

The Teachings of Metin Yazir

Dance Systems

There are two systems of partner foot relationship. Cross and Parallel.

Cross is when you and your partner are dancing on the same foot (left to left or right to right.)

Parallel is when you and your partner are dancing on the opposite foot. (left to right or right to left.)

Step Relationships

There are three relationships of the feet as they move through the dance. Open, Cross, and Together.

Open can be to the side, forward or back (square), or at a diagonal. The next step can be influenced by the dance system.

Cross is when one foot steps across the foot line of the other. There are several ways to get to a cross position, and it is determined by the dance position.

Dance Movements

There are three movements. Open, cross, and walk.

Open can be to the side but generally refers to the diagonal step.

Cross is in four directions. Cross front or back, left or right foot first.

Walk refers only to the straight open, forward or backward step.

It is very important to be able to dance these movements with great distinction. The cleaner the lead, the cleaner the follow.

Foot Positions

There are five positions, which relate to the feet, for the lady or man.

1. & 2. Step to one side or the other and end with the free foot touching, closed and under the body.
3. Feet apart with weight equally distributed on each foot.
4. & 5. Step to one side or the other and end with the free foot held and touching to the point where the side step started.

These positions are also used for diagonal and crossing steps.

Dance Positions

There are two (contact) dance positions used to create all dance steps. Open and Embrace (or half embrace.)

Embrace is when the bodies are touching at the body just below the ribs (towards the man's right corner works well.)

The man's right arm will wrap comfortably around the ladies left side, but with no real sense of pressure. The man's left hand will open for the lady's hand, but not rise above the base of her ribs. His hand tends to extend comfortably to the side, away from the bodies. The lady will place her right hand in his left, without any great sense of pressure. Her left arms wraps comfortably along his right arm, resting her hand, with no pressure, around his shoulder, neck, or on his shoulder.

Open is when the man stands away from the lady with his right wrist under the top inside area of her upper arm, palm toward the body, placing his thumb area to touch the highest, most inside muscle of her upper arm. This contact allows the man the lead any move, in any direction. The man's left and lady's right hand is the same as embrace. the distance between the two must be such that it doesn't cause either partner to lose their balance, at any time.

Frame Ownership

This refers to the ownership aspect of the frame, which includes the upper and lower body for both partners.

The upper body of both partners belongs to the lady.

The lower body of both partners belongs to the man. His main concern is the lady's lower body, as he needs to always know her foot position (which includes her weight.) His lower body does not need the same priority because he may need to do different movements and weight changes to continue his lead with his partner.

Dance Direction

This refers to the movement direction of the lady and how it relates to the (hip) position of the man. This reaction happens because of the relationship the lady has with the man's right wrist area and her inside upper arm. She dances to keep a balance with her center and a balance with the wrist to arm contact.

If the man walks with his hip square to his direction, she must go back or forward.

If he moves to the side, she must move to the side with him. His hips are parallel to the side direction. The lady will also move to the side if the man only moves his arm.

If the man, (while standing still,) rotates his hips to the right or left, she must walk open, at a diagonal, or crossed.

Dance Movement Combinations

The three dance movements are limited in the way they relate to the two dance systems.

The Cross system works well with the 'open' and 'cross' movement, but should avoid using the 'walk' because the dancers are using the same foot as they move. A 'walk' would eventually cause either dancer to step onto their partner's standing foot. Example: Using this system, the leader, stepping forward onto his right foot, would place that foot right on top of the follower's left (non-moving) foot. If it doesn't happen the first time a walk is executed, it is only a matter of time before it does happen. This is not a good chance to take.

The Parallel system works well with the 'cross' and the 'walk' movement, but doesn't make a good looking step, using the 'open' movement. There is no contrast and the couple ends up looking like they are stepping side to side and "skating" across the floor.

Remember: The 'open' movement refers to the diagonal moving side step.

Footwork

This style of Tango promotes natural movement, so the footwork of the man and lady should be natural.

Walk forward with the heel, as if you are walking in a park.

Walking backward steps with the toe first.

Posture

Stand upright and do not allow anything to stop you from reaching the best 'standing' posture you may be able to achieve.

The Lead

Moving naturally is the main premise of this style of Tango dancing

The leader's steps are not as important to the lead as they are to his moving with the lead.

Lead first, step second. If a step is not necessary, don't step. Even if the lady does move.

(Advanced) The leader may direct the movement by just moving his right arm, but this lead requires experience in order to keep from pushing the lady. Weight shift will be done, when necessary.

(Normaly) The leader uses his lower body to move himself. It then translates to his upper body, so the follower can read that movement. It is, of course, sent to his right arm, as well, but that contact should be used sparingly so that it would never overpower the lady's center balance. Preserving that balance is the leader's main objective. He must both influence and support that balance at the same time.

The leader should be very careful that he not 'over-lead' by adding too many things at once. Turn the lady or move her. Not a little of each. Remember her balance. Using the left hand or arm is not affective in leading anything that you want the lady to follow. Using the wrist by 'pointing or flexing' it is not affective in making the lady turn left or right. Invite a direction with body rotation. Extend the invitation in the same direction (just a little) will allow the lady to turn.

The Follow

The follower will be able to move herself easier and in a more natural manner if she would start out trying not to move at all. As she feels a 'Dance Movement' from the man it must, however quickly, build up to a point where the direction cannot be confused with anything else. She must then be careful not to 'throw' herself into the next step because the leader may need her to stop for the 3rd foot position, or slow at that position to create the 4th or 5th position.

Know how your balance works so you can get from one step to the next without losing it.

Energy Direction

Regardless of the man's turning, moving, or positioning, he creates two different directions for the lady. Forward and Back.

He must be aware of that, as it is his responsibility to make that direction clear to his partner.

The lady must wait for the direction to become clear. She should not move if she is not sure.

Timing

Listen to the music. You can hear a beat which will tell you when to step and when to wait. Generally, step on each beat, in the music, which seems strong to you. Every leader may interpret the music in a different way, so they each may dance the same patterns to the same song in a different way. The follower should not decide if a timing is 'right or wrong.' When it is time for her to 'play', she might interpret the dance differently than the man thinks she should, he must wait to see when she is available to be danced again.

EACH LEAD IS AN INVITATION

EACH FOLLOW OBLIGES THAT INVITATION

Move as naturally as you can.

Preserve your balance and respect that of your partner.