



The Magic Words

A short true story by Richard Parker, Delray Beach, FL

Esteem

Noun: *Favorable regard.*

It was about 8:00 that night, and I strolled over the honey-colored dance floor as the guests milled about, the soft cascade of lights adding a unique ambience to the room.

That night was the culmination of the weekend competition event, and the night, like many such nights, was a time of enjoyment and relaxation.

The lady appeared to my right and immediately caught my attention. Dressed in a long white gown decorated with splashes of pearl, she was the picture of elegance, with her blond hair up and a smile on her face. Of course, I asked her to dance.



Ballroom dancing is like that. You can participate in the grandest of environments with the finest of ladies and the best of music, and all for less than a night at the movies.

It seemed to me that many of my friends were living half-lives, missing that essential part of your being which seeks the emotion found in music, the giving of yourself to the movement with another and the joy in finding expression in dance.

I find this wherever I go; I find people who are different – people who are participants in life, instead of spectators.

I also find I cannot speak of this to co-workers who are not dancers; they just do not seem to “get it.” They do not seem to understand why music and movement calls so much to me and to others.

But to a dancer, there is no need of explanation. The state of the dancer is self-evident. It is *anticipated* or *discovered*.

To most men it is *discovered*. They find later in life there is meaning and fulfillment in the dance and in participating in the dance.

Most men find it hard to make the transition of the many hours of lessons into some kind of credible movement. They prefer to believe they possess the ability to “lead” the lady when in fact they usually get in the way,

It is hard for the man to humble himself to lessons, preferring instead to rest in the delusion of his assumed proficiency, and thus missing the real feeling of dance – that of moving in concert with a partner.

To most ladies it is *anticipated*. They want to feel the movement to the music and the interpretation of the many textures of feelings to be found in the rhythms and melodies of ballroom music.

Most of the songs, of course, are love songs. They speak of the passion and longing that is at the heart of the human experience, for there can be no greater expression than the expression of love.

Then the dance is at heart a fantasy. It is a 3-minute journey of a lady with a man who can let her imagination wander and her feelings come to the surface, and when it is all done, she can say “thank you,” and return to her seat, safe and secure and free of commitment.

So the lady wants a gentle lead and wants to execute the steps with confidence and feel that her mistakes are minimal and her enjoyment is at a maximum.

But the man – what does the man want?

The man is really placed on the spot. He must guide the lady expertly, stay in time to the music, not bump into other dancers, and provide a nice mix of patterns to make it interesting.

So the man is on the stage for his performance: his performance as a dancer, and to a certain degree, his performance as a man, for many men equate their self worth with their ability to please a lady or to smoothly move through a social function. So what does the man look for? He looks for that elusive quality that gives him fulfillment.

The lady finds fulfillment in the *experience*, where the man finds fulfillment in the *accomplishment*.

Now what can the man do to increase the experience of the lady? He can endeavor to lead her so that she feels she is moving with the music in a satisfying way. The man fulfills his role by making the lady feel accomplished. The man fulfills his role by actions.

And what can the lady do to fulfill the experience of the man?

She can do what this lady did that night, in her beautiful white gown and her pleasant demeanor. She can fulfill her role to the greatest extent by letting the man feel that she really enjoys dancing with him, for there can be no greater gift she can deliver to the man than this gift of appreciation. The lady fulfills her role with words.

She can do what this lady did that night, when she said those Magic Words, which made me want to do anything for her.



Because the music started with one of those numbers which floats in the adagio – a song which cannot be evaluated until many seconds go by.

So I said to her, “what dance would you like to do?”

And she said to me

“It really doesn’t matter as long as I am dancing with you.”