



## Dance and Romance

A featured article by Richard Parker, Delray Beach, FL

Like most men, I sometimes wonder at the attraction dance has for women. It is not unusual to see ladies spend 4-5 nights a week at dances, and not unusual to find otherwise intelligent women spend \$15,000/year on dance lessons. This was a real curiosity to me early in my “discovery” of dance, and today I still find it an endless source of fascination.

This article is a discussion of dance and romance, and is the result of many hours of investigation and life experiences. I approach this landmine-laden subject both logically and systematically. No, I am not as qualified as a clinical psychologist or counsellor, but I can read and write and feel, and I know what I see.

Perhaps some of my conclusions will be interesting. If so, you can let me know.

### A Hidden Ingredient

Aside from the fun and social benefits, dance has another ingredient – something that calls from deep within us and readily brings out emotions that may only seldom occur.



Consider what happens in a popular dance – the Argentine Tango. I used to spend some time at the Miami tango dances at the Elk’s Club off the Alhambra Entrance, from 11:00 PM to 3:00 AM. Now, when asking a lady to dance at these events, you are diving into a sub-culture that has its own style and flair. The lady, whom you may have never met before, generally is quite receptive to the invitation (that is, if her boyfriend is not around).

Then, in classical Argentine Tango, you start with the “close embrace” dance position, which is basically two people plastered together so close that synchronized breathing is useful.

But then it starts to get interesting, as the movement, sway and body positions assume a familiarity that is generally only found with lovers.

Now how is it that this lady, whom I have never met before, is suddenly so friendly for three minutes?

The answer lies somewhere (it is listed below) in the depths of Romance. But not just the feeling and the topic, but it also shows how men fail to understand Romance.

### Understanding Romance

Towards the end of the Roman Empire, man was perceived as an object at the mercy of external events happening to him, and from this he derives some spiritual significance. Later in the Middle Ages, man was recognized as a mobile object who would be in a

constant journey to find spiritual meaning. From this we derived the concept of chivalry, and the chivalrous knight rescuing the maiden. Alas, the puritanical mores of the times only allowed an unhappy ending. The man retreats with his own love intact after saving the lady, and she is married to someone else.

Contemporary romance, on the other hand, requires a happy ending, despite *The Bridges of Madison County*.

But our contemporary man, long conditioned to images of rescuing maidens, finds himself in a dark spot. Having no dragons to slay and unable to fathom the purposes of the lady's heart, he seeks her approval by means of gifts, cards and letters.



In this, he abandons his control of his destiny and instead becomes a supplicant – a beggar. This is a fundamental transformational fact of many men today.

The lady, however, gazing upon the gifts and calls, finds herself repulsed, and why is that?

*Now here is where you make the decision to stay on board with me or get off the train*

The man in this process *tends to abandon his manhood*, because he does not understand the dynamic that attracts the lady to dance.

Interesting, no?

Now for the technical part.

### **The Technical Part (please forgive me)**

The lady really has three conscious levels of thinking:

1. The top, or day-to-day layer
2. The second, or conditioned layer
3. The deeper, or unconditioned layer

*The hapless suitor is talking to the lady's 2<sup>nd</sup> layer.* This is the layer that is festooned with danger signs, warnings and conditioned responses going back to the time she was a little girl. If there is no initial attraction or means for the relationship to progress, the lady responds negatively because she perceives the attention from a supplicant as a means to curry her favour.

Being a modern, independent woman, she ain't about to be obligated to nobody – so there.

Even worse is the state of the Romantic. This man is not a supplicant, but an individual who lives in a partial fantasy of imagination. The Romantic has a heart that Reason is not equipped to understand. The heart of the Romantic is itself a source of knowledge -- ideas that are actually "felt" as *sensations* rather than thoughts, so the Romantic will probably never understand the woman, and cannot comprehend the lady's refusal.

End of the man's story.

So what does this have to do with dance?

Easy – the lady is waiting, subconsciously, for the suitor to affect her 3<sup>rd</sup> layer – the unconditioned layer of her emotions.

The unconditioned 3<sup>rd</sup> layer of a woman's emotion is a vast sea of possibilities, responses and textures. Being unconditioned, it has the favour of spontaneity, the allure of immediacy and the passion of intensity. The 3<sup>rd</sup> layer is only available to the suitor who somehow affects a patterning of her behaviour, which allows this emotion to come to the surface. Generally, it is unconscious (although we know now that the knowledgeable man can directly affect the lady's 3<sup>rd</sup> layer).

That is why the lady complains if there is no chemistry (3<sup>rd</sup> layer not affected), and that is why the lady sometimes shuts down emotionally (2nd layer), because she does not wish to take the risk of this virginal field of her dreams to be sullied by someone or some condition that she cannot control.

### The End of the Medieval Romantic Man

To give some credence to my assertions, consider the romance novel.

This genre started to explode in the early 80's and now accounts for a staggering 54.5% of all popular fiction sold in the US, or \$1.52 billion in sales in 2001 alone. Just look at any supermarket shelf and notice the array of novels with their obligatory bodice-ripping front cover scenes.

Now why is that? Well, look at the formula:

Romance novels are primal. The romance novel affirms the core values of our society. The romance novel actually empowers women, as the heroines *always* win. This is a *complete role reversal* over the medieval man and his medieval picture of Romance. No wonder the contemporary male loses with the ladies so much of the time. In fact, the



victory of the heroine is celebrated in the entire industry oeuvre using the standard HEA ending (Happily Ever After).

But the story of romantic love as a road map for an *entire* relationship is a losing desire and founders on the rocks of reality. The marvellous feelings of passion we experience in romantic love are the space given to us to form a longer-lasting relationship built on trust, patience and forgiveness.

*Forgive me now, as I may ruin this for some of you, and  
yes, we will get to dance*

### **"I get a kick out of you."**

Falling in love involves mental and a physical processes. Researchers now say at the core of the feelings of love is a chemical called phenylethylamine, or PEA. Chemically related to amphetamine, it gives a similar "kick" and comes from secretions through the nervous system and bloodstream, creating an emotional response equivalent to a high on drugs. This makes your heart palpitate, your hands sweat, and your insides go all funny (sound familiar?). According to Liz Dawson of the London Neuro Psychotherapy Group, the first stage of a relationship involves the release of Phenylethylamine, which, along with dopamine and norepinephrine, is manufactured in the body when we first feel the physical sensations of romantic love. It is the body's natural "high."



It is also found in chocolate.

But the kick doesn't last forever, or even for very long, averaging 18 to 36 months. This is still plenty of time to have a fantastic fling, get him or her to say, "I do," and/or propagate the species. So it seems that romantic love is relatively short-lived. The good news is that it does last long enough to kick-start great love affairs.

We may recall the words of Thoreau who said, "If you have built castles in the air, that is fine. Now put a foundation under them."

*Please accept that although science has identified the  
chemical of love, that knowledge does not make it any  
less magical.*

### **What is the Trigger?**

Past experiences, both positive and negative, are patterned and stored by your sexual subconscious (2<sup>nd</sup> level). If the timing is right and someone triggers one, BLAM! A shot of PEA shoots through your veins, blasting your brain, blinding your reason, and you begin to fall in love.

That's just for starters. The love signal is a powerful jolt to your life starter, revving up your motor, and placing your actions in gear. The super-powered starter gets your car going, and then the engine takes over. Finally, after your brain recuperates from its first shot of PEA, a little reason (hopefully) starts to make its way through the grey matter, and you start to consider what is really going on.

*So that is what happened to me; but what's this all got to do with Dance?*

Well, simple.

Consider the lady at a dance. The happy environment, the attractive people, and the gorgeous music – they all contribute to a magical scene of the mind.

It is so friendly and so - so *safe*, that the lady may allow her deeper levels of feelings to come to the surface. The measured and choreographed movement adds to the safety and the limited time (three minutes) gives the control. No matter what, she can walk away from her partner in three minutes. Safety and control – the wielded weapons of the heroine.

So, she allows the deeper levels of consciousness to come to the surface, and every once in a while, some basic familiarity trigger is pressed, and MINI-POW! the feeling of love causes a brief intoxication. That dance satisfied, she looks forward to the next.

As for the Romantic – we know now that his PEA-injector is out of control. Sailing though life on his subliminal surfboard, the Romantic male regularly receives small jolts of PEA, causing his logical process to sputter and fry in the olive oil of love.

### **So how do we use this?**

Now, gentlemen – we have an honour and a duty.

Knowing now that dance can expose the lady's 3<sup>rd</sup> level of consciousness and emotion, we can once again revert to the chivalric sport of rescuing the damsel. All is not lost in the days of advanced psychology. No – you now can know what your mission is.

Your chivalric mission is to hold and guide the lady expertly on her emotional carriage; over the river of passion and through the woods of patterns. Thus you, the squire of the pleasant countryside offers protection and fulfilment to his lady, who revels in her exposed 3<sup>rd</sup> level of consciousness, and thoroughly enjoys the evening.

*Translated: give a good, smooth lead with no steps beyond the lady and escort her back to her seat.*

As for all you Romantics, take a cold shower.

*“Thou shalt respect all weaknesses and shalt constitute thyself the defender of them.”*

Third Stanza, The Code of Chivalry - Leon Gautier, *The Decalogue*