

Wellbeing Writing with Marissa McCallam



Marissa is a Body and Mindset Coach, Social Entrepreneur, Workshop Facilitator and Podcaster.

Using her years of study in self-development, experience as a performer and work across multiple sectors, she helps performers and creatives discover what they want, decide how to go for it, and feel like they deserve it.

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO YOUR CURRENT WORK WITH DANCERS AND COACHING?

I have always loved performance and dance from a young age. I distinctly remember watching a VHS of The Wizard of Oz on repeat as a small child trying to learn the Tinman dance and making up routines in the playground with my friends. Any opportunity to perform at school assemblies or entertain my family, I was there! Formal training wasn't financially available to me and so I was mostly self-taught. I lost touch with dance when I left university and it wasn't really until my late 20's, after a period of depression, that I rediscovered it – joining a local dance crew and constantly being reminded of the universal, healing, magical power of dance.

Outside of my 9-5 job in the corporate sector, I became a freelance dancer and also ran

projects focused on another passion of mine – well-being and self-development. This led to the set-up of my youth platform, *Centre Myself*, which took a fun and holistic approach to increasing confidence in young people.

There came a point where I became tired of cramming my passion projects into evenings and weekends so, I decided to leave my sales career and transition fully into becoming a Coach and Social Entrepreneur.

I dedicated myself to years of studying Self Development, Coaching, Mindset and Somatic practices, and along the way felt myself consistently drawn back to the support of performers and creatives. This was magnified by Covid-19 where dancers faced what had already historically been portrayed as a tough sector to thrive in, becoming even more limited. Their income was threatened and their profession dismissed as disposable. This was all in combination with not being able to share their passion, physically connect with others and, for many, an unanticipated period of reflection: What does dance give me? Who am I when I'm not performing?

I felt called to do what I could to support performers in navigating these aspects. When the world began opening up again, I wanted to create opportunities for them to explore themes such as comparison, outside validation, social expectations and challenges in terms of diversity and representation.

This led me to create free online workshops, real-time sessions, and dedicated podcast episodes – all with a view to help dancers transform from struggling artists to thriving performers.

WHAT IS BODY AND MINDSET COACHING? HOW MIGHT A TYPICAL SESSION LOOK? WHAT DOES A COACHING EXPERIENCE WITH YOU INVOLVE?

Body and Mindset Coaching is about embracing the connection between our bodies and mindset to lead a healthier, consistently happier life.

My work draws on a variety of influences and is specifically tailored for performers and creatives, recognising that the struggle to stay motivated, inspired, and healthy can be incredibly challenging for a lot of artists. The aim is to increase their ability to be resilient, positively draw from their resources and build their sense of self-trust despite outside circumstance.

Themes that often come up in sessions are:

- Fear around the expectations of or judgement from others
- Lack of career control
- Undervaluing work (financially and emotionally)
- Unhealthy lifestyle and relationships
- Procrastination
- Burnout
- And self-criticism

I offer both 1-1 coaching and group workshops.

1-1 offers a dedicated, intimate space for people to feel seen and heard.

Depending on the challenge that the performer is trying to navigate, I use a variety of mindset and body-oriented techniques. The aim of these is to raise self-awareness, deepen exploration and uncover insights so that they can move forward in a positive, resourced way. Session length can vary – ranging from a single session for a burst of clarity, or longer-term journeys for larger unfolding experiences. If required, between session support is also available in terms of email and messenger check-ins and hypnosis recordings.

In a group setting, we explore issues prevalent in the performance world such as visibility, comparison, entrepreneurial mindset, and saying 'No'.

I facilitate discussion and practical activities that encourage the use of group wisdom. This is also a space to show how we can all draw on the wealth of collective experiences to realise we're not alone, feel supported, and have powerful personal insights. As well as my own group programmes, organisations invite me in as a collaborator to provide complementary self-development offerings to groups (e.g., students, project participants, staff).

HOW CAN DANCERS BENEFIT FROM THIS APPROACH AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF THEIR CAREER (CAREER TRANSITION, JUST AFTER GRADUATING)?

I've found that this work supports people in all areas of the dance industry, from students to organisational leaders, the self-taught to the classically trained.

In most cases, dancers find themselves facing a period of change in their life which can bring about fear of the unknown.

It may be that they want support in stepping into something new or through a period of growth and widening of experience. Body and Mindset Coaching can help them to build confidence in their ability to navigate uncertainty, gain perspective and tap into resilience. It can guide them to raise self-awareness, breaking unhelpful thought patterns and habits that get in the way of achieving what they want.

Sometimes it may be that they desire to reignite their passion, build healthier boundaries or feel more fulfilled. My aim is to create spaces where they can explore all of this, consistently remind themselves of their innate worth and listen to their inner wisdom. This can help them to make choices that support the positive vision they have for their life.

WHERE CAN PEOPLE GO TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BODY AND MINDSET COACHING FOR DANCERS AND PERFORMERS?

People can find out more about Body and Mindset Coaching for Performers and Creatives on my website www.marissamccallam.com

