## Deciding on a Water Birth

I enjoyed my pregnancy and spent much time preparing for the birth. My partner Ed and I moved to the countryside to be with Mother nature and welcome our baby into this environment. I focused more and more on what was happening inside my body, deep within, really listening to my intuition and to the baby growing inside me. We decided to hire an independent midwife, and I am eternally grateful to my mother for supporting this choice financially. I invited two of my best friends to be with me at the birth. Hadas flew in especially from Israel and gave solid, sisterly support, and Victoria who was wonderfully reassuring in her presence, having given birth at home, in water herself.

Ed and I prepared a room for the birth creating a very clear and sacred space. By the time the birthing pool arrived, the whole house was tingling with a magical energy of summery celebration and welcome. The labour began at 9.50pm on the 21st July just as everything became quiet and the sun went down. Whilst talking to Hadas I suddenly felt a very strong wave of energy. The rushes were getting stronger and closer together and I was drumming passionately on my drum, roaring away when Ed rang the midwife and asked her to come. Music was playing and the room was full of candlelight, crystals and flowers. It felt like the birthday party was about to begin!

Victoria arrived with an amazingly pure and grounded vibration. She and Ed and I hugged through a strong contraction and it felt like we were all merged into one powerful force along with the baby. At that moment I really transcended the pain and “rode the wave”. I knew I could do it! When the midwife arrived around midnight, the waves were coming frequently and I was screaming out. She reminded me to breathe deeply and take the energy down into my body rather than throwing it out. The people supporting me were God’s gift, as I felt no inhibitions around them. I was standing in the water supported by Ed who gave himself over completely to me and to the process. We said “YES” together. I shook him like he was a rag doll and gave him two love bites while belly dancing in the water, helping the baby move down. I felt down between my legs and touched my baby’s crown. What a sensation! Pure bliss and ecstasy and way beyond. Midwife Val, Victoria and Hadas were sitting around the pool quietly and Ed was ready to catch our baby. Sayana was born slowly and gently into her fathers loving arms in warm water.



A Miracle – a beautiful baby girl. The labour lasted three and a half hours and the placenta came out fifteen minutes later. I put her to my breast and it felt very natural and beautiful to do. Ed and I were left in the water with our new baby girl. The feeling was beyond words. We did it together, we gave birth to our baby, our family in a gently and loving way. I deeply acknowledge and thank Sayana, Ed and everyone who was involved with this birth. I love you all. By sharing my story, I hope to inspire more women to “Go for it” (as a friend said to me) and create their own perfect birth.

*Maayan, UK and Israel*  
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## Returning to School at 52

I am a student again. At age 52 I found myself unemployed and growing frustrated with the job options that were available. I have 30 years experience as a substance abuse counselor and found myself looking at work that was offering between \$27,000 and \$40,000 year, which pretty much is what I made when I started 30 years ago. I started in the field of substance abuse while in College studying for my psychology degree since I needed a job to support myself. I figure I would try counseling and see if I would enjoy working with people. I got hired without experience since according to interviewer, "your heart is in the right place". I loved working with people and truly enjoy working with addicts. I find many individuals seem to stereotype the population as manipulators, liars and criminals and fail to see the humanness.

I am back in school at 52. I am currently unemployed and my job options do not provide enough to cover my rent. The field has taken a dive due to economics and budget cuts that impact the social field severely. My last job search attempt provided me with employment that paid 35,000, which meant after taxes and basic deductions I would only bring home \$450 more than my current unemployment benefits. I decided that the only way to overcome my income limitations is to obtain a Masters Degree in Mental health, which is only 2 years giving me 60 credits. So I enrolled in school September 6th 2011. As of today I have completed 24 credits and will have an additional 12 credits after August 19th. I then plan on going back for the Fall and the Spring.



There are huge challenges I have faced, such as learning to think like a student, writing APA style, which I did not do back in the 80's when I was last in College. And facing limited income and unstable health issues. As someone unemployed and barely making ends meet, insurance is not an option. I make too much for Medicare or food-stamps, or any public benefits but not enough to pay for insurance. I have asthma and had no insurance for regular care. This winter my asthma got out of control and I ended up in the hospital for 4 days as a result of not responding to regular asthma medication. In February I came close to dying since my body was not responding to my emergency asthma medication and the Ambulance arrived and did not have both types of asthma medication needed for emergencies, which meant I became critical. I arrived at the ER basically blue as my boyfriend witnessed and not responding. A team of doctors and nurses frantically worked to help me breathe and had to coach me in order to help relax enough to let the medication work.

The hospital made me realize I not only had to change my career goals, but my health as well. Fortunately, the hospital I attended was a City hospital with a budget for individuals that don't qualify for Medicare due to their income. I got approved for benefits to use while attending the hospital, which means I now have my asthma under control. I also decided to work out, lose weight and of course all this energy has allowed me to continue my goal with school...

So, at 52 I am a full time student and I workout daily and loving it.

*Rosa Castro, New York, USA*

## Leaving a Corporate Career for Dance

My whole life has been a constant balancing act between making a living and dancing - or doing what I love most. In 2006, when my grandmother died and left me an inheritance, it gave me the opportunity I was looking for and I changed my life from working long hours in the corporate world in a full time career whilst also following my passion for dance, to making a huge leap of faith and leaving the security of an excellent position within a global corporate organisation to retraining and refocusing my life in the direction I wanted to go. I am now fully self employed and following my passion. I remember many people at work coming up to me when I was leaving to say congratulations and admiring my decision to follow my dream as they all felt they could never let go of the security of their job. So here I am today six years later and leading a much more fulfilled life.



Before I left work I was instrumental in setting up a Health and Wellbeing program within the office as work/life balance was becoming a popular theme and health and wellbeing was acknowledged as contributing to productivity. I employed many of my friends to offer yoga, tai chi and pilates classes at lunchtime and set up a relationship with the local gym, all very positive things, but it was really just me doing what I loved and wanted to do. I had worked it into my job, which is what I have always done with my jobs, created opportunities to contribute from the heart.

*Angela McWhinney, Melbourne, Australia*  
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## Rebuilding our Lives after a Tornado

In October of 2010, a tornado swept through our home leaving my family and I the task of rebuilding our home and our lives. For months I had feelings of anxiety, panic, worry and little interest in the dance I had grown to love and share. After months of therapy and rebuilding, getting back into our new home felt like a renewing transition.

At that time I decided that if I could survive that storm, I could survive anything. I thought about all of the goals I wanted to achieve. I began studying the A-Z program more intensely and soon felt passion in my dance again. Being a part of the 2011 Pulse8 DVD's encouraged me and gave me great motivation. Keti and the A-Z ladies inspired me in such a positive way that forever changed my life. I brought back a new energy to my studio and shared my healing with my students.

I have witness myself grow into a more confident dancer and my student's have flourished in their dance. I feel more passionate about my art than I have in years. Being at peace with myself and overcoming adversities has made me not only a better mother and friend, but it has made me a stronger leader. I hope that my story will inspire those who have been through trying times and give them hope that they too can change their lives by following their dreams.



*Candy – Newton, NC USA [www.rebellydance.com](http://www.rebellydance.com)*

## I Realised that Dance was my Career

I am a Belly dancer. I moved to Europe (Barcelona) from the USA, opened a dance school, developed a teaching method based on movement analysis through sacred geometry, wrote a book on Belly dancing and my method, 'Sarabi', which means 'my mirage'...I actually did attend a private university in Minnesota, thinking that, at the ripe old age of 23 - having already spent 5 years getting surprisingly well paid to perform in Greek and Arabic restaurants in Minneapolis – that it was high time I got serious about starting a 'real life'. So I spent another 5 years studying, performing at night to pay rent and tuition, until I graduated with a triple major... I had paid for college by shaking my shoulders in a beaded bra top and fancy fringed hip belt!

A lot of people think that Bellydancing is just a shady niche above striptease on the dance ladder, but I know it to be both spiritual and profound. Not only is it a fun and extremely well balanced form of exercise but it can also become a path to inner truth, body consciousness, and a deep understanding of what it is to be a sensual woman.

Now I have a quite chaotic personality, I get side-tracked easily and have never made any 5 year plan or applied any of those time-tested techniques that supposedly guarantee results for happiness on the grand scale. It's my nature to just go with the flow and let circumstances determine my actions. We can consider the synchronicities that guide our lives - those 'chance' happenings that are the very fabric that shape our future, easily appreciated in retrospect but while in the moment, just seem like innocuous daily details - I could fill a whole volume on *that* subject, considering all the turning points I have had throughout these last 4 decades. So I really believe that I am living out my destiny, without questioning too much what that is, exactly.



I'm not sure exactly at what point I realized that I didn't need to look for a career, that I already *had* one...but here and now I am grateful for all of it. I did make some tough choices along the way...for example I am not a mother, and I will probably always wonder if that was right for me, but at 53 I feel mostly satisfied with the ups and downs of my day to day life. I have met and performed with world class artists, travelled to places that I can't even pronounce correctly, and have shared the beauty of this rich and varied dance form with many thousands of people, a few of whom took the time to show me their appreciation for my performance, which I am truly grateful for.

Often I've said, 'If you really want to be fulfilled, you should look for something to dedicate your life to that you love so much, you would do it for free, even if no one was willing to pay you for it. Then concentrate your time and energy on the doing. It won't feel like work - you love it!!' I've done a lot of interviews in which I am asked what is the secret of my success...not quite sure just what that is, as each of us would undoubtedly define it differently. But as an answer is required, I always quote a now deceased friend, who long ago told me this: Success, Devorah, is to know your *place*...and occupy it. Wise words. I'm working on it - with joy!!

*Devorah Korek, Barcelona, Spain [www.sarabi.es](http://www.sarabi.es)*

## The Rainbow Serpent

When I was four years old I remember telling my Mother, "when I grow up I want to be a nurse." A favorite game in the school cubby house was playing "doctors and nurses." Friends and dolls were my patients - I gave them pretend injections and medicines. I didn't play mothers and fathers like the other girls. My father was a school teacher, so we moved town every three years. My mother gave birth to four children in quick succession. Home was not a happy place, Mum ruled her domain like an army camp. Dad was always at school or church meetings, or else he'd be tinkering with his car. I loved my Dad, but he had slimy fingers, he tinkered with my sacred parts. Mum knew that he did, but due to her own childhood secrets, she never protected me. My days were attuned to my mother's mood...her wrath was fearsome. Dad was often in the firing line and I was next.



Home felt like a war zone. School and learning came as a wonderful reprieve, it was home time I dreaded. I often hid in our tree house with my book, to escape. The first time I ever felt safe, was when I turned seventeen. I moved into the nurse's home to commence my nursing training. Determined not to follow in my mother's footsteps, I continued my nursing training to become a midwife, learning to assist women turn into mothers.

I met the "man of my dreams" while studying homeopathy (a natural complementary medicine) Pete wanted to continue his studies and become a traditional doctor. I wanted to work as a homebirth midwife. We were the perfect couple. With my homeopathic kit in my birthing case, courage in hand, I worked in the community delivering babies in their homes. Pete started his studies to be a doctor. I worked right up to the day before I gave birth to Sam. I delivered my baby in my own home, in a big tub of heated water, without drugs or intervention. It was a dream come true. Sam was a perfect beautiful contented baby. So you can imagine the devastation I felt when Sam was nine months old, I was diagnosed with an auto immune disease. I could barely function or take care of my precious baby. My life became a living nightmare. My body was at war with itself, the Graves disease was a symptom of my inner world conflict. The doctors wanted to operate. I refused their advice, I knew my body had its own wisdom. Pete was still studying at medical school when he left our marriage, Sam was six years old. He could no longer support the unconventional way I had chosen to heal.

I needed to feel safe in my own body and stop the war...this much I knew to be true. For the next fourteen years I struggled to solo parent Sam and work part time. I tried everything to heal. One of the most wonderful ways I found, step by step, was learning to perform and teach belly dancing. Through this sacred dance and my special teacher, who opened numerous doors for me, I found the most important ingredient there is in life. To trust with an open heart and feel deeply. "I can only feel, that...which I am willing to face." Learning to face my own inner reactions, my own self destructive responses, those that I'd been blaming my parents for, has changed my life. My biggest dream to always "feel well and to dance" has come true.

Recently I returned home to live with my elderly mother, my father died three years ago in his sleep. In forgiving my parents, I'm releasing my own deep self rejection. With this understanding, I can rejoice in my own liberation. Now I want to become the most wonderful wicked grandmother on earth and to write books to my heart's content. My first book is still in draft form, it's a TRUE love story. It's about how I meet a Rainbow Serpent from the Dreamtime and then from faraway shores a handsome Egyptian Prince. The narrative tells how they both win my heart and teach me to be brave.

*Diana Flame, Cairns, Australia & Cairo, Egypt*  
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## Facilitating Happiness

Laughter Yoga and Life Coaching? A few years ago I had no clue what that was all about. And yet, this is what I delved into as I felt nudged forward by unfolding events. Over the past years, while I was still enjoying the sense of safety that a regular paycheck offers, I used my financial freedom to take plenty of classes in exiting places. This, I felt, was the most thrilling thing to do in order to thrive.

Even though I worked as a consultant for causes that were important to me, like intercultural dialogue and human rights, I didn't feel fulfilled. Going through a divorce and entering Menopause unexpectedly was more than a challenge. I sometimes sank into the underworld of depressive states that had the tendency to border on despair over the horror of human misery. Hitting rock bottom got me to seek help from a practitioner of energetic therapies – a loving woman who inspired trust so that I surrendered during a series of healing sessions. A miracle happened: A tumor that was on top of my uterus disappeared. That was so shocking that I knew I needed to learn something important. So I took up courses. During one of them a shiny young woman told me about Life Coaching. Now that rang a bell. When I heard that the Coaching Academy offers free training events, I was off to London.

What happened there on the first day was that another lovely lady sat next to me and told me out of the blue that her sister was a "happiness facilitator". I sat up, now totally alert, and wrote down in big letters these two words that held so much magic for me. "Wow, this is what I want to do too", said a little voice in my head. While I forgot about this, as I became busy with enrolling in the academy and studying for my certification, the universe didn't. Two years later a close friend of mine posted a link about World Laughter Day on my facebook page. When I went on that website, I knew this was it. Soon enough I was on a plane to India for the teacher training delivered by the founder of this fantastic movement. Half a year later my work contract was surprisingly not prolonged, which turned out to be another blessing. I felt I was being lead to take a leap, not only into yet another career change but to realize my goal to work as a soloist. And so I did. Some of my clients said that I inspired them and set them on track. A lady came after a laughter session and said she never laughed that much in her entire life. I intend to do more of that with many people - perhaps by simply making a casual remark or a post - just as these wonderful women did who came into my life at magic moments. My credo now is: Laugh and Thrive!



*Dr. Ute Devika Meinel, Cairo, Egypt*

*[www.LaughandThrive.com](http://www.LaughandThrive.com)*

## Pursuing a Dream as an Artist

I'm an Egyptian girl born in Tokyo, Japan, from two Egyptian parents. I was raised as a child in a totally different culture and tradition to my family's culture, and when we got back to Egypt, we were exposed to different social standards. We were obliged to follow them, especially me and my sister, because we were girls, things were different – we had to comply.



We lived in a small city called Zagazig, although my father had become very neutralized in Japanese society, whilst in Japan, he returned back to the traditional, typical ways of an Egyptian man in his own society.

I had a dream since I was a child to become artist, I was obsessed with Manga and Anime. I started drawing when I was very little, and I knew that art is what I wanted to do with my life. But due to the family pressure, I had to go to Pharmacy College, and study pharmaceutical sciences. Yet I never stopped studying drawing and painting.

After graduation I started taking graphic courses to study graphic design, and I worked for a year as a graphic designer, but left the job. I later worked as a pharmacist but I never gave up on my art - I participated in a comics workshop, which was a best thing for me since I was very passionate about comics, each of us made a comic story about Egyptian revolution. The comic work I created in the workshop was exhibited later in comic salon in Erlangen, Germany, and I was invited there to participate in it, I was also invited to participate in seminar about comics for free, the theme was about "revolution". That was a wonderful experience!

At the time, I was suffering from a major heartbreak that changed my perception of life, and until now I'm still learning from it. The nice thing is that before any of this happened, I was thinking year ago that I would love the opportunity to travel to Germany, and I already started taking few courses to learn German. After few months I forgot about the whole thing, but after year I was invited to Germany!

What happened to me despite the social boundaries, inspired me to go on in pursuing my dream to be an artist, although it is very hard in Egypt to earn your living with art. Its hard to be yourself as an individual woman, but I can do it!

I decided also that it's not too late to study art, and applying for a scholarship to study art in Germany. I'm working on it by studying the German language, and exchanging messages with the professor from art school in Germany.

That recent trip was very inspiring for me, because it synchronized with three visualizations - to go to Germany, my dream to be an artist, and with my passion to explore comics.

Revolution after all - for each person, is their own personal revolution.

Love and happiness to all,

*Mona Said, Cairo, Egypt*

*mindonna.deviantart.com*

## Seven Women – Supporting Grassroots Development in Nepal

Steph Woollard is the founder of Seven Women, a fair trade wholesale and retail business that sells handmade felt and knitted items as part of a grassroots development project that empowers women through income generation.



During a trip to Nepal, Steph met seven women with disabilities who were operating out of a tin shed and experiencing harsh discrimination. Having witnessed the stark contrast between her quality of life and that of many women living in the impoverished country, she felt she had to do something to make a difference. Together with the seven women Steph created a women's skills training centre, where women learn skills that empower them economically.

Fast forward to today and the initial seven women have now taken on managerial roles at the centre, which now employs 460 women, and two men in wheelchairs, who are keen to pass on their skills to others.

Ever since her first trip to Nepal, Steph has been inspired to give back to a country that she feels has given her so much. Steph believes in empowering others to break the cycle of poverty they live in; she has a passion for effective development work and loves public speaking engagements where she can talk about how best to effect change by moving away from the charity model, which can encourage dependency, and embrace methods which empower. "Empowerment is not expensive," she says.

Steph hopes to effect positive change in many communities in the future by applying the same principles of empowerment that she used with Seven Women. In the meantime, she is establishing a wholesale business to create more demand for the Nepalese women's project.

Steph's passion and determination to make a difference was recognised recently when she was selected to take part in the Foundation for Young Australians' 2011 Young Social Pioneers program. The 12-month training and development program supports, educates and equips young social change makers with the tools they need to successfully manage their project or organisation.

"I'm so happy to have been selected as a 2011 Young Social Pioneer and I'm confident I will gain the knowledge and skills I need to make Seven Women a long-term success," she said.

"Learning from the other Young Social Pioneers and industry experts will help me become a better leader and will hopefully help me to expand Seven Women."

I always have had a natural desire to stand with those who are perceived as less fortunate than ourselves. This desire took me on a volunteering trip to Nepal with Duke of Edinburgh after high school. It also was the reason I returned as a leader of a group of architects with the same organisation a few years later. I stayed on after this trip and a friend of mine said he sister was disabled and had gathered 6 women together and they were operating in a tin shed. I visited this group of women and inquired into why they were living in this situation. They explained to me the stigma they face everyday of their lives for having a disability and that it comes from the accepted belief that if you are disabled in this life you are paying for evils committed in a past life. I returned to the tin shed where they were everyday for a few weeks to get to know them but also to identify how I could most effectively support them to get themselves out of this situation of poverty and isolation.

My dream was born out of a need that I first saw and felt when I met seven women living in a tin shed with no one giving them the first hand up that they needed to change their situation. The practical plan and process we adopted was:

- To pay for the women to get trained in a skill that would allow them to earn an income.
- To pay for brochures of who they were and what they were doing and why it was important to buy the products they were producing and support women with disabilities.
- To perfect quality of the products they were making and design to suit the western market.
- To import and sell the products in Australia, set up a stall with friends at my university at the time (La Trobe) and raise money through the sales of the goods to build bit by bit a Women's Skills Training Centre which included a place for the women to live.
- To allow more women into the facility we had built and have greater impact by providing opportunity to other women with disabilities
- To train and enable the 7 initial women to step up into leadership positions so they were able to employ both women with disabilities and impoverished women then pass on what they had learnt.
- To enrol 50 volunteers australia end to sell products at markets and wholesale to shops.
- To engage others in public speaking events and
- organise Seven Women Study Tours once a year to Nepal where others can become inspired to give effectively and be humbled as I was and continue to be while experiencing the culture and the beautiful people.

My dream became a reality as soon as I saw a need. Injustice has always urged me to act and that is what happened in this situation. It is my dream to be able to impact the lives of others in a way that empowers them to use their skills to create and uplift others, then to hand the project over and start again. It has socially and economically empowered over 460 women and 2 men in wheelchairs who have just joined us. It is having a ripple effect.



*Stephanie Woollard,*

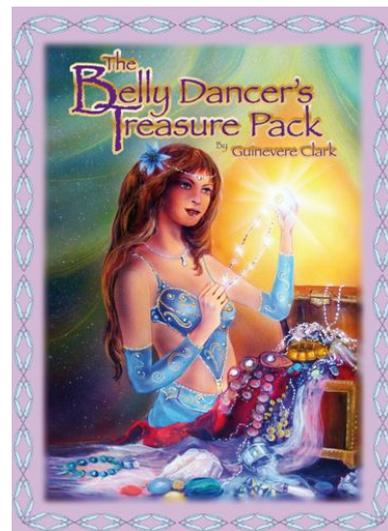
*Victoria, Australia*

*[www.seven-women.com](http://www.seven-women.com)*

## Art to Celebrate Dance, Intuition and Empowerment

The vision that inspired *The Belly Dancer's Treasure Pack* was an urge to celebrate the profound benefits that Belly Dance brings to women. After teaching for many years I found women sharing similar stories of healing, well-being, creativity and friendship, all initiated by their Belly Dance journey. I wanted to encapsulate this in a beautiful, long lasting product that reflected the gifts dance offers and would also inspire more discovery and self-development.

The pack was an idea that originally came from the concept of designing a book called *100 Tips for Belly Dancers*. I quickly evolved this idea into an illustrated guidance book and oracle type card deck for Belly Dancers. Once the vision was born, I spent time developing card titles and sourcing possible art work and artists. It was an exciting time. The project was challenged without a given budget. Also, I had to inspire other people to participate in the vision with their art work. Directing what eventually became a 56 card deck was hard at times but one of the best journeys of my life. It was like an amazing jig-saw puzzle. It felt like it existed and I just had to find the pieces. The pack has turned out to be a gallery of contemporary feminist art with powerful themes of dance and empowerment.



I faced many obstacles to be able to invest in the first pilot print run and chose to let go of and adjust many things to contribute to its manifestation. I changed my regular job, working part-time as a nurse and dancer to complete the project. I moved house into a beautiful part of Wales and lived the dream of a creative writer with my time taken up polishing the card descriptions, affirmations and poems, finally matching all images to the cards and continuing to work the product into the market. I previewed the pack at local dance events and further afield in Italy and Cairo.

Sponsorship, endorsement or direct funding to further the venture was vital to move from the vision to the product being available. I was not successful in applying for local business grants and a local innovation network group proved unfruitful beyond hearing out my idea and suggesting a single prototype pack. As the process developed, the artists started to invest their time and creativity into the project making it more alive. I was deeply compelled for the work to be born. I managed to secure the business interest of Miles Copeland of The Bellydance Superstars. He saw potential in the work and that it offered something new to the world of Belly Dance. He gave me tasks in producing the pack and considered advice on its journey and place in the market. Miles was supportive of the product in media articles as the pack evolved.

The Bellydance Superstars now link into the product through the attachment of a music download to the pack, increasing its market value and the mixed arts nature of the work. The Treasure Pack is stocked in their online and touring store which has taken the product from its conception in Wales to a multi-national market. The pack was finished as a marketable product in April 2011 and was launched hot of the press at St David's Hall Theatre in Cardiff on the Bellydance Superstars world tour under my new publishing house - Baubo Press!

The Treasure Pack had a huge effect on my life. It would have been ironic to talk about trust, inner guidance and self-believe; some of the major themes in the deck and not walk

the talk myself. I placed trust in the universe and through this, entered a chasm of unknown direction, finding the people, resources and environments that supported the vision and the production of the pack. I learnt many new skills from IT and design skills to negotiation and business skills but on a deeper level I learnt to literally follow and nurture my dream. The cards *Ambition* and *Transformation* from the pack greatly inspired me!

Collaboration among female artists from all over the world was the grass roots of the pack's manifestation. I could not always reassure the artists as to when the deck would be produced or how but I did enough and they must have got enough from the words and the core energy of the pack to bring their talent and insight forward. Some artists had prolific boosts to their art production during the project. Many of them are Belly Dancers so had a sensitivity to the nuance and feel of the dance. There is still much potential in exploring the art in the pack on a commercial level, using the work in posters, banners, cards and t-shirts etc. This would need the correct business contract but I would love to see the artist's work evolve even further.

After over three years in the making, I was happy to get busy processing pre-orders and shipping out packs to every corner of the globe. I knew then that the pack was going to take me places and I would travel with it! It seems to transcend language and cultural boundaries. This is partly due to its strong visuals and the succinct card titles. Also, Belly Dance is a developing subject for women in many parts of the world.

The Treasure Pack offers an approach to teaching and practice that is chance based alongside structured exercises to celebrate creativity and empower dancers. I run 'Belly Treasure' workshops at national and international dance events often basing workshops entirely on cards that are pulled randomly. The work keeps me open to creating new frameworks to explore the cards with individuals and in groups. This approach inspires greater trust in my own and others creativity. It devalues the traditional master/student relationship and a paternal framework of knowledge. Instead we join in union and create our learning experience.

The cards guide how we channel our dance and provides excellent visual and personal cues into a deeper understanding of our own divine capacity to dance in harmony with ourselves, others and the greater framework of Belly Dance culture. The level of synchronicity that the cards promote is alive. I pulled a card on the day I found out I was pregnant and I got *Birth!*

*Guinevere Clark, Wales*  
*The Belly Dancer's Treasure Pack,*

[www.baubo.co.uk](http://www.baubo.co.uk)



## The Challenges of being a Dancer in Egypt

I have always danced had recently finished my Acting Superior Course in Portugal/Spain when, "by chance", Oriental Dance came my way. I studied it and started working in Portugal but and wished to go deeper into this art and write a book so that more people would also know about the *real* Oriental Dance. I wished to write it from a knowledge achieved by my direct experience and not through theory like other book in the market. I developed a *mission* to find out about the *true soul* of Egyptian Dance and share it with the world in the shape of my work as a dancer/teacher. I put my entire life in Portugal on hold and headed, all by myself and with no contacts or guides, to Egypt where I aimed to perform in order to learn and collect material for the book.

The first obstacle I found was a law that forbade foreigners from professionally practicing Oriental Dance in Cairo. While this law was being implemented, I performed in different Arabic countries, knowing deep in my heart that my path would lead to Egypt. The law changed, just as I knew it would, and I returned to Cairo to start looking for a contract. However, the obstacles I found were many and extremely hard to face. I found an extremely corrupt environment where prostitution was the main way of getting a job, prejudices and ignorance from Egyptians towards their own dance (which I considered *artistic* and *sacred*), bureaucracy and daily life that went against my own values. People told me I'd never perform in Egypt because I was "too honest" but I proved them wrong...with lots of struggle, perseverance, patience and hard work. I thought I would arrive to Cairo and win the world with my determination, talent and conviction of the mission I had in hand. But reality was harsher, full of turns and setbacks than I could have ever imagined. The more I saw how low Oriental Dance was considered in Egyptian society, the more I wanted to prove people wrong and make my best to help change their perspective.



I've been performing in Egypt for the last six years with great success from local, as well as foreign audiences. I learnt my lessons the hard way before I got my first contract - through a wonderful man called Chaudhri, the only honest man I ever met in this business. He used to work for Oberoi hotels and I consider him my angel because he was the only person who offered me a chance to prove my worth in a professional way. There is a magical point to this story as I am a foreigner but, on stage, Egyptians recognize me as one of their own and support me. I believe life has put lots of obstacles in my way to test my will power, conviction and character as well as to teach me that Oriental Dance is not only about technique and glamour but a personal journey for growth I am grateful to LIFE for the opportunities it has given me because, although they were few, I was lucky enough to have the tools (my body, mind, heart and soul) to make the best of them.

My dream has grown over time. It started with the dream of professionally performing in Cairo with my own orchestra, something I have already achieved. My book - the reason of my move to Egypt - will be published this year. More recently, due to the recognition of my work in Cairo, I've been invited to teach, perform and give conferences on Egyptian dance/music/culture all over the world so I am starting to share my experience/knowledge with the world. I am dreaming about touring with the nucleus of my orchestra and perform/teach with them. The dream keeps growing. I hope to inspire other women who are afraid of stepping out of their comfort zone and fighting for what they want.

*Joana Saahirah, Cairo & Portugal*

## I Experienced my Destiny Unfolding in Egypt



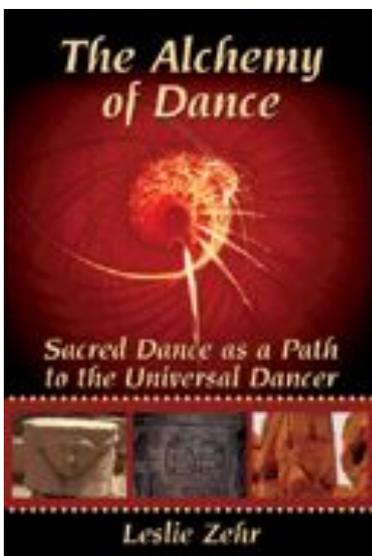
I had been living in Egypt for 16 years when we took a family trip, more like a pilgrimage, to the Osireion at Abydos in Upper Egypt. The Osireion is a very sacred and very powerful temple. It was 2002, a very auspicious moment for me as I was in the midst of my Uranus opposition. All the conditions were in place for a huge shift, one that I wasn't at all aware of.

After Abydos we went to the Red Sea to relax for a few days. It was then that everything began to unfold. Sitting on the beach I felt as if I could see an arc in the sky. It wasn't there visibly, but I could perceive it. I called this 'the Dream' from the Aboriginal mythology of one Destiny being a dream that we dream in an awakened state. Knowing that our Density is a spiral unfolding, like our DNA, I felt I was being shown a small piece of my spiral.

I noticed that if I focused on a single point on the arc it would open, like a 'mouse over' on a website when a popup opens with further information. I saw scenarios, like little films. What was curious was that they all happened in a time 10 years in the future. In each scenario I was speaking about the past, but a past that had not yet occurred in 2002.

I heard myself speak of things I had done, books I had written, and people that I knew, with intimate details about them. It was also from 'the Dream' that I realized for the first time that I would not be married 'forever'. I was devastated. As time unfolded the scenarios began to manifest. Sometimes I had not been shown certain details that I clearly would not have been able to handle. I call them the veils obscuring what I was not ready to see. But when faced with living the events I found the courage to deal with them. I am truly blessed to have been shown this unfolding. Having seen what was coming years before it happened made it more palatable, an adventure, an unfolding of my Destiny, rather than a challenge. I knew I could get through it because I had seen myself do it. I knew where I was going and that there was an end and then a new beginning.

This experience and the wisdom I gained from it about life's unfolding, Destiny, and our role in the universe as individuals changed my life forever. It put me on a new life path one that I HAD to walk alone. What might have seemed like a tragedy or failure from an earthly perspective was experienced as a true gift from the Divine in the expanded perspective.



*Leslie Zehr, Cairo, Egypt (originally from Lima, Peru)*  
Author of *The Alchemy of Dance: Sacred Dance as a Path to the Universal Dancer*

[www.universaldancer.com](http://www.universaldancer.com)

## I Dreamt, I Followed

I have thought about this a lot the past few weeks, I have so many dreams that I have followed, I came to the conclusion that my whole life has been a dream that I have followed. I was not born into a perfect life. Things happened to me as a child that were not right and my family did not know the essence of who I was, there is not one person in my entire family like me. In spite of this I lived a very creative rich life, alone, teaching myself everything that came to me to do. As a child I loved my dream world, I created a life in that dream world. I am nearly 53 and as I reflect back on my life I see that back then I knew about who I was going to become. This is a chapter of my dream.



I dreamt of spirals and waves that move through my body, I dreamt that bellydance mimics the flow of our galaxy and the pattern of life. Fractals reflecting, returning and moving, constantly never ending. I dreamt of the whole self united with the earth and the universe.

I brought these dreams together breathing my way into my bones, fluid system, organs and muscles, my body incarnate. I dance the union of my physical and subtle system and energy fields. I danced this dream for many years alone and with a hand full of others. I dreamed of Egypt, of dancing in the vastness and stillness of the desert. After centuries I returned to Egypt and found my home and family. I found Isis in the temple of Dendara. The Daughters of Isis danced with me. Isis gathered the scattered pieces of my dream and danced them together.

I dreamt to share the depth of Embodied Bellydance with many beyond the special few. Now the dream is coming true. The Seed is has sprouted and is pushing through the earth to see the light of day. Over the years I cleansed myself of fear and reached out. I gave my dream to the will of my Higher Power and the Universe responded. I have received gift after gift and for this I am beholden in gratitude.

Dreams come true when we dare to be authentic and to stay with them no matter how difficult the road my seem. When we chose to go out on a limb and stay with the calling of our hearts.

Dreams come true when we have the courage to keep believing and to reach out toward the dream. Dream come true when they are about the good of all, not just ourselves. Dreams are the fabric of our reality, they are the truth. They may take years to come true but they do come true. They always come true.

*Maria Sangiorgi, Italy*  
[www.embodiedbellydance.com](http://www.embodiedbellydance.com)

## De-coding a Traditional Method for Dance

Isolations. Fractional shimmies. Dancer-attributed labeled dance steps and movement. A system for teaching belly dance was already in place, and it had so strongly taken hold that no one seemed to want to change it or even challenge it. But that system didn't work for me. In fact, none of it made any sense to me. I had studied the dance with my teacher Jodette as it was danced by the Egyptian Greats; Taheyia Karioka, Samia Gamal, Suhair Zaki, Nagwa Foad, and so many others. Watching these greats along with Jodette was nothing like watching non-Egyptians dance. I mean, what Egyptian celebrates life in dance only to have to remember to isolate parts of her/his body before dancing? I discovered that Egyptians hear and feel the beat of the music altogether differently from us, here in the West. What I discovered was that there was a very unique dance expression in their celebration, something I have called the Egyptian Dance Code®. I began teaching my method privately, but when posting about what I had discovered on the different belly dance forums, I was often slammed and ridiculed. So I no longer posted on these forums, as it became too painful to read the responses.

I wanted to establish and propose a different way of thinking about the dance and to change the status quo of it as well as the labels everyone was using. So, I developed a one-year curriculum, partitioned into four three-month or 12-week semesters. Each movement, I noticed, was comprised of simple basic elements that when put together in different ways make up different movements. These elements, I also noticed, remained constant throughout the dance. Realizing this new approach and way of thinking about the dance opened the door to a completely new way of teaching and labeling each dance movement. In keeping with my discovery, I labeled each step pragmatically and steered away from the generic terms that are being used today by my teaching peers. I knew I would still come up against resistance, but I also knew that I would be creating quality dancers because I was able to prove via old Egyptian movie dancer greats that this method was correct.

Soon, I had women calling to study with me once they saw the results of my efforts on my graduates who began performing first at my restaurant, Al-Masri, in San Francisco. I even had seasoned dancers who were frustrated with their progress and dancers who were just curious, all from other studios, attend my one-year course. While this approach is controversial and often labeled as "crazy", each one of my students has progressed in such a way that their dance has changed just by thinking about it differently. No isolations. No fractional shimmies. No dancer-attributed labeled dance steps and movement. Just a different approach with appropriate labels. It has changed the lives of many of my graduates who continue to dance and perform as well as teach this method, and it has changed my life in knowing that I am teaching this dance authentically and correctly, keeping and maintaining the dance with the deepest and most profound respect that this dance deserves.

*Sausan Al Masri, San Francisco, California, USA*  
[www.sausanacademy.com](http://www.sausanacademy.com)





## From Burn Out to Balance

Here is my story, it is maybe not perfect English but.....

In 2009 I was burned out the 3rd time. First time, a divorce, second, my fourth pregnancy and third after my car ran over me and broke my pelvis, symphysis and back. I needed wheelchair for some time and had to start all over again. I've bellydanced for 17 years, with 10 of those years as a teacher with my own school. It took me 7 years from the time of the first 'burn out' until I found balance.

Phoenix, the Firebird, is an ancient Egyptian fabled animal and a symbol of rebirth. According to legend, Phoenix lives between 500-1000 years. Towards the end of its life it flies to the holy city of Heliopolis where it builds a nest of myrrh in the temple of the Sun God Ra. At sunrise ignites the nest of the morning sun's glow and both nest and bird burn and become ash. From the ashes resurrected Phoenix as a young, new bird that rises to the sky. The name Phoenix Dance was chosen because I can draw a parallel between the legend of the bird Phoenix and my life. My life was a rollercoaster and I hit the ground, got burned out and then rose from my ashes. After getting back to life I re-emerged as a new and more whole person. After years of uncertainty about the future, I have during the time as burned out learned to see things from new perspectives, hatched my future visions and I have made several large and realistic goals and objectives for the future. Being burned out gave me wisdom about life and reality, and there was also a gateway for future. Though I never thought I could dance again, that was actually my future path. This is what I like and am good at - teaching and give of my knowledge to others.

I live in Norway, a small country where it takes time to grow new things. Still, in September, a dance colleague and I are going on a health congress to talk about what bellydance and our concepts can do for women. There will be psychologists, doctors, patients, scientists etc listening to us. The event theme is – co-incidentally - 'Dreams'.

Phoenix Dance is a concept where I use my background as a dancer/teacher/therapist and my life experience to meet women where they are in life. Through bellydance and NLP Coaching the goal is personal growth. I start the class with breathing exercises, meditation, allowing muscles of the body 'to get to know' movement pattern, making the participant aware about their own thought patterns and feelings etc. We dance and improvise and also 'play' and do therapy dance work with veils. We work to intergrate the feminine and masculine forces to get in ourselves in balance.

I realized that we have far more resources than I thought was possible, and that we can bring up even more as time comes. To stand up after a fall can be hard, but by looking at the goal, take a settlement with the old patterns and make a tremendous personal effort to get up and out - can anyone who wants it, move exactly where they want to be. As long as we do something for ourselves and not put the responsibility on others, we'll be okay. I am here to make a difference, both for myself and for others by offering something that is effective and comprehensive for our health. My goal is to lift up others so they may find themselves and their lifeforce through the dance and get an even better life. It's all about getting in good condition mentally and physically, and it always begins with YOU taking the first step.

*Sol Eilertsen, Norway*

## A Woman of Courage

In my early 30's I was trapped in a very controlling, emotionally and sexually abusive marriage. I had two young children, was overweight, with no self-esteem. My mother-in-law offered to give me a car if I would help in her new maid service. I jumped at the chance.....the freedom of a car and a bit of money of my own! My next step was to join a bellydance class, I thought it looked like a fun way to get fit. I had no idea what it was, I'd just always loved dancing. Little did I know that it would change my life completely! I felt joy for the first time in years, the music touched my soul. My teachers saw something in me and encouraged me to take private lessons. Within two years I was asked to join their professional Lebanese dance troupe.....I was so happy! Then, my world collapsed.....I discovered my husband had molested our daughter. I lost my job around the same time, and dancing became my therapy and my lifeline.

It took a few years of professional counselling and spiritual awareness searching to turn my life around. I learned a lot from Oprah's 'Change Your Life' inspirational shows, I took a course through the women's centre, and along with teaching and performing developed my self-esteem and confidence. I loved the opportunity to awaken other women to the magic of bellydance and what it could do for them.....physically, emotionally and spiritually. I developed and produced a bellydance fitness DVD to make it available to all women. I wanted to use the music that had touched my soul and had been trying for a year to find the musician Raja to get the rights. I went to a bellydance retreat in Hawaii hosted by a dancer Delilah, who had been on one of Raja's videos. I thought she could help, but she'd lost touch with him. A few weeks after my return, she e-mailed to say Raja had e-mailed her 'by accident' and she told him about me. A magical synchronicity!

I have had many miracles happen in my life to bring me to my present, blissfully joyful place! I took many leaps of faith, faced my biggest fears about being able to support myself, and now use my life experiences to show other women how they can rise above adversity and thrive. I received a "Woman of Courage" award last year and that helped me to realize how I have impacted other women by being an example and inspiration. My company is called "Goddess Emerging" and that's what bellydancing does.....it brings women to discover their inner goddess. I have a beautiful dance studio attached to the side of my charming Victorian farmhouse. I feel that I am in paradise every day! I also teach 5 Tibetan Yoga/meditation classes, and offer various workshops with guest instructors. Life is wonderful!

*Tahira Badre*  
*Goddess Emerging Studio*  
*[www.goddessemerging.com](http://www.goddessemerging.com)*





## **My Sense of Value Regained**

In 2000, at the age of 30, I left an abusive relationship. After two years of suffering physical, emotional, and sexual abuse leaving it challenged me to gain control over my own life. Abuse breaks a person down, and trying to pick up broken pieces is even harder. The nature of domestic violence is especially demeaning to female victims, when control is used to undermine her inherent sense of value. Determined to improve my life, and spurred by survival instinct and a surge of strength, I put things back in order. This included getting a new job, signing up at the gym with a personal trainer, and beginning Bellydance. I had searched for

Middle Eastern bellydancing classes before, but trying something new would have been the source of more ridicule, for certain, in the relationship. But I knew that in it I would recover some of my lost sense of self. During my first class I felt empowered. It was a vague sense of power and rebellion, embracing something that I had forbidden myself. I had been working out for a few months, and was ready for the mental and physical challenge of the new approach to my body - doing something just for me, unique to my female self.

I was taking my body back, and my mind soon followed. Dancing began to overpower memories of slaps, chokes, and injurious words. My body was capable of expressing itself in hip shimmies, hip circles, strong abdominal movements, and graceful choreography! The spirit of the dance invoked timeless feminine qualities: grace, strength, beauty, and subtle erotic expression. Bellydance with its ancient, timeless use of the body in a specifically female form of expression and art, boosted my confidence, my acceptance of my own opinions, freed the trapped energy of guilt, tension, and shame fostered by abuse. It responded to shimmies, abdominal rolls, and hip circles with tighter ab muscles, stronger hips, and more sensual expressiveness. The music would take me to unexplored times and cultures, connecting me with centuries of history in which women used dance to increase the energy of fertility and spiritual female bonding.

Bellydance has been a passion and spiritual path for ten years. It has spearheaded many positive changes and challenges in my life. Early in 2011, I began another journey. After fifteen years of living in a Southern state, I felt I was not growing in many areas of my life and moved to the East Coast. I was tired of hiding my true identity as a dancer and woman in roles that I wore to appease the outside world and small-minded opinions. In moving I have taken on a totally new career and many other mental and emotional changes. Once again, by embracing change, I challenge myself to push beyond oppression by uncovering internal strength. I want to continue studying with the world-class teachers here, spur myself to grow socially and professionally, and boldly go after all the dreams I have inside.

*Viola Nelson*  
*Newark, New Jersey, USA*

## A Book of Seeds and Bag of Prayers



It's been nearly a year since I've started working on this project; it's called "the Little Book of Seeds"; I make notebooks and paint their covers with the intention that whatever is written in them with love will come to life like a seed thrown into fertile grounds to grow to fruition and nurture everyone. I believe that it is important to really see the seed in our minds; to dream... The name comes from "the Seed of Life" a sacred geometry pattern that is the basic component of the "Flower of Life" which is said

to contain the blueprint of the universe. It is also an amazingly beautiful reminder of our interconnectedness.

I remember, once, I was on my way to Sinai. I was somehow feeling confused, like I needed to reassure myself and really know where I was standing. Sometimes I feel I'm childish. Working on my project felt like it wasn't enough compared to the jobs that the people around me were having. But then something happened as soon as I first arrived at the camp. In the main hut, I was about to sit down when I found a notebook right on the cushion where I was going to sit. I picked it up and to my surprise; the notebook had a sticker of a picture of 'me' on it! Later on, I knew that this notebook belonged to a girl who was also making notebooks! She was friends with my friend who shot my picture. This felt like a sign that I was on the right track...

It wasn't however the first or the last sign I've had about those little magical books of seeds; On New Year's Eve, in Sinai also, I've asked to be shown a new way of exchange as an alternative for money. The next morning, I was just done with a gift – a book of seeds - that my friend and I were making for the owner of the camp (hag Ezz), when a man with an English accent approached me and asked me if I felt connected to Tibet. I started telling him about my dream in which I've met a Tibetan monk who drew me a diagram; showing the Earth shifting and evolving as a being, and how we too as beings can evolve and acknowledge our oneness... The English man then handed me a bag, inside it were the so called 'Tibetan prayer flags' and said that he at first wanted to give them to El hag Ezz but then he felt I'd appreciate them more. His gift to me had surprisingly enough, the same colors and the same idea of my gift to the owner of the camp, 'the book of seeds'.

Thinking about it, I realized that the answer to my New Year's prayer is to give without expectations, "to give for the joy of it" and that the universe will take care of the rest because, in reality, we are all interconnected, we are One.

*Zeinab Kamal, Giza, Egypt*  
*[littlebooksofseeds.blogspot.com](http://littlebooksofseeds.blogspot.com)*

## Traveling to follow my Heart

I have always believed in being able to live my dreams, since I was a young child. I don't know why I felt this way, but I know that so many things are possible if you just believe they are possible. I was raised in a small, predominantly Mexican-American community in California. I used to read fashion magazines – drawing and dreaming of escaping to the big city, having money, and traveling and seeing the world. I did not know any other family member or person who did this, but I was an avid reader and read about many things in the world and I wanted to leave my city and explore what I read about. Most people from my community dreamed of having a good job, getting married, and having a family. I just knew this was not what was waiting for me in life, and at 17 when I graduated early from high school, I went to college in Los Angeles to study fashion design. This was phase one of living my dreams and I loved Los Angeles and the fast pace of the city, Hollywood and all that the city offered in terms of culture and nightlife and excitement.

After I graduated college I wanted to move to New York to become a fashion designer. I didn't have money to move, but I had a desire. I spoke to a friend of mine and we were talking about what I wanted to do, and I told her I wanted to move to New York to become a fashion designer, but I didn't have any money or contacts to do that. She said to me "You have an apartment full of nice furniture and a car, sell your stuff and move to New York". That was a big ah-ha moment for me. So I listed my car for sale, dragged all of my stuff out of my apartment onto the street and tried to sell everything but I wasn't having any luck. By chance, a friend of mine happened to drive by with her friend from Atlanta who had just arrived to LA to make her dreams come true. She bought everything from me right there on the spot. It was cosmic and I couldn't believe my luck because I was really tired of standing on that street corner trying to sell everything I owned. A few days later I bought a one way ticket to New York and I stayed for five years. This is where I was introduced to my next love in my life, belly dance, and I trained with Bobby Farrah and Yousry Sharif. I eventually moved back to LA and had a great career in film as a costume designer and belly dancer.

In 2008, while living in LA again, I was itching to do something different. I was dancing every weekend, still doing costume work occasionally, and working in real estate as well. The market had been good to me, I wanted to invest and I did, but I saw the crash coming so I went to a seminar. They asked the question, "If you had all the time, all the money, and every comfort in your life, what would you be doing?" The only thing I could think of was "Dance in Cairo". This, they said, is what you are supposed to be doing. Well how could I move to a third world country, where I don't know the language and or how to stay without working papers, and what am I supposed to do with my business, and my dance company, and my houses and my cats and all of my furniture in my 4 bedroom house? It was overwhelming to think about but in October 2008 I moved to Cairo and have been living and working here ever since. I experienced a revolution, fell in love, traveled, I teach, and I'm doing pretty good life living the life of my dreams. It hasn't always been easy to follow my dreams and people will sometimes say I'm crazy, but I wouldn't have it any other way.



*Aleya Pena, Cairo, Egypt (originally from USA)*

[www.aleyabellydance.com](http://www.aleyabellydance.com)

*Thank you*

*to all the inspiring women  
who contributed to this book  
and shared their stories.*

*Keti Sharif*

*This e-book is free  
Please share!*