

HOW TO BECOME A GREAT LEADER ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Becoming a great leader on the dance floor is a lofty goal with many rewards.

It's also within the reach of anyone willing to pursue this elusive skill.

There are two key ingredients to becoming a great leader:

- 1) Connection
- 2) Clarity

On this issue will be concentrating on the first Key ingredient - "Connection".

CONNECTION

In order to lead someone you first need to establish a connection with that person.

Without connection any attempt to lead will feel abrupt and unsettling.

In order to establish connection with another person, you first need to be connected within yourself. The best way to develop your inner connection is by consciously focusing on your core area (one inch above your waist line to one inch below).

Your core area connects your entire body and provides it with a dynamic tension that adjust to the speed and power of your movements. As you practice concentrating on your core area you will feel your inner connection increase.

Establish connection within yourself before asking a partner to dance and when you touch their hands they will feel that connection and respond to it. They won't know why, they'll just know that for some reason they dance better when they dance with you. You will be aiming to connect from your core area to theirs; the hands and arms just help transmit that intention.

A good exercise is to concentrate on your core area until you feel your arms and body connected. Put your hands in front of you (as if you are holding a tray). Now, with your feet side by side (about shoulder width apart), start transferring your weight from one leg to the other - make sure as you transfer weight that your arms and columns are connected and are part of the weight transfer.

Now try this exercise with your partner in front of you; the palms of your hands are up and your partner's are down; connect the hands at the fingertips (your arms will provide a little tension upward and when done properly she will provide a reciprocal tension downward that will maintain your fingertip connection).

Start moving from one leg to the other making sure that you are communicating the weight transfer - not merely moving your hands from side to side, but keeping your body connected and transferring your weight with your entire body columns.

As you practice the above exercise you will feel a connection with your partner as you move from one leg to the other. Since the hands are moving you might think the hands are doing the leading - try now disconnecting the core and lead only with the hands and you will notice that *only her hands will follow your hands and not her entire body.*

The above exercise will do wonders for your connection within yourself and with your partner.

At the beginning you will feel a bit stiff as you move with your partner from one leg to the other; this, however, is okay. Soon you will establish a solid connection that will make this action as natural as breathing.

Connection is an elusive quality; and like a pilot before take off, it's usually a good practice to have a check-list of steps to help make sure we dance connected.

- * Concentrate on your core area to develop your inner connection.
- * Establish a fingertip connection with your partner as soon as you touch their hand by providing a little lift upwards with your arms. You are aiming to connect from your core to their core.
- * Make sure you are connected with your partner as you get in dance position by maintaining the upward lift.
- * Both of you should lean slightly forward towards each other in order to maintain connection while moving.
- * Once you start dancing, you will be alternating between leading and following your partner's movement to insure you maintain a continuous connection.

Becoming a good leader is not something you learn - it's something you continually improve. Work on your connection and you will be on your way to becoming a great leader and a very popular dance partner.

Happy dancing,

Blanche & Emilio