

5 Secrets of Couples Who Dance Together

They come in all shapes, ages, and sizes, yet these couples all share something in common. You can spot their joy as they spin and glide around the dance floor, smiling and having fun. If you guess they must be competitive ballroom dancers, you just missed their secret. Most couples dance together just for fun. Some of these couples have been partners for a long time. I often ask my dance students to share what makes them successful on the dance floor. The techniques they use are skills needed for all flourishing relationships. Five of their top suggestions include:

1. **Learn how to lead and how to follow.** On dance floors and in living rooms, whenever two partners each decide to go in different directions, the couple suffers confusion, collisions, conflict and hurt feelings. In the world of dance, each couple creates a “dance frame” (the foundation for dance partners to communicate). It is understood in advance that the gentleman is assigned the leadership role, he sets up the couple’s dance frame, and he learns to lead clearly and confidently. The lady learns to flow into and with the dance frame, be ‘in tune’ and respond to her partner’s subtle cues, move with his changes, and carry her own weight – to seem ‘light as a feather’ to her partner and to others. She may assist by counting out the beat and whispering traffic alerts or occasional reminders. When both partners do their part, the man should never push, pull, or drag his partner. As he should lead gently and respectfully, she offers suggestions in the same manner.
2. **Remember that nobody is perfect.** Sadly, it is common to blame one’s partner for problems on the dance floor. Either partner may be distracted or unsure of the gentleman’s lead, footwork, timing, or simply avoiding collisions on the dance floor. Each person may be out of step with their partner or the world around them. Whenever this happens, we suggest both partners agree to stop, laugh about it, listen for the rhythm, and start again. It doesn’t matter who was right or wrong. Everyone makes mistakes and forgiveness is crucial in dancing and relationships. Forgive your partner’s mistakes as you would like him or her to forgive yours.
3. **It takes teamwork.** Dance partners should each maintain their part of the dance frame and perform their own footwork to enjoy top results. Still, successful teams understand that every member has both talents and shortfalls, and they practice and adjust to use the strengths and hide weaknesses of each other. If a lady more clearly feels the beat of the music or better remembers the dance pattern, she might speak gentle cues to her partner. If she loses her balance or doesn’t follow his lead, the gentleman can provide extra strength and support and adjust his steps to mask the issue.
4. **Practice, practice, practice.** The best training is only effective when the team practices both the basics and new skills. Dance students often have dreams (or nightmares) about new routines they continuously practiced until the new steps were becoming automatic for them. Likewise, relationship skills such as patience and forgiveness become easier the more often they are used.
5. **Find activities that you enjoy doing together.** Just as striving toward common goals can bring people closer, enjoying a shared activity can improve respect, friendship, communication, and the joy of sharing life with a special someone. When learning how to dance, couples often discover new talents in themselves and their mates. As challenges occur, practicing effective

communication, problem solving, and maintaining respect and forgiveness result in stronger, happier relationships and impressive dance performance.

JUST FOR FUN–DANCE!

Our classes are designed to help couples have fun while learning how to dance. In the process, they gain confidence, and develop improved communication, respect, and other fundamental relationship skills. Our focus is on enjoyment rather than competition. Each month, JUST FOR FUN–DANCE! offers a beginner level class with a variety of dance styles, a line dance class, and an intermediate class focused on one dance style. Each class meets once a week for 4 weeks. A bonus dance party is held on 5th Fridays during available months throughout the class year.

About the Author

Jo Ellen Christian, MA, NCC is a nationally certified counselor and founder of Healing Strides, LLC. She sets aside her counseling hat to offer JUST FOR FUN–DANCE! students the joy of line dance and couples' dance. She and her husband Kevin have been dancing and teaching together for many years. Her other unique and inspiring Marriage Improvement Programs enrich the lives of families. For more information about Healing Strides or her programs, visit her website at <http://www.HealingStrides.com>.