

We see in this story that Joseph had a pretty amazing individual relationship with God. But then, Each of you do too;

The way I see it, God and I are dance partners in the everchanging daily act of creation—at least in my little corner of the world. Sometime God leads, sometimes I lead.... Well, if I was to be really honest, I would have to say, I TRY and lead most of the time usually without knowing what I am doing. But I have a very patient dance partner.

For me this is a uniquely Jewish way of thinking—we are active partners in shaping our world. When we come to the beginning of this passage, Joseph has just buried his father. THIS is where he starts.... In the tango of grief. Completely exposed. Every mad, sad, guilty, overwhelmed, out of control, rage-filled, jealous, fearful, heart-broken, exhausted part of --being human with loss.

Then comes the part that STUNS me...the unbelievable idea in the middle of this maelstrom--- JOSEPH'S BROTHERS ask him to FORGIVE them for being the ultimate definition of jerks. You know, like beating him up and then selling him into slavery. Pretty jerky.

First, Joseph says 'hey guys you'll have to take that up with God, but then he talks about their bad action ultimately becoming a miraculous good.

And here's where I start thinking about the whole dance partner thing—Yes, God starts the dance and sends some cool dreams to Joseph --fat cows, skinny cows...first step of the dance. But Joseph took the next step himself. He decided to not grumble about not having slept well. Nope, he shared his dreams and ended up saving the lives of thousands from starvation. He moved creation forward without knowing the outcome because he chose to be in the moment and to take part in the dance that shaped that moment Joseph looks at his brothers. God stands to the side. It's Joseph's choice. ...one choice of many he could make. Joseph chooses FORGIVENESS—

I think he forgives--- not for his brothers—though they are very pleased about that, it's not for God, No, Joseph forgives for HIMSELF. He has, after all, been on his journey for a very long time. He knows about being connected.... Like really connected-- to all the joy and the gunk and the right now. He knows he can't really be present and connected with the weight in his heart... of anger from the past or fear of the future. God waits for him, is Joseph going to live in the intensity of creation? here? --now?

YES. Joseph is ready to dance like never before and so is his dance partner.

This passage is really painful and personal for me. My sister, the person I loved the most in this world, died in June. And I can't dance. I can't hear that small clear voice. And as I talked with Joseph, it became clear and scary to even admit why.

I am angry. I am angry at God. I am angry because I don't understand why I lost my sister or what else I could have done. I can't dance because like Joseph I have to choose— I have to actively choose to forgive-myself for not being able to understand and forgive my dance partner, God because I will never understand loss and love. And I sure want God to make it all easier.

So, what I want to do right now. With Joseph on one side, God on the other and all of you because I know the love in your hearts, all of you embracing me. I want to empty my fear and anger. I want to be OPEN to the things I will never understand. I'll still be sad and mad and all that human stuff but I know with your help, I will dance again.

May Joseph remind us all how to dance with abandon, right now, right here, with a heart ready for anything. Shana Tova