**Doing… The Right Thing**

We know people who are just looking for dancing as a social outlet. “Doing” for them is going to local events for a night out, loving the music and mixing with the crowd. Some may occasionally perform in a local showcase. A little variation or imperfection is not an issue; they come mostly to have fun. Those of you subscribing to Outside Change are primarily competitors. Doing it right is not only a desire but a requirement for professional success and personal satisfaction.

Partners need to work together to find the most constructive learning process in doing steps for the pleasure of one another and the audience. Do you tend to get in a comfort zone and hesitate to try something new? You won’t know if it works for you until you do it. And remember, the first few times you try you are still in a learning mode. Whatever your objectives are, doing the steps correctly usually brings the most enjoyment to your partner and to you personally. Making sure you “lock in” the correct step, pattern or transition, then practicing and practicing again will help ensure satisfaction and success on the competition floor.

Following the line of dance is one of the basic right things to do in dance etiquette. I am fortunate that my instructor/partner is a master at floor craft. (See link below.) He not only follows the line of dance but is at all times aware if someone else isn’t and maneuvers us accordingly if we are caught in a corner or have a close brush as couples dance by each other. Even in a crowded studio for lessons, in 6 ½ years we have never bumped into anyone. I am sensitive to respond to his lead, even going on and off the dance floor in a timely and gracious manner. At a competition, being on time for your heats is a first in “doing it right” as well as coming off the floor in an orderly fashion. I recently observed a professional competition where a dancer’s delayed exit caused displeasure of the announcer as well as disorder for dancers on the floor. Remember, what you do (or don’t do) affects your partner, fellow dancers, and the audience.

Respect and communication are basic to doing it right, whether in the dance venue or in public. The evening following my performance at an international competition, I went into town for dinner with a friend. A family stopped by our table, recognizing me from the dance event. I realized I was in the spotlight whether on the ballroom floor or a casual encounter. A trophy is important, but “doing . . . the right thing” is not only a dance style but a lifestyle, the effects going way beyond an awards ceremony. Whether you dance as an amateur, professional or pro-am, people are watching. Doing the right step is primary as a dancer, but “practicing / doing” the right thing (i.e. basic courtesy) is an extension of your identity on and off the dance floor.

<http://archives.dance/2012/02/27/floor-craft-a-lost-art/>