



“I’ve decided that a marriage is a lot like dancing. It’s a subtle interplay between two people that requires constant focus and dedication.”

The Dance Lesson

Standing by the faux crystal punch bowl, I glanced around for my ideal dance partner. He was talking to a group of giggling girls across the middle school gym that had been converted into a crepe paper and balloon menagerie for the seventh-grade dance. In my mind, I’d gone over the conversation with Mr. Man of My Dreams.

“Hi, Sam, how are you? Would you like to dance?”

No, that was too forward.

“Hi, Sam. How ya’ doin’? You look nice.”

No, too intimate.

“Hello, Samuel. What’s going on? Care to take a spin?”

Too pathetic.

Regardless of my hopeful intentions, this fictionalized witty banter was a moot point because the conversation never materialized. One of those pesky popular girls grabbed my object of affection and dominated him as her dance partner for the entire evening. To add insult to injury, he even dipped her like Fred Astaire would and she threw her head back, smiling just like Ginger Rogers.

I ended up on the dance floor with Hal, my science lab partner, who was a foot smaller than I, giving me a visual vantage point of the top of his slicked mop of black hair.

My quest for the perfect dance mate continued through high school, although K.C. and the Sunshine Band wasn’t exactly the musical elixir for a long-term romance. “Shake Your Booty” just doesn’t cut it for finding the right roses and violin kind of guy. The college years were better — frat parties and sorority mixers made for great fun, but how long can love last with “The Electric Slide”?

Luckily, my search was complete after graduate school. I met Mike. I knew he was the one for me when I caught him tapping his toes to

a Glenn Miller album that I was playing. This man had dancing potential.

Now, more than 16 years later, we’re still together and still find ourselves engaged in the art of the dance.

Actually, I’ve decided that a marriage is a lot like dancing. It’s a subtle interplay between two people that requires constant focus and dedication. Sure, we stumble from time to time, but the trick is to keep on moving. Preferably in the same direction.

So, in the spirit of maintaining a forward-moving marriage, we signed up for dance lessons. I wanted to jump right into the complex foxtrot while Mike was lobbying to ease into a comfortable waltz. We both agreed this was an apt metaphor for our marriage.

These days, our dancing opportunities consist of spontaneous turns in the living room. We call this our own little “Dancing with the Stars,” minus the stars and, if you want to get picky, the dancing.

We alternate partners — mother/son, father/daughter, brother/sister (only on good days when they’re civil to one another), but the kids’ favorite combo is when mom and dad end up dancing together. They find one of our favorite tunes on the iPod — usually Frank Sinatra — then pile on the couch, watching their parents glide around the room, swaying in step, sometimes out of step, temples pressed to each other.

We’re usually at our best when we’re not thinking about the next move, when we’re just dancing. One night, I asked my husband, “Am I leading?”

“Probably,” he said, laughing.

Then he dipped me like Fred Astaire and I smiled like Ginger Rogers. Or at least like a seventh-grade girl who grew up to know the value of a really good dance partner. ●●●

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