**Failure or Forward?**

Most of us strive to be 1st; we will settle for nothing less. The reality is that for you to be first there are many others who come in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and so on… There is a price to pay to be first. If you’ve been around the ballroom floor more than 1,000 times, you know what that means. We each have a goal. When and where we achieve it depends on a creative combination of planning, training, partnership, event selection, external circumstances, fellow competitors, and evaluation standards. When I fall short of my goal I consider several key points to get back on track to move forward. Let’s look at a few.

Focus – Are you blaming someone or something else? The accountability is yours, so make a detailed evaluation of what you did or did not do. Then focus and commit to make the improvement.

Find – Be strong and find the courage to seek honest feedback from your partner and the judges. There were two of you on the floor; ask your partner and/or instructor how they felt about the outcome. What constructive changes do they perceive need to take place?

Friends - What did others see in your performance? It helps motivate the change process when you have positive input from someone else. We tend to be our own worst critic. Keep a balanced perspective.

Forgiveness – Can you forgive yourself for the things you did wrong or could do better? Don’t waste your energy and time grieving over what is done and past. Move beyond the negative to get to the positive.

Foundation – Did you adequately prepare for the event or did you think a two day rehearsal would do the trick? People take years to build a foundation affirming the basics, then refine their skills to achieve the results they want. Learn from those who have experienced the same and are still pushing forward, striving for their best.

Faith – Do you have faith in yourself, your learning abilities, and your partner? Share your feelings with your partner. If they know what’s going on, they can be a better support to you.

Function – Keep your thumb on the heartbeat of reality. This is one event in the arena of multiple opportunities. There’s a ladder to climb; you go up one rung at a time. Sometimes you must pause to get your bearings and re-evaluate your progress to achieve your final goal.

Freedom – You grow by correcting your mistakes. Take a deep breath and start moving forward again. None of us are perfect. Only when you allow yourself space can you be free to let that creative learning process kick in again for further development.

Fullness – Dancing is a part of me that brings peace, pleasure and great joy. There is a reason that you started dancing. Go back and capture the full essence of that!

Follow – Stay on the path. Follow your heart. Never, never, never give up!