

# Larry's Corner

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Do you have any likes or dislikes, stories, or helpful hints for dancing? If so, write it down and give to Larry Ablin or Barb Johnson. We will add it to one of the future News letters.

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If you would like to tell us how you became interested in dancing, write it down and give to Larry or Barb, we will add your picture with it and put it in one of the future Newsletters

## Etiquette When Social Dancing

Dancing was born in a noble and elegant attitude. When a man escorts the lady to the floor for a dance, she should be on his right side. Not only is this the "place of honor", but there is also the symbolism going back many centuries, which implies that the man is offering his fighting arm in service to his lady, and by placing a hand on his arm she is accepting him as her champion. For everyday modern ballroom etiquette, the woman precedes the man to the floor, no contact is required. Once on the dance floor, the man takes a position and extends his left hand to his partner in invitation (palm vertical, towards her), she takes the last two or three steps towards him and takes his hand and then comes into his arms (Exception: Viennese Waltz. Right hand, half turn, curtsy.) The "lady being on his right because his sword is on his left" is just another urban myth. No officer and/or gentleman would wear his weapons at a ball. The man's job is to show off the lady and let her have fun.

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Etiquette When Social Dancing

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If you are interrupting a conversation to ask someone to dance, you should at least apologize to both people for interrupting the conversation. Unfortunately, even this simple courtesy can't be found in many dancers.

A general rule is that one should always say yes (once per evening at least) when one is asked to dance (this is true whether a leader asks a follower or a follower asks a leader.) Exception: if one has reason to believe that person would hurt you or if one is in an unusually fragile state due to injury recovery. If you find yourself in a painful situation, don't be afraid to stop and say something like "I am sorry but some of your moves are aggravating a past injury and so I will have to sit the rest of this dance out." Nobody should, out of politeness, risk injury. If a man leads you badly - especially when he tries to do something that endangers or hurts you - you can:

- 1) Subtly refuse to follow... don't pull away, just back lead or do something very different from what he's expecting.
- 2) Boldly refuse to follow... let go! Become physically detached from him and tell him (out loud) that it hurt!

Smart guys will at least realize that they've done something wrong and will get the idea after this happens once or twice. Dumb or uncaring guys aren't going to get the idea, but you'll know to stay away from

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them in the future. Don't feel that you have to get through the dance with them.

What are the consequences of saying yes and do you accept those? I have danced with a few ladies who said yes and then intentionally showed little or no interest in dancing or were rude in other ways. I would have preferred them to have simply said "no thanks" if they were not really interested in dancing with me.

Men and women are both allowed to refuse a dance and "sit one out". If they do, the rules of etiquette say that they must sit it out completely, regardless of who asks them to dance. Exception: a woman (or man!) trying to shake someone who is hitting-on/pawing her should be free to ignore the cad and immediately go find someone else with whom to dance. Why let a bozo spoil a nice evening of dancing?

If you have trouble telling people that you don't wish to dance with them, try this rejection line: "I'd love to, but I think I'm going to mingle--there are many people I haven't danced with yet. Perhaps we can get in another before the end of the evening?" [The second sentence/question is optional]

On rules of etiquette... Social dancing is as friendly a place as you make it, but it's not slavery. You aren't a paid taxi dancer, required to dance with whomever. Sitting out dances, just because someone you don't want to dance with asked you first, is not what you paid your money at the door for. Dance with whom you want to. That said... Remember that you may have to ask (beg, plead) to get the person you turned down (and maybe his friends also) to dance with you in the future. Maybe he won't have fun, will stop dancing, won't tell his friends how much fun it is, all your favorite dance places will go out of business, you won't have anywhere to dance, etc., etc. Aside from good

manners, there are other reasons to be polite. Many beginners who later become good dancers remember who was courteous and who was not.

Looking at yourself in the mirror is definitely not correct behavior at a social dance. When you practice, especially by yourself, looking in the mirror can be helpful. Looking when you are socially dancing with a partner can be rude.

When you've finished dancing, always thank your partner first, thank them for asking you to dance if that was the case, and mention something that was inspiring if that emotion was tweaked.

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Teach Beginners at Singles All Together dance class on Monday night, at Lenox center on Minnetonka Blvd in St Louis Park.

Teach at Singles All Together on Tuesday night 8pm at Medina.

Teach Ballroom at Jefferson Community Ed on Wednesday at 26th and Hennepin 612-668-2740  
Lakeville Class Century Junior High 952-985-4610  
Prior lake class Grainwood Elementary 952-440-2930  
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Web <http://www.comedancewithus.com> for Bulletin board, Photos, and Dance stories.