

Why Students Stop Dancing: A Theory A Student Perspective by Batt Johnson

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Not everyone wants to become a professional dancer or even a great social dancer. It is no secret that we all dance for many reasons: therapy from injuries, weight control, weight loss, love of music, getting married and you don't want to look like a geek, something you always wanted to do, inspiration from old Fred Astaire movies, saw Forever Tango on Broadway, nothing but life, love life, married life, who knows why we dance?

My question is: Why do we stop dancing? No time, no baby sitter, no money, no energy, no dates, no skills, no interest, numerous, but I submit to you one reason that is not often discussed...Frustration!

Many students stop dancing because of frustration. Students often don't think they are good dancers, and one of the reasons they are in a hurry to get to the advanced class or the next level up so they can dance like their favorite hero tango instructor does not make you that level of dancer. Only learning technique and practicing your basics will do that. It is easy to be a professional tango dancers walk.

Remember, this incredible dance is based on a walk, that's all. You might be saying to yourself, "A walk? I can walk, but tango is to be able to walk tango, and that takes time.

I once had a teacher who had us walking around the studio in line of dance for months before he started working in a class something the school owners don't want to hear.

But I must say that because of that constant walking and understanding of the technique, we were able to understand the foundation. Learning the walk is not exciting, but it is necessary. You can't do this dance without it. I know that the beginners are not going to go back to their true level because they read this article, but they should. What good does it do to be able to dance like you are in the beginner class? Please don't misunderstand me. There is nothing wrong with being a beginner. That's why you or while dancing with you they can feel it. If more dance schools had a screening system for students to graduate to tango milongas. I get the feeling that not many are teaching floor crafting, line of dance and simple dance etiquette. Last week I was bumped and knocked around more times than I care to mention. Why? Is it because the leaders weren't looking where they should at the right time too many times?

This article is being written for my fellow students who are in a hurry to get to the advanced class. If you want to increase your skills, take the classes that are above your true level. Believe me, the advanced class is not all it's cracked up to be, but the beginner/intermediate classes are where you learn your foundation, learn to walk, the importance of your feet, your posture, your blades, the separation of your upper body from your lower body. Without a good foundation you can grow as a dancer with bad habits. For those of us who have attempted to break any habit of any kind, you know how difficult it is.

I was once in a class when maestro Carlos Gavito walked through on his way to another studio. My teacher stopped him and asked, "what is the most important, most useful, fancy step a student could learn?" Without hesitation he said, "The basic, you don't have that. Forget about dancing if you don't know the basics. Without the basics, what you are doing is not dancing."

A word to the wise: Don't throw away your money on intermediate/advanced and advanced classes that you are not ready for. Spend your money and only teach you steps...steps, and more steps. But remember steps without foundation is bad dancing. Why do you stop dancing? Many of them stop because they didn't learn the basics or build a foundation, got frustrated, and quit. Stop throwing away your money...learn the alphabet.

Batt Johnson - Lover of Dance

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for different reasons. Some of us dance as a form of physical
ek for the wedding dance, saw the milonga in Central Park, just
ing better to do on a Friday evening, as a way to a better social

st, no balance, no luck, your mate won't allow you. The reasons are

reasons is they try to go too fast, learn too much too soon. They
tor. We have to be aware of the fact that the NAME of the class
e seduced by the ease and effortlessness with which high-level

ut when I walk, it doesn't look like THAT." To be able to dance

ny "steps." Students were dropping out left and right. That is

d and apply more complex steps later because we had a
eginner students who are in the intermediate and above classes are
e to say that you are in the intermediate level class if you dance
t is where we all started. But, you can't fool people, they can see,
he next level, there would be a lot more skilled dancers at the
eek I was at a crowded milonga and was stepped on, kicked,
re they were taking their partners, or was I just in the wrong place

ease your level of stress, frustration and embarrassment, rush to
ner class is. How can that be? The beginner and
frame, your posture, your head, your shoulders, your shoulder
er but you'll be a dancer with many very bad, difficult to break

im and asked him in a voice loud enough for all to hear, "Carlos,
ou have got to really learn your basics. NOTHING can work if you
cing."

ready for. The dance school you are studying in will GLADLY take
g, steps without style is ugly dancing. So why do many students
It is not possible to write a novel before you know the alphabet.

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