



“WHAT MATTERS MOST”

In our journey of life we go through many different experiences, changes, and emotions. In Dance, we also go through many different experiences, changes, and emotions. The question I want to ask those of you that are reading this article is “What Matters Most In Your Life?” As a former dancer starting at age three, as I look back on my life I realize that I did not always value the most important things. Whether we are just beginning our dance career, or at the peak of our career, life speeds by us. We are involved in rehearsals, traveling, teaching, and making sure we have enough money to do all that we want to accomplish in the fast paced Ballroom Dance Industry. Yet we could be missing out on more important life matters.

We Dance because we love to Dance, we love the Ballroom Dance excitement and life style. The best dancers are the ones who have devoted themselves completely to their art, and love it. They express the music and dance with a passion that makes them stand out among the crowd. Yet, many dancers wind up being very lonely and feel unloved. I have been at the bedside of a number of fellow dancers in their final moments, when they stand on the edge of eternity, and I have never heard any of them say, “Bring me my dance certificates, or my dance trophies, so I can look at them one more time. Show me my awards, my medals.” When life on earth is ending, people do not surround themselves with objects. What we want around us are people, people we love and have relationships with.

Relationships are what life is all about, and the best use of life is LOVE. We start using the word love as a child with our parents, with our toys, stuffed animals or dolls. Later in life we use the word love for clothes, places to live or visit, cars, movies, music, hobbies, and of course our dancing. I believe the reason Ballroom Dancing has become so successful in the recent years is because it shows two people in a relationship. They may be teacher and student, two amateurs, or two professionals dancing together, but when they dance there is a certain feeling of caring and affection that happens. The best competitive couples express this kind of emotion to the audience and judges.

In the Ballroom Industry our schedules are so full that, many times we cannot find time for our families, children, or for the people we love that are in our lives. Busyness is a great enemy of relationships. We become preoccupied with succeeding in our dance career, making a living, paying bills, and accomplishing goals. How you treated other people, not your accomplishments are the most enduring impact you can leave behind. Mother Teresa said, “It’s not what you do, but how much love you put into it that matters.” When we love, it leaves a legacy. The greatest gift is LOVE, and it cannot be packaged.

The best expression of Love is TIME. What is most important to you can be measured by how much time you are willing to invest in it. If you want to know a person’s priorities, look at how they use their time. As you climb the ladder of success in the Ballroom Industry, remember your family, your loved ones. The greatest love gift you can give someone is your time. It is not enough to say relationships are important, you must prove it by investing time in them. As I look back on my own life, I wish that I had spent more time with those I loved that are no longer around. A doctor friend of mine gave me some good advice years ago in how to determine whether I needed to do the things on my agenda. I now pass it

on to all of you. Ask yourself the following question: 1. Will what I have to do affect the next year, the next ten years, eternity? If your answer is Yes to all of the three time spans then you need to do it. If the answer is no, drop the issue.

Don't wait, the best time to Love is NOW. You don't know how long you will have the opportunity to express that love; circumstances change, people die, children grow up. There is no guarantee of tomorrow. Look at your life and evaluate whether you need to make some adjustments in your time. Who do you need to start spending more time with? What do you need to change in your schedule to make that possible? What sacrifices do you need to make? So I leave you with this question: What Matters Most In Your Life?"