

## ***Ten Commandments of Dance Floor Etiquette.***

### **1. Thou shalt not give advice to a partner on the social dance floor unless asked for it.**

There is nothing more disheartening, deflating or irritating than when a social dance partner offers an unsolicited critique, no matter how subtle or well-intended. I don't care if you do know more than your partner. I don't care if you are trying to be helpful. I don't care if you nice, encouraging language. It's still a put-down. If your partner doesn't ask, don't tell.

### **2. Thou shalt not fail to protect your partner.**

An incredible, synergistic dance is what we all want, but first and foremost, no one should get hurt trying to achieve it. This is directed more toward leaders who are in charge of maneuvering and floor craft, but it is incumbent upon anyone, male or female, to try to avoid a collision or disaster if you notice one looming. Protecting your partner from a flailing arm, a flared heel, or an out of control speedster, is your first obligation.

### **3. Thou shalt not guide your partner, nor receive a lead, with unnecessary force.**

In partner dancing, the proper amount of pressure and connection to use is the least amount necessary to get the desired result. This will vary from partner to partner of course, but it is never OK to shove, push, strong arm or clamp down on your partner's hands nor to twist limbs into positions that are anatomically unnatural. It also pretty much guarantees the receiving partner will never want to dance with you again.

### **4. Thou shalt not talk or give advice while an instructor is teaching a group lesson.**

The teacher is doing his/her best to impart useful information. Your partner is doing his/her best to listen. If you don't agree with the instructor or think you know better, leave the floor.

Then you will be free to go out of earshot where you can relish your superiority with your biggest fan—you.

### **5. Thou shalt not refuse to dance with partners of lesser ability.**

Everyone likes to dance with someone who is advanced and a proficient partner. It's more challenging, more fun and, most of the time, more successful. But the truly great dancers are the ones who are happy to dance with anyone of any level, taking it as a challenge to provide a satisfying experience. I don't care how good you are, nobody likes a dance snob.

### **6. Thou shalt not apologize for your insufficiencies.**

It's rare when you are matched with a partner of the exact same ability. So whether you blow a lead or miss receiving one, there is no need for sealing it with a "Sorry" or "My bad". Move on and if you're both game, try the move again. If the Diva had been required to beg forgiveness for all of her *petit faux pas* on the floor, she would not have any words left with which to impart her valuable wisdom

### **7. Thou shalt not do choreographed routines, aerial lifts and flamboyant arm styling on a crowded social dance floor.**

There is a reason the dance world has competitions and exhibitions. They are the proper venues for dramatic presentations. If you are a talented dancer, it will show...even if you're doing an understated beginner pattern. If you're not, all the theatrics you throw in will just make you look like a show off and a jerk. (See commandment 10)

### **8. Thou shalt not ignore or oppose the line of dance.**

Social dancing works because there are rules of the road. If you don't know them, ask a teacher to explain where to best position yourself for different dances and according to your skill level. If you prefer to be more free-form, leave the dance floor and try a mosh pit.

### **9. Though shalt not put a priority on making yourself, rather than your partner, look good.**

You will attract a lot more-and better- future partners by ensuring that your current one looks competent, relaxed and enthused. It's incumbent on both sides to find a common denominator and to make the partnership the priority, not personal aggrandizement.

### **10. Thou shalt not be a jerk.**

Really, need I say more? Be a gentleman. Be a lady. Remember the etiquette your Mother taught you? Do unto others and all that good stuff. If you keep this foremost in your mind, you will always be a gracious partner. That has nothing to do with dancing. That has to do with being a good person!

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