

INTRODUCTION

GET THE MOST FROM DANCE LESSONS



www.artofdancemadison.com

Dear Dancer,

Thank you for enrolling with the Art of Dance. Whether you are taking a group class or enrolled in private lessons, we strive to provide the best environment for you to develop your skills as a dancer. You may have devoted a considerable amount of time, research, and careful thought in selecting a professional dance instructor. Thank you for choosing one of us. We promise to listen to you, treat you with respect, and stay current with dance trends (both technically and artistically).

Dance lessons are a luxury item. We want you to enjoy the maximum benefit from your time in lessons. We will create an environment that fuels your learning, though we are only a part of the process. **You must bring the desire and work ethic.** Learning to dance and refining your dance skills requires **a personal commitment to self-improvement.**

Through consistent attendance, changing partners (in group classes), and participating in all of the activities, *whether or not you immediately understand the purpose*, you are giving yourself the best opportunity to develop the strength, balance, coordination, flexibility, muscle control, and sensitivity needed for dancing the way you imagine yourself dancing.

Regardless of whether you are new to dancing or whether you are a seasoned competitor, you can always learn something new about ballroom dancing. **Knowing the steps is not the same as learning to dance.** Knowing-the-steps is to dancing as paint-by-numbers is to painting. You may produce a result that looks like art, but ultimately it is just a facsimile. Knowing the steps is only about the feet, and **your feet do not produce dancing.** Dancing well involves your entire body.

Informed by your goals, we will teach you to move your body in the ways necessary to dance with skill and confidence. With ever-increasing degrees of precision, you will learn to communicate movement with your dance partner. As you develop a solid sense of partnering, leading, and following, you will more easily absorb new dances, steps, moves, and figures into your repertoire.

The warm-up portion of your lessons is when you learn to move your body in new ways. The warm-up allows you to develop efficient movement. **Technique** - the actions (and the muscle control that produces the actions) - **makes dancing easier.** By developing technique, your dancing becomes more dynamic, extemporaneous, and expressive.

Though our focus on technique may be considerably different for introductory-level group classes, for wedding dance lessons, and for private lessons taken by dance competitors, technique is important for all dancers. Be patient. **Like any new skill, developing solid technique requires attention, practice, and time.**

We have developed a comprehensive FAQ (document addressing **Frequently Asked Questions**) that appears on the Studio's website at "www.artofdancemadison.com/faq". **Many of your questions may already be answered there.** Make sure you are especially familiar with the sections **Shoes, Changing Partners,** and **Etiquette.**

In order to better serve you in meeting your goals, please complete and return the survey that follows this letter. **For couples enrolled together, each of you should return your own copy.** The questions are designed not only to encourage self-reflection, but also to help us in running your lessons in the ways that will provide the greatest benefit to you.

Thank You,

Darrell Dieringer & Sarah Calhoun

SURVEY

EACH PARTICIPANT MUST COMPLETE AND RETURN TO INSTRUCTOR



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Learning to dance involves a commitment to self improvement. The questions in this survey are designed to help you ***identify and clarify*** your reasons for learning to dance, as well as to assist you in ***defining your goals***.

Your instructor wants to provide the best private lesson and group class experience possible for all participants. Your answers will help you to ***provide a context for your expectations*** and will allow your instructor to ***more fully understand your goals and motivations***.

You and your instructor will, in private, revisit these questions from time to time. How your answers to these questions change over time will help you to ***recognize your progress in learning to dance***.

Please be complete with your answers and honest with your responses. Most responses require self-evaluation. There are no wrong answers. Your answers will be kept confidential and will never be shared.

What is your background with ballroom or other styles of dance, movement or strength activities, artistic expression, sports, music performance, painting, drawing, sculpture, pilates, yoga, rock climbing, skiing, snow boarding, ice skating, gymnastics, wrestling or other contact sports, acting, improvisation, comedy, theatrical productions, meditation, martial arts, or similar activities?

How might your involvement in the activities you described above help (or hinder) your learning to partner dance?

What activities might be helpful in learning to partner dance or might be useful in cross training?

If you are a teacher, what do you teach? What do you enjoy (or dislike) about teaching?

Why do people dance? (list many reasons, not just your own)

Why do you dance (any kind of dance)? If you have never danced previously, why not?

What do you think partner dancing is?

What kind of things do you expect to learn in order to partner dance?

Do you want to learn? Are you prepared to devote the effort that learning a new skill requires?

What factors might affect the amount of time it takes to learn to dance?

How long have you wanted to learn to dance? If it has been a short time, how come you enrolled in a class/private lessons so quickly? If it has been a long time, how come it has taken so long?

Do your motivations for wanting to dance include personal growth; self-discovery; overcoming fear; developing or rediscovering pride, confidence, and self-satisfaction; understanding fearlessness, fearfulness, frustration, or your reaction to challenges; expanding your willingness to accept advice; strengthening your romantic relationship; reducing or increasing pridefulness; or other similar concepts? If yes, please elaborate.

Do your motivations for wanting to dance include meeting the expectations of others, being seen, being admired, attracting attention, standing out, having somewhere to go, having something to do, becoming part of something, meeting new people, making new friends, or other similar concepts? If yes, please elaborate.

What are your goals for this class / private lesson series?

What are your goals regarding dance in general?

Do you "recharge" by being alone or by being among others? Is this always true?

Do you like to perform? Why or why not?

How competitive are you?

Are you coordinated? Are you strong? Are you flexible?

SURVEY

Are you a visual learner (seeing it - images, shapes, colors), a kinesthetic learner (feeling it - actions, motions), or an auditory learner (hearing it- words, lists, descriptions)? How do you know?

What motivates you and why? (goals, deadlines, meeting your potential, exceding your potential, checklists, fear of reprimand, rewards, coersion, etc)

Do you have any illnesses, injuries, disabilities, or health concerns that may affect your dancing?
What are they?

What has your past experience (good or bad) with other professional dance instructors been? With whom have you studied, when, and for how long?

What are you looking for in a professional instructor?

When is your birthday? (day and month - you may omit the year)

printed name of dancer

today's date

revision date

revision date