



Larrys Corner

Volume 8, Issue 4

April 2008

This is called Larrys Corner because when I teach I stand in the corner so I can see everyone.

If you want to read dance stories they are under Headlines or Larrys Corner.

[Http://www.comedancewithus.com](http://www.comedancewithus.com) Or <http://www.dancempls.com>

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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.

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. If you have anything you would like to write about, just write it up and give to Barb or Larry. I enjoy writing something for you.

Come Dance With Us

Inside this issue:

Relationships	1
Beginning Dancers	2
GIFT OF DANCE	3
Walk like a Dancer	4

Relationships

Can be learned in a West Coast Swing Class:

1. Lead her GENTLY and she'll follow you anywhere. For every ACTION there is an equal and opposite REACTION.
2. Never CRITICIZE a Partner. The only person you can FIX is YOU. (The only person, responsible for making an ADJUSTMENT, is the one who knows an adjustment needs to be made.)
3. A Lead is an INDICATION of direction (a suggestion-never a DEMAND).
4. A DANCE PARTNERSHIP is 50/50. BOTH partners are equally responsible for the outcome of the partnership.
5. If either one of the partnership insists on deciding who is right and who is wrong, they BOTH lose.
6. The FIRST Rule in learning something new is - Don't Hurt Anybody.
7. Be sensitive to your Partner. Never Blame or ridicule. YOU alone can make the difference. (don't try to adjust the Partner - adjust YOU).
8. Always concentrate on WHAT is right rather than WHO is right.
9. TEAMWORK gets the most points. (In LIFE as well as the Dance!) YOU are frequently judged by how good you make your partner look.
10. A good Partnership requires patience, understanding, and an awareness of the needs of the other partner. Stay focused.
11. The way to help a partner improve, is to do YOUR part so well that you know that you are not part of the PROBLEM.
12. Life is a JOY when you're both in step to the same BEAT.
13. Praise works wonders. Applaud little accomplishments and bigger accomplishments will follow.

14. We frequently judge others, not by who they are, but by who we are when we are with them. Make your partner feel wonderful.
15. Every dance is a "Three minute relationship." If someone can't complete one "3 minute" dance without criticizing a partner, it is highly probable that when the music stops - the criticism won't !
16. A successful "Partnership" maintains the separate uniqueness of each individual, without losing the connection of the partnership.

Beginning Dancers

Beginning dancers generally focus on simple moves, as they gain understanding of the dance. There are plenty of beginning WCS lessons available in any city. Often there are lessons before dances, but it would benefit a prospective student to take longer classes (5-10 weeks).

Typical beginners must concentrate much on being where they are supposed to be--including their feet or hands. Unfortunately, many teachers neglect to teach their students the importance of leading and following.

The next step, ironically, is to re-learn all that you know. Moves are to be led and followed, which is typically not what a beginner is doing. Once one is comfortable dancing the basic patterns, it is time to learn to lead/follow them. This is the time when most people want to learn more complicated moves, and often put off learning to lead/follow in order to do that. At some point it will become clear that all moves are just combinations of the fundamentals.

Moves

Basic moves that any WCS dancer should know are:

- Starter Step: Two triple steps in closed position to begin the dance, so that the leader and follower can get in sync with each other.
- Throw Out: A six count basic where the follower is led from the [closed position](#). In couple dancing, **closed position** is a category of positions in which partners hold each other while facing at least approximately toward each other.

The most commonly used kind of closed position comes from the waltz, and is very commonly used in ballroom dance. The leader's right hand is on the follower's back (or, rarely, on the left upper arm near the shoulder); its exact placement on the back ranges from the waist to the left shoulder blade. The follower's left hand is on the leader's right shoulder, or the upper arm near the shoulder. The other two hands are connected together at or near chest or shoulder height with the last 3 fingers hold Middle, ring and little.

- Sugar Push: A six count basic where the follower, facing the leader, is led from the end of the slot to a two hand hold, then led back to the same end of the slot.
- Right Side Pass: A six count basic where the follower is led to the other end of the slot, the couple passing on their right.
- Underarm Pass: A six count basic where the follower is led to the other end of the slot, passing the leader underarm on the right.
- Left Side Pass: A six count basic where the follower is led past the leader to the other end of the slot, passing the leader on the left.
- Return to Close: In six counts, the follower is led 3/4 of the way around the leader into closed position.

- Tuck Turn: This is like a throw out in 6 counts, but the follower is blocked and led to turn under her arm (an inside turn).
- Whip: This 8 count basic resembles **Lindy Hop** which is a street dance that evolved in Harlem, Manhattan, New York in the late 1920s through the early 1940s, that emerged with swing jazz.

Lindy Hop is a fusion of many dances from all over the U.S. from the early 1900s, but mainly the Charleston. Lindy hop combines the movements and improvisation of African dances with the formal 8-count structure of European dances. African dances usually separate the men from the women. Europeans invented partner dancing.

The follower starts at one end of the slot and is led around the lead, to the same end of the slot she started.

With these moves, anyone can do a lot.

Style

Beginning dancers focus on squaring up their bodies with their partners and staying with the music.

Advanced Dancers

Advanced dancers may be allowed to break the rules and won't remember what patterns they've just done.

GIFT OF DANCE

If you are reading this article - you are probably one of those lucky people who already possess "The Gift". Dance may be as important in your life - as it is in mine! If that's a fact - you too must realize the magnitude of "The Gift." We have all sent and received Birthday gifts, Anniversary presents - and numerous special gifts for special occasions. But every once in a while there are moments of realization that lets us know how special we must be - to have been given this "Gift of Life" - this special gift called DANCE!

Think of all the times when the world was coming down around your ears and someone said "Let's go dancing". Didn't it change your day?

I have been in situations where I thought I could not make it through the day: Personal pressures - Car broke down - Someone broke a window - My wallet somehow got "misplaced" with a cashed paycheck in it! But - that would have to wait - "There's a class to teach and people are expecting me - The music starts - The class lines up - Someone asks a question - And there we go - **"Off and dancing"** The problems of the day disappear - (even if it's only for a while). Dancing allows us to "take a break" from the cares of the day.

We've known all along that "Dance" is a gift. But sometimes we get so caught up in the joy of it all - that we forget to treat it as a gift! Don't be the one to spoil someone's evening. Take a deep breath and "Share the gift." Someone out there needs a smile and quiet assurance that they are "progressing as they should." Someone out there has had a bad day and really needs someone to tell them that they are okay. (Not in words - simply by sharing a dance) Each of us has the opportunity to feel the glow that comes from sharing the gift. Feel the blessing every time you take the time to dance with someone a little less talented or a little less experienced.

We can use the dance as a way of growing - a way of learning how to give back some of the treasures that life has given us. Those who dance have been truly Blessed. Share the Blessing.

The years pass swiftly. Many wonderful experiences lie behind us - and many, more wonderful experiences lie before us. **But today is the most valuable day in our lives.** Close your eyes - Take a deep

breath - and Smile. Take a moment to become aware that **"It's really later than we think."** Every time we do something for someone that brightens their day - more joy returns than one can imagine. One warm "Hello" - one sincere "Thank you for the dance" - one small, unexpected token of friendship, can really make somebody's day.

AND - if you're out there thinking that nobody cares about you - or that you can't really do anything for someone else until somebody does something for you - please remember this: I care About You. Whoever you are, and wherever you are, **I care about you.** So go ahead and get yourself out there. Show that you care about the people around you. Does all this sound like I've had a really emotional day? You bet. I've spent several days thinking about several of the wonderful people I've come to know, simply because of the dance. **Many of them are no longer with us.** They have gone to a higher plane of existence. They are up there blazing new trails, gathering musicians, "DJs" and dancers - getting ready to welcome each of us, as it becomes our turn to "graduate."

Meanwhile, I am eternally grateful for all of the wonderful people who have been part of my life. My constant prayer is that somehow, the whole world could experience the exhilaration and sense of "renewal" that takes place, when we discover that "Life is a dance!" Live the experience. "Share the Gift."

Walk like a Dancer

A Dancer moves through space by the carefully studied use of body control. The "Center Point of Balance" moves upward as the toes press DOWN into the floor. Learning to Dance is much more rewarding when the secret of controlling the "Center Point of Balance" (CPB) has been mastered. This mastery produces a wonderful "Dance Walk". Think of projecting the "Center" of your body forward - as if you were moving a shopping cart in front of you. Your foot won't hit the shopping cart because the cart moves in front of you - BEFORE you move your foot. Practice this forward movement - and then continue walking, but allow the arms to swing freely. The right arm will swing back as the right foot moves forward. The left arm will swing back as the left foot moves forward. Practice this exercise until you start to feel the freedom and exhilaration of contra-body movement. A "lifted" feeling starts to develop, which allows you to move forward comfortably, on a straight line. (Single Tracking)

The "Sending Foot" presses down and BACK, in order to propel the body forward. The "Receiving Foot" accepts the weight transfer and immediately starts "pressing" - as it becomes the next "Sending Foot". The important part here is to identify what is being SENT and what is being RECEIVED. It is the "CPB". It is located in the SOLAR PLEXUS and is about the size of a fist. When the "Center Point of Balance" is tightened - and projected - it carries the whole body with it - in one connected piece.

Control of your "*Center Point of Balance*" can elevate your level of dance almost overnight. A good dancer is known for her "entrances". It seems that she would pause in a doorway, and then slowly project herself across the room. By the time she reached the other side of the room, all eyes were on her - and the room was silent. We might not aspire to such a dramatic entrance, but we can certainly appreciate the impact of a great WALK. A "GREAT" Walk requires developing individual elements, one at a time.

The last element - the finishing touch - is to project the "Centering Knob, at the base of the neck, straight back. That knob is where the base of the neck and the top of the spine meet. It takes practice to keep the chin from going either up or down. - but the result is fantastic. By pushing that knob back, the "finishing touch" lines up and centers the spine so that the entire body moves effortlessly across the floor, producing Body Flight. It's a wonderful feeling - and a sight to behold. A beautiful "Dance Walk" is created when each element is learned and mastered separately, and then they all join together in their own time. These elements include: Sending & Receiving Foot - 3 Toe Base - Individual Connection - a lifted Center Point of Balance (CPB) - Contra Body Movement and control of the "Centering Knob" at the base of the neck.

I view the dancer's body as an instrument that needs to be kept in tune. When we dance to recorded music - all of the music comes out of a little black box. The Dancer who understands both the music and the dance, becomes the VISUAL part of the music.