



Larrys Corner

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This is called Larrys Corner because when I teach I stand in the corner so I can see everyone.

If you want to read dance stories they are under Headlines or Larrys Corner.

[Http://www.comedancewithus.com](http://www.comedancewithus.com) Or
<http://www.dancempls.com>

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Do you have any likes or dislikes, stories, or helpful hints for dancing? If so, write it down and give to Larry Ablin or Barb Johnson. We will add it to one of the future News letters.

If you would like to tell us how you became interested in dancing, write it down and give to Larry or Barb, we will add your picture with it and put it in one of the future Newsletters. If you have anything you would like to write about, just write it up and give to Barb or Larry. I enjoy writing something for you.

Come Dance With Us

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CRITICAL TIMING

Critical timing and the "2-Beat" Rhythms: I do believe in "Staying within the Rules" - but there are times when I momentarily find exceptions to those rules. I say "momentarily" because I always stop - step back - and take a second look whenever I seem to encounter "exceptions" to a RULE.

So far, each experience has proven that RULES are more important than any momentary "shortcut". Many times we only think we are breaking a rule - when we are simply encountering a lack of understanding the depth of the rule.

I marvel at how rules unfold gradually, revealing their secrets one at a time.

Counting out a pattern - creating a new pattern - or teaching an old pattern, it saves time and effort when we stick to the "Rules of Timing" and "Rules of Movement". Every pattern - in every dance that is danced to 4/4 time music - is composed of a series of "2-Beat" rhythms. There are no exceptions. On occasion, I have found myself breaking down a pattern - stopping on count "3" to explain a foot position, a move, a lead, or a styling - and then continuing on, starting with count "4". In every instance, without exception - when I went back and took the same pattern apart in "2-Beat" increments, I found a tiny "gem" that made the difference between a good performance and an exceptional one. That "gem" always turns out to be that almost imperceptible "breath" that separates the "2-Beat" rhythms. Separating the rhythms in any dance encourages the dancer to discover "Pulsing." Accenting the Downbeat or the Upbeat - according to the dance being done, leads to the discovery of the "Heartbeat" of the dance.

Select one of your favorite Swing dance patterns. Determine what kind of an action is taking place on the "&a" before count "3" - as well as the action on the "&a" before count "4". I guarantee that you will make another important discovery. Do I always catch the "discovery" on the first try? Of course not! When we truly embark on the "learning path" - we learn something new with each new journey. A journey requires a destination. Our destination is always a new level of dance performance, but much of the joy is in the journey.

When working on "Critical count" it is amazing how much clarification and excitement is added simply by adhering to the "2-Beat" rhythm rule. Break down each pattern by stopping on every Upbeat (2, 4, 6, 8).

Practice each individual rhythm. Start each rhythm on the "&a" prior to the Downbeat and END each rhythm precisely on the Upbeat. You will be rewarded by the things you discover about each individual rhythm. You will be even MORE rewarded by the improvement it will make in the performance of that pattern.

Yo Yo Ma, world-famous cellist, made an eye opening statement in a television interview. When asked: "What is it that makes you such a

great musician?" He answered that it was not just knowing which notes to play - but rather the quality of the spaces between the notes that made the difference. What a statement and what a fantastic observation! To me, that is a great description of "Critical Timing." Critical Timing is created by controlling the rhythmic flow of uneven, although precisely placed, spaces between weight changes. This is sometimes accomplished through a natural "inborn talent" - but more frequently acquired by the studied development of "Rolling Count." The ability to manipulate the spaces between the rhythms - and the spaces between the weight changes within the rhythms, always creates an exciting performance.

GIFT OF DANCE

If you are reading this article - you are probably one of those lucky people who already possess "The Gift". Dance may be as important in your life - as it is in mine! If that's a fact - you too must realize the importance of The Gift. We have all sent and received gifts for special occasions. But every once in a while there are moments of realization that lets us know how special we must be - to have been given this Gift of DANCE!

Think of all the times when the world was coming down around your ears and you went dancing". Didn't it change your day?

I have been in situations where I thought I could not make it through the day: Personal pressures of the day! But - that would have to wait - "There's a class to teach and people are expecting me - The music starts - The class lines up - Someone asks a question - And there we go - "Off and dancing" The problems of the day disappear - even if it's only for a while. Dancing allows us to take a break from the cares of the day.

We've known all along that Dance is a gift. But sometimes we get so caught up in the joy of it all - that we forget to treat it as a gift! Don't be the one to spoil someone's evening. Take a deep breath and Share the gift. Someone out there needs a smile and quiet assurance that they are progressing as they should. Someone out there has had a bad day and really needs someone to tell them that they are okay. Not in words - simply by sharing a dance. Each of us has the opportunity to feel the glow that comes from sharing the gift. Feel the blessing every time you take the time to dance with someone a little less talented or a little less experienced.

We can use the dance as a way of growing - a way of learning how to give back some of the treasures that life has given us. Those who dance have been truly Blessed. Share the Blessing.

The years pass swiftly. Many wonderful experiences lie behind us - and many, more wonderful experiences lie before us. But today is the most valuable day in our lives. Close your eyes - Take a deep breath - and Smile. Take a moment to become aware that "It's really later than we think." Every time we do something for someone that brightens their day - more joy returns than one can imagine. One warm "Hello" - one sincere "Thank you for the dance" - one small, unexpected token of friendship, can really make somebody's day.

AND - if you're out there thinking that nobody cares about you - or that you can't really do anything for someone else until somebody does something for you - please remember this: I care About You. Whoever you are, and wherever you are, I care about you. So go ahead and get yourself out there. Show that you care about the people around you. Does all this sound like I've had a really emotional day? You bet. I've spent several days thinking about several of the wonderful people I've come to know, simply because of the dance. Many of them are no longer with us. They have gone to a higher plane of existence. They are up there blazing new trails, gathering musicians, "DJs" and dancers - getting ready to welcome each of us, as it becomes our turn to "graduate."

Meanwhile, I am eternally grateful for all of the wonderful people who have been part of my life. My constant prayer is that somehow, the whole world could experience the exhilaration and sense of "renewal" that takes place, when we discover that "Life is a dance!" Live the experience. "Share the Gift."