



October 18, 2016

Hi Dancers.

There has been a large misconception regarding the Social Dancer vs the Competitor dancer. I would like to discuss this touchy issue.

Every single person on the dance floor today has had some form of ballroom lessons. The first time on the dance floor can be very stressful and most couples feel they are being watched and judged. They are afraid they will look like fools if they make a mistake. **That's the First mistake.** They sit down and watch another couple get up and flow around the floor doing double reverse spins and picture moves. Well...the beginners aren't going to get up and compete with THAT. **That's the Second mistake.**

Why? Both the beginner and the Competitor are learning and in learning, they have to practice.

Let's put this in perspective. Do you remember getting on a school bus as a grade one student? Remember all the Grade 12's? They were grownup. We were just little kids, small, shy, & inexperienced. The only difference was we are in Grade One they were in Grade 12. But these Grade 12's started in Grade One, 12 years ago. That's 12 years of learning.

So too is the beginner dancer. You are in Grade one. The rest of the dancers are stretched between Grade one and Grade 10. In truth there is no Grade 12. There is no set point in learning dance when you can look into a mirror and say "I Graduated".

The interesting point is the beginner will pass into Grade 2, Grade 3, and Grade 4 faster than the Grade 8's will move into Grade 9. The beginners will learn combinations. The technique is for the more experienced dancer. You need one before you can learn the other. The technique is slower going.

The Third mistake is believing all competitive dancers are "snotty, nose in the air, I'm better than you, get out of my way" people. Negative! We're just dancers who love the movement and have a passion for the art. This means we are seriously studying the figures, the flow, the science of centrifugal (pronounced force and balance. We are not "showing off". We would

not bump into you on purpose. And we certainly would apologize if we did. We're just human and we are practicing the same as you.

. We also acknowledge that not everyone wants to take ballroom dance on as a study. They just want to have fun. That's great! That is the ultimate Goal! BUT....**every person who steps into their very first dance class can embrace the study of dance, the Science of dance as far as they wish.**

The Fourth mistake is thinking we believe we are in a higher class than everyone else when they see us in Tux's and Ball gowns. Education wise concerning ballroom technique, maybe, but socially? Ha! The clock strikes midnight and we're in rags again. That's when the war paint comes off and the hair comes down and the jeans go on. We were just playing dress-up.

Some folks like to compete to meet other dancers. Others take it soooo seriously and all they want is to win. (I don't understand that myself. How can that be fun?) Then there are people like me that treat competitions like final exams to see how far we have grown in our training.

Perhaps you have never thought of the pressure we competitors feel during a competition. We actually represent you. NBDS. That's stress right there. We don't want to let you down. Isn't that strange?

The point I am trying to make is that ALL of us are on the same journey! The more experienced dancer understands there are many different levels of education dancing on the ballroom floor.

Unfortunately, the intimidated beginners don't understand that they too will grow as they train. That means some day THEY will be the ones whipping off double reverse spins and contra-checks.

We're all together on the floor to share one thing. DANCE.

The Fifth mistake is not getting to know each other. Feel free to ask for help from, well..., anyone. We will gladly help anyone who is stuck on a dance step or combo. You would do the same.

So.....Shall we dance? Let's have some fun!

Elaine Thompson

Dance competitor -Gold Level

(the clock struck 12 and she was in rags again! - Cinderella)

