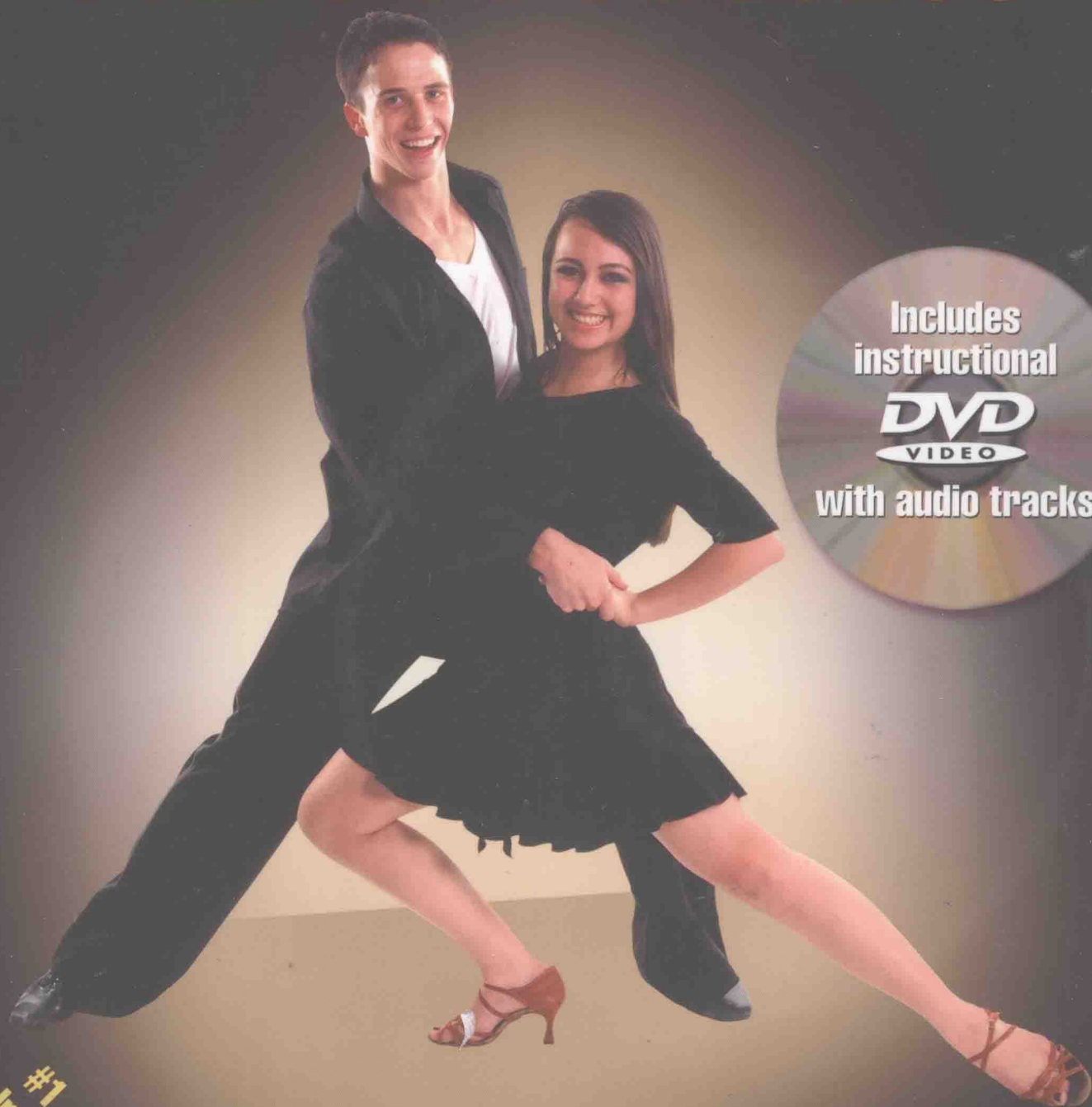


Third Edition

Social Dance

STEPS TO SUCCESS



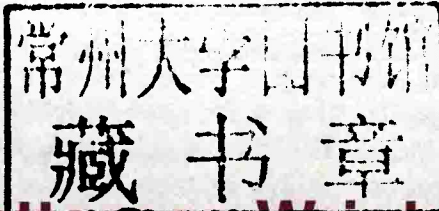
#1
Sports Instruction
Series

Judy Patterson Wright

THIRD EDITION

Social Dance

STEPS TO SUCCESS



Judy Patterson Wright, PhD



HUMAN KINETICS

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E5170

To my husband, Sam Wright,
to honor all the years we've been together
and especially for sharing your zest for life
both on and off the dance floor.
With love.

DVD Contents (Side A)

Welcome to Social Dance

Dance Rhythm Strategies

Introduction

Strategy 1: Step on Each Beat of 4/4 Time Music

Strategy 2: Step on Downbeats of 4/4 Time Music

Strategy 3: Step on Upbeats of 4/4 Time Music

Strategy 4: Triple Step

Merengue

Introduction

Eight Steps in Place, to the Side, Forward, and Backward

Rotational Turn Options: CCW and CW

Follower's Right Underarm Turn

Combination A

Head Loops

She-He-She Turns

Combination B: On Your Own

Four-Count Swing/Hustle

Introduction

Basic Step

Change of Position

Inside (Left) Turn

Outside (Right) Turn With Inside (Left) Turn

Combination A

Wrap and Unwrap

Belt Loop With Inside (Left) Turn

Inside Turn With Slide to Two Hands

Two-Hands-Joined Outside-Inside, Inside-Outside

Combination B: On Your Own

Waltz

Introduction
 Waltz Balances
 Box Step
 Slow Underarm Turn
 Combination A
 Left Box Turn
 Right Box Turn

Half-Box Progressions
 Combination B
 Cross Step
 Weave
 Rollovers
 Scissors
 Combination C:
 On Your Own

Six-Count Swing

Introduction
 Swing Rhythmic
 Step Patterns
 Arch-Out/Arch-In
 Transitions
 Roll-Out/Roll-In
 Transitions
 Couple's Rotational Turns
 Change of Position
 Combination A
 Single Under
 Double Under

Brush
 Combination B
 Belt Loop
 Shoulder Touches
 Tuck and Spin
 Combination C
 Wrap and Unwrap
 Row Step
 Double Cross
 Combination D:
 On Your Own

Foxtrot

Introduction
 Box Step
 Half-Box Progressions
 Cross Step
 Combination A
 Box Step With Left
 Box Turn

Foxtrot Basic Rhythm
 Combination B
 Rock Step
 Left Rock Turn
 Right Rock Turn
 Promenade

Foxtrot *(continued)*

Combination C
Sway Step
Weave Step
Right Box Turn
Combination D
Rollovers

Parallel Forward
and Backward Basics
Zigzag
Combination E:
On Your Own

Polka

Introduction
Polka Rhythmic
Step Pattern
Polka Basic
in Promenade Position
Polka Basic With
Inside-Hands-Joined
Inside-Hands-Joined
to Promenade
(Hand-to-Shoulder
Transition)
Promenade
to Inside-Hands-Joined
(Slide-Apart Transition)
Combination A
Polka Basic in Closed
Position
Closed to Promenade
Transition
Promenade to Closed
Transition

Combination B
Couple's Polka Turn
Follower's Right
Underarm Turn
Combination C
Front-to-Front and
Back-to-Back Half Turns
Gallops
Swivels, or Twists
Combination D
Transition From Closed
to Sweetheart Position
Transition From Sweet-
heart to Closed Position
Around-the-World
Reverse Around-the-World
Combination E:
On Your Own

Cha-Cha

- Introduction
- Cha-Cha Rhythmic Step Pattern
- Basic Cha-Cha Forward and Backward
- Transitions From Two-Hands-Joined to Shine Position and Shine to Two-Hands-Joined
- Combination A
- Chase and Half Chase in Shine Position
- Full Chase
- Cross and Hop
- Combination B
- Transition From Closed Position to Two-Hands-Joined to Closed
- First Position Breaks (Two-Hands-Joined Position)
- Parallel Breaks Forward and Backward
- Combination C
- Fifth Position Breaks
- Crossover Breaks
- Walkaround Turns
- Combination D
- Butterfly
- Freeze
- Figure-Eight Turns
- Combination E: On Your Own

Rumba

- Introduction
- Rumba Side Basic
- Rumba Box Step
- Half-Box Progressions
- Combination A
- Slow Underarm Turn
- Left Box Turn
- Combination B
- Fifth Position Breaks
- Forward Parallel Breaks
- Combination C
- Crossover Breaks
- One-Hand Around-the-World
- Combination D
- Cross-Body Lead
- Open Rumba Walks
- Combination E: On Your Own

Tango

Introduction
Tango Rhythmic
Step Pattern
Left Quarter Turn:
Closed Position
Combination A
Corte and Recover

Basic With Rock Steps
Combination B
Closed Figure-Eight Fans
Basic With Open Fans
Combination C:
On Your Own

Salsa/Mambo

Introduction
Salsa Rhythmic
Step Pattern
Closed Position With
Cross-Body Leads
Right Underarm Turn
for Follower
Head Loops
Right Turn for Leader
(Behind-the-Back Pass)
Combination A
Fifth Position Breaks

Crossover Breaks (With
Walkaround Turn Option)
Combination B
Side Cross Basic
Open Break and Inside
(Left) Turn (on Four Walls)
Shoulder Checks
Double Left Turn
for Follower
Combination C:
On Your Own

Dance Floor Etiquette

Running Time93 minutes

Music Tracks (Side B)

Track	Description	Beats per min. (BPM)
01	Counting Beats in 4/4 time	120
02	Counting Beats in 3/4 time	102
03	Counting Measures in 4/4 time	120
04	Counting Measures in 3/4 time	102
05	Counting Downbeats in 4/4 time	120
06	Counting Downbeats in 3/4 time	102
07	Merengue Music	122
08	Four-Count Swing/Hustle Music	120
09	Waltz Music	102
10	Swing Music: Slow	120
11	Swing Music: Moderate	150
12	Swing Music: Fast	165
13	Foxtrot Music	120
14	Polka Music: Slow	110
15	Polka Music: Moderate/Fast	120
16	Cha-Cha Music	120
17	Rumba Music	120
18	Tango Music	120
19	Salsa/Mambo Music	150

Preface

Whether your motivation to learn to dance comes from watching dancers on popular television shows such as *Dancing With the Stars* and *So You Think You Can Dance*, or it's just something you've always wanted to do, this book and DVD package is designed just for you. Dancing is a blend of rhythm, timing, and motion. This book will help you to move efficiently to the music with a partner in social settings.

The dances in this book represent the 10 most popular smooth style and rhythm style dances used on the social dance floor in the United States today. The smooth dances follow a counterclockwise direction around the perimeter of the floor, also called the *line of dance (LOD)*. The rhythm dances are more limited within a small area, sometimes referred to as a *spot*. Both types of dances offer many rewards and challenges for a lifetime of dancing.

STEP-BY-STEP LEARNING APPROACH

My experience with traditional methods of teaching social and ballroom dance and my research on the process of acquiring sequential skills motivated me to produce a course with a different approach. The uniqueness of this approach to learning social dance is its complete learning progression, which places skills and concepts along a continuum with uniquely designed practice drills for each learning step. So, you will find learning steps instead of chapters in this book. Each learning step gradually builds in the necessary experiences to prepare you for the final outcome—to be able to dance with a partner to music on a crowded social dance floor. The 16 learning steps are organized into three parts that outline your journey to dancing success. Part I (steps 1 to 4) introduces you to the prerequisite concepts and skills that are applied throughout the rest of the book. These early learning steps are especially helpful if you've never had any rhythmic experiences. Part II (steps 5 to 14) describes the 10 social dances covered in this book. You will learn the unique basic step for each dance, how to transition between partner positions, and how to put variations together to form combinations. Part III (steps 15 to 16) helps you bridge the gap between a practice setting and the social dance floor. These latter learning steps also help you improve your turn technique and better understand how you can add styling.

Two new dances have been added to this third edition of *Social Dance: Steps to Success*: the merengue and the four-count swing/hustle. Both of these dances are easy, beginner-level dances that provide quick success and lots of fun. All learning steps have been updated and revised as necessary to include current terminology, key concepts, more history, and a variety of footwork and timing cues for each basic step.

In each learning step, the easy-to-difficult drills are streamlined to support the concepts covered and situational drills have been added to prepare you to make spontaneous decisions on the dance floor. All of the drills provide options for increasing or decreasing the difficulty level of each drill so that you can practice at your preferred learning pace. As you meet the success goal for each drill, you are ready to move to the next drill.

Also new to this third edition are updated illustrations showing proper footwork, technique, and positioning with a partner. Lastly, a major addition is the enclosed DVD, which includes both video and music selections for practicing the 10 dance styles covered in this third edition. Use it as often as needed.

Start your journey by reading *Steps to Success: How to Use This Book and DVD Package*. As you proceed through this book, you'll soon find yourself pleasantly surrounded by others, enjoying their company, being challenged, and improving your fitness.

NEW SKILL EXPECTATIONS

Sometimes it can be frustrating to learn new skills. Even if you are highly skilled at one dance, with each new dance or move you begin the learning process over again. The first stage of learning is more cognitive about what to do and how to do it. You are entering the second stage of learning when you can repeat the basic rhythmic step pattern to music and you are expanding your skills with success most of the time. As you add more moves, the challenge is how to remember them all! You'll need to choose a strategy not only to help you combine moves in a meaningful way but also to recall them on the dance floor when under pressure. The third stage of learning is when your moves are automatic and you can focus on objects around you, such as other couples on the floor. Everyone goes through these three general learning stages when learning something new. Don't expect to do things perfectly the first time you are introduced to a new skill. It takes practice to make your dancing look easy, which is the ultimate goal.

There are two general approaches to learning new skills. How do you approach learning a new skill? When someone demonstrates a new skill, do you prefer to focus on one thing at a time, add on the next part, and so forth, until the entire skill is learned? Or do you prefer to see what the entire skill involves, including the timing, rhythm, and position relative to your partner? If you prefer to focus on each part, then your attention would be only on what your feet do, then only on what your arms do, and so forth, until the entire skill is learned. This is an example of the part-whole method of approaching new skills. If you prefer to focus on the entire skill first, then you would focus on how the parts merge together, including timing, rhythm, and coordination with your partner. This is an example of the whole-part method of approaching new skills. Both methods work equally well. Neither method is better than the other. It is a matter of what you prefer and what helps facilitate your learning. Try out both methods to find your preference when viewing the enclosed DVD demonstrations. Once you know your preferred method of approaching new skills, you can be more tolerant of others who may use a different method. Again, remember that each method gets you to the same end. Be patient with your partner; it's simply a matter of using different ways of getting to the same destination.

Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge the contributions of my many hundreds of students, who taught me as much as I taught them. My constant joy is to see students enjoying and expressing themselves on the floor. I am grateful for the opportunity to update my teaching methods in this third edition and thank Dr. Rainer Martens for encouraging me to write the first edition. Kudos go to Doug Fink for directing the video new to this third edition and to Roger Francisco who helped compile the music used on the enclosed DVD. This book and DVD package now presents multiple ways to learn as you can read about it, see specifics in the photos, and see things in action on the video, including how to put them into short practice combinations. My heartfelt appreciation goes to each of the accomplished dancers who modeled for both the photographs and the video segments: Allen Gehret, Charles Gibbs, Gregory Hohensee, Julie Hodson, Cassie Palmer-Landry, and Nanyan Zhou.

I especially want to thank my husband, Sam, for being my partner in life as well as on the dance floor—he is definitely my Mr. Right. I am grateful for his constant support. Finally, I give loving tribute to my late mother and father, who always encouraged me to be the best I can be.

Steps to Success: How to Use This Book and DVD Package

Get ready to climb the staircase that will lead you to become an accomplished social dancer. You cannot leap to the top; you simply proceed one step at a time. Each of the steps is an easy transition from the one before. A total of 16 steps are grouped into three parts.

Part I, What Every Dancer Needs to Know, presents four learning steps that are prerequisites for your dancing success, each with specific concepts highlighted as follows:

- Step 1 helps you understand how to stand like a dancer, including the importance of postural alignment, centering your body's weight over your base of support for balance, and positioning your arms to create a frame. It is also helpful to know the common foot positions that are used each time you take a step (i.e., make a weight change from one foot to the other). You can enhance your balance and execution by being aware of these different foot positions.
- Step 2 helps you understand the hierarchical arrangement of beats, measures, and phrases. It also helps you identify the most reliable (as well as recognize the least reliable) cues in the music. Once you can hear and count the number of beats per measure, you will know the external speed (or tempo) and get an insight into what type of dance music is being played. The tempo of the music drives the footwork to be used.
- Step 3 helps you to connect your footwork to the tempo of the music. All dancers make a perceptual-motor match by recognizing the beats in the music and coinciding steps (or weight changes) with certain beats or counts. Your task is easier once you know and can execute the basic dance rhythm strategies used by social dancers. These dance rhythm strategies, whether used separately or combined, comprise the specific rhythmic step pattern, or basic step, unique to each dance style (to be presented in part II).

- Step 4 introduces you to the general partner dynamics that occur in social dancing, both verbal and nonverbal communication, including general tips on leading and following, proper etiquette, and partner respect. You also need to understand your role in the partnership, especially when demonstrating common partner positions, and knowing how to use your individual frame (i.e., arms and upper torso) effectively with a partner.

Part II presents the 10 social dances covered in this third edition. For each dance presented in steps 5 through 14, the following sections guide your journey:

- A brief history.
- A description of the rhythmic step pattern.
- Keys to Success illustrations with cues for both footwork and timing.
- Easy-to-difficult practice drills for executing the rhythmic step patterns, adding transitions, variations, and combinations (linking any three or more variations). In each drill, use the success goal, the success checks, and suggestions for either decreasing or increasing the difficulty level of the drill to self-pace your progress. The drills offer you successful experiences that prepare you for the next challenge.
- A summary

In part III, as you near the top of the staircase, you are ready to move from practice situations to dancing on the social dance floor. The last two learning steps help you adapt as follows:

- Step 15 introduces the floor etiquette, or the rules of the road that help you to avoid collisions with others. Unique situational drills prepare you for the spontaneous decisions needed on the social dance floor when the movement of other couples is unpredictable.
- Step 16 challenges you to improve your turn technique, demonstrate the characteristic styling associated with each dance, and be aware of timing options when dancing to unfamiliar music. The drills help you prepare for selected situations that you might encounter on the social dance floor, and they help you expand your opportunities to do more social dancing.

Before you begin your journey, read the next section, *Reasons to Social Dance*, to get an overview of why people dance, the benefits of dancing, and additional resources for social dancing.

At the end of this book, you may rate yourself according to the directions in the *Rating Your Progress* section and ask a trained observer, such as your teacher, coach, or trained partner, to evaluate all of your skills. Finally, the glossary is available for your reference.

Good luck on your step-by-step journey to developing your social dancing skills, building confidence, experiencing success, and having fun. See you on the dance floor!

Reasons to Social Dance

Are you looking for a way to meet new people and expand your social skills? Are you looking for an alternative way to work out and have fun at the same time? Try social dancing! You can learn new dance skills, have an evening out, hear great music, and share common interests while you benefit from a mind, body, and spirit boost.

SOCIAL NEEDS

Throughout history, dance forms have reflected our social needs. These social needs were first displayed in primitive courtship and tribal dances. Although primitive dances were often performed by members of the same sex with no bodily contact, social dance is essentially touch dancing and includes all forms of partner dancing done to a variety of musical styles primarily for recreation or pleasure.

The term *ballroom dance* refers to partner dances done in a ballroom to traditional ballroom music. The earliest 18th- and 19th-century forms of ballroom dance were the minuet in France, the quadrille (a dance with two, four, or more couples) in France and England, the waltz in Austria, and the polka in France. During the Renaissance it became fashionable for ladies and gentlemen of the court to dress well and have polished manners. Soon, competition to outdo others led to elaborate balls and the hiring of dance masters to teach peasant dances to the aristocracy.

The early 20th century saw the introduction of additional partner dances for pleasure, including the foxtrot, swing, tango, samba, rumba, and cha-cha. After World War II, traditional ballroom dancing and Big Band music went into a decline, but partner dancing continued in popularity throughout the rock 'n' roll era and was perpetuated by the romantic disco era. Various movies featured couples dancing, which helped to reenergize interest in even more dance styles, including the four-count swing/hustle, country two-step (a variation of foxtrot), salsa/mambo, and tango. Couples dancing continues to be popular, mainly because of the attractive benefits of social dancing.

BENEFITS OF SOCIAL DANCE

The foremost reason for participating in partner or touch dancing is the sheer joy of moving rhythmically in unison with a partner to music, regardless of your age. Being with a partner both enhances the pleasure and highlights the social benefits of meeting others, sometimes with romance in mind. Many married couples—including my husband and me—first met on the dance floor. Through dancing, partners can get to know each other, share common interests, learn to respect each other's rights, show appreciation for each other's efforts, and get a good workout, too.

Scientific evidence supports the physical benefits of social dance for increasing muscle tone, flexibility, and cardiovascular endurance and reducing stress on the joints. The low-impact aerobic workout of dancing continuously is a major benefit of social dancing. It is a great way to blend exercise and recreation because you can raise your heart rate to 70 percent of its maximum, which boosts stamina safely. To achieve the aerobic benefit, all you have to do is gradually increase the amount of time you dance continuously. Start by dancing the length of one song, and gradually add more time until you are dancing 15 to 60 minutes nonstop, three times per week. Social dancing can add elegance to exercise. For many dancers, social dancing is becoming the preferred way to be more active and improve fitness while having fun.

Growing research also supports the mental benefits of social dancing. It helps keep the mind active, especially for older adults. A 2003 study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that ballroom dancing at least twice a week makes people less likely to develop dementia.* Social dance requires that you focus, so your mind tends to wander less. For example, to keep time, you mentally count the beats of the music as you move your feet in rhythmic ways. You focus on memorizing the basic steps, learning variations, and repeating combinations or longer sequences using both short-term and long-term memory. Leading requires thinking ahead to plan what to do next. Following requires being ready to respond appropriately, so you need to know the names of the movements and be able to execute them. In a practice setting, all couples are doing the same thing. However, once you are on the dance floor, many couples are doing their own thing at the same time. This means that the leader has to be alert and constantly surveying where other couples are located and anticipate (by spontaneously adjusting the choice of variations) to avoid potential collisions on the dance floor. Potential decision-making situations are built into the drills in this book.

The spiritual benefits of social dancing come from the opportunities for social interaction, artistic expression, improved execution, and dancing in unison with a partner to music. Listening to the music requires focusing your attention on recognizing the external tempo so that you can move in time with the music, which helps you to enjoy the present moment instead of think about the past or the future. When proper etiquette is followed, it is a more pleasant experience for you, your partner, and other dancers.

You can experience great personal satisfaction from your accomplishments in dancing, including improved posture, coordination, balance, precision, timing, and concentration. Additional satisfaction comes from knowing how to ask a partner to dance (or how to accept a dance), how to lead (or follow), and how to adapt your variations to fit the traffic flow of other couples.

*Quote from Dr. Steven Karageanes, sports medicine physician, director of the Performing Arts Medicine at the Detroit Medical Center, and president-elect of the American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine (reported in the *Detroit Free Press* and printed in the *News-Gazette*, Champaign, IL, June 14, 2011).