

Nothing is impossible



A conversation with **Danielle Aris** – fine art professional, Pilates instructor, and New Yorker with Polish roots.

You love ballet. When did this fascination begin?

I've had many beginnings in ballet, though some of my first steps in life were dancing into the arms of my grandfather, who was born in Łódź, Poland. My father put me on his and my German grandmother's dining table. The tablecloth and chairs were covered entirely in plastic – that was the era! I danced towards him in my onesie and learned from a young age that every milestone was a celebration. My first class was at age 2 or 3.

In one of your interviews, you said that ballet is like prayer. What do you mean by that?

Prayer comes in many forms. Ballet offers me space – inner and outer – to connect with myself, and therefore, the divine. Ballet is very deliberate and intentional, and yet it requires passion and imagination to reach its artistic potential. By staying in calm dialogue with my body and mind, I can transmute

my emotions into creative expression. And I cannot think of a better way to connect with Gd than that. That is where my truest essence comes out.

You love ballet. What does ballet teach you about discipline, hard work and staying strong?

That it's all worth it! The endless doctor appointments, the questioning of yourself when you can't see if you're going anywhere – it's all worth it. On this roller coaster ride, ballet has taught me to keep perspec-

I had my first ballet classes when I was two or three years old.

tive. Sure, for each milestone rendered, they required practice, commitment, and a lot of tough days. But looking back, the community I was building is what I truly remember from those experiences.

When I was diagnosed with a condition which answered why I was suffering so much in my dancing, it felt like freedom to finally address it. It was a lot of work, but it helped me work smarter, not harder. I got to know my body better and how to take care of it so I could train at peak performance. My main message: take life one step at

When you want more from life, you come to New York.

a time so that you can discover yourself and the world around you. Don't skip the in-between steps because of impatience. They will guide you towards your destination. ►

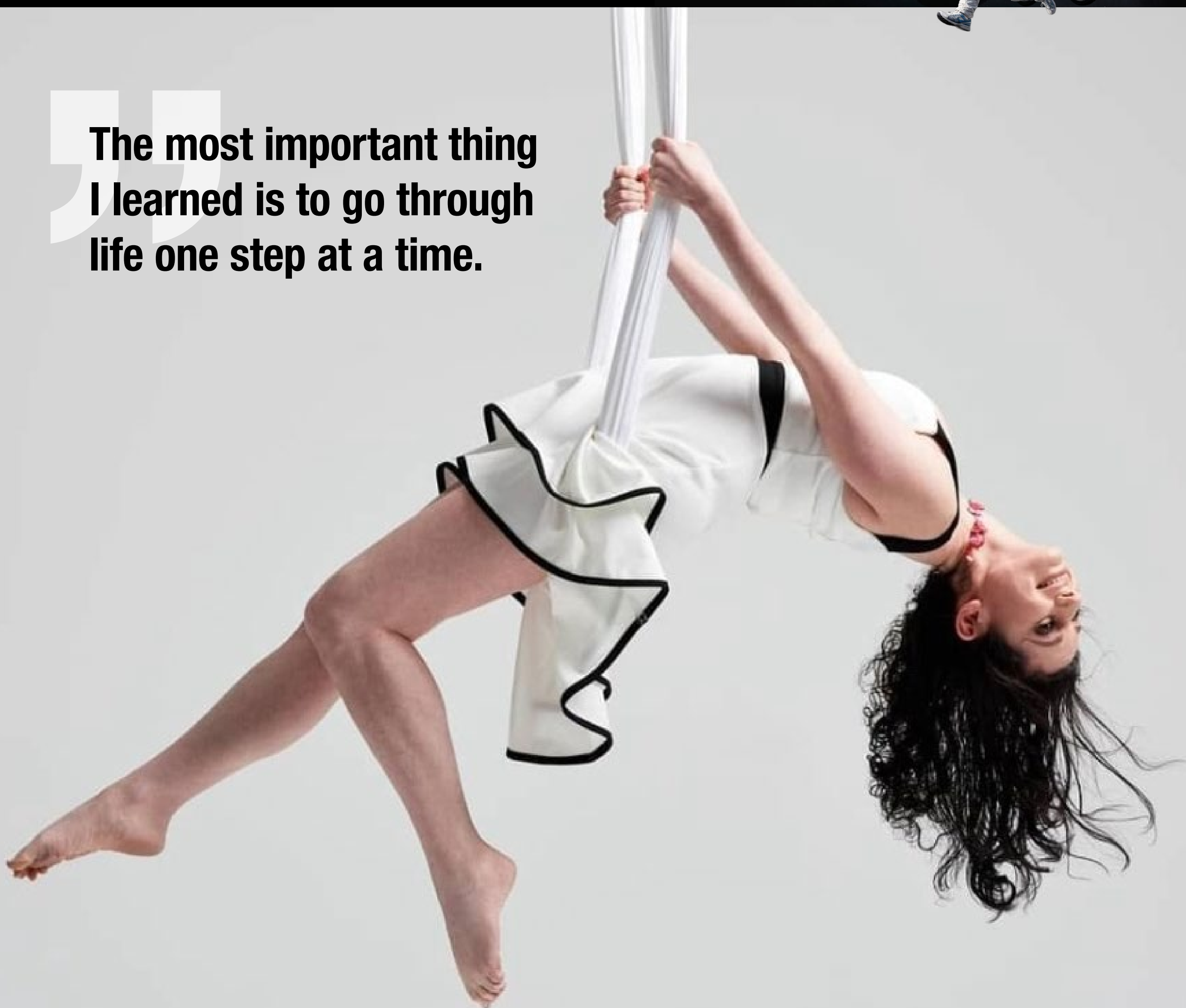


For Danielle, ballet is a passion.





The most important thing I learned is to go through life one step at a time.



You are very involved in sport. You are also a Pilates instructor. What does physical activity give you in your life?

It gives me a sense of purpose. I was definitely born to bring people joy from the stage. I like to express explosive movements that are grounded in style but control. That requires training. Each time I walk into the studio, it's a call to be present with my body as it is in that moment. My movement serves as a medium to express that which cannot be put into words. I get to share in the community of dancers, all while owning the fact that there is only one me. What a gift.

If you join a team, the sense of community will be priceless. If you choose an individual path, it is worth finding a mentor or coach you can trust.

After all these years of training, everything is artistic movement to me. The way I move my hands when I speak, how I swing my backpack on in the morning, the way I drop my keys down at night – there is a language to it, and it's unconscious – and I love that it defines who I am.

You live in New York City. Does this city give you energy and motivation to do sport? I saw many runners and cyclists in the streets and in Central Park. Do New Yorkers also love sport?

Absolutely! The contrast of people struggling, next to people who have everything, next to people who have all but a dream – there's something about that

juxtaposition that makes this city so alive. That's what I love about it. When you want more, you come to New York. I think when I started to run into my favorite ballet stars on the street, on the train, and they gave me this knowing look asking me who I was, and that they saw something in me, that's when the electricity started to show me: if they can do it, I can do it.

Many people want to start a new sports challenge, but are afraid. What advice would you give them?

First, give yourself credit for being so brave! It takes courage to make art and to learn an athletic sport. If you join a team, the camaraderie will be priceless. If you choose to go solo, make sure that you're working with a mentor or coach whom you can trust. The confidence will come after you act on this endeavor – and it is so worth it. Remember that you don't have to limit yourself to a single identity – if you try one sport, and you decide that it's not for you, you can always switch. The ultimate goal is to find something that lights you up and commit yourself to that. Because you deserve to live a life of process that you love, daily. Allow your ►





PHOTO: ROMAN SZEWCZYK



In New York, many people take part in different sports activities. Athletes can most often be seen in Central Park.

unique process to unfold so that it is yours. No one can take that essence from you; that is your light. Let it shine through everything that you do. The

Doing sports or creating art requires great courage. If you join a team, the sense of community will be priceless.

world can't afford to miss out on the magic of what makes you who you are.

I would like to recall the words of Audrey Hepburn, one of my favorite actresses and a true icon of fashion and style: “Nothing is impossible, the word itself says ‘I’M POSSIBLE’!”

Interview by Roman Szewczyk ●



Danielle works at the United Nations.

Danielle Aris is an Independent Fine Art Professional. She works at the United Nations and is also a professional Pilates instructor. Danielle has Polish roots — her grandfather was born in Łódź. He and his family survived the Holocaust. Grandfathers parents were a university educated business woman and a mechanical engineer. She’ve been to Poland before but never been in Łódź, her grandfather’s hometown.

