

# THE REASONS WHY WE DANCE

As a choreographer and writer (though I confess I am far more comfortable to claim the former than the latter), I get asked to share my opinion about a myriad of dance related topics from the practical:

***“How can dance help you get in shape?”***

***“What is the best way to practice my footwork?”***

***“What are the three most important partnering techniques I should learn?”***

To the existential:

***“Is my dancing a projection of my self-image?”***

***“How can dancing improve relationships?”***

***“Can dancing help you overcome fear?”***

All good questions with good answers to be certain, but today I want to answer, or at least try to answer, the question I get asked most often. The question I think matters most...

***“WHY DO PEOPLE DANCE?”***



That's it. Simply, why? What is it about moving our bodies to a song we love that is so joyfully Pavlovian? Why do we watch videos, obsess over our reflection in the kitchen window, and yes, take lessons to perfect something that could easily be labeled as trivial? Why do we put ourselves through the physical fatigue and the occasional social awkwardness just to call ourselves **dancers**? Why do we love it so?

There are the obvious answers. **We dance for physical fitness. We dance for mental clarity. We dance for emotional stability**, and other such pluses.

However, all these benefits could be attained by other means, though I confess I have yet to find a better alternative than a great cha cha to lift both one's heart-rate and spirits. Still, we do not need to **dance to acquire a sound mind and body**. So, there must be more reasons why we do so. There must be something glorious about dancing that is more than just intangible; it must be almost imperceptible. We cannot seem to explain it, yet we all know it so well that we do not hesitate to tap our feet to a Gershwin melody or pulse with the percussion of a samba rhythm. **So why do we dance?**

Perhaps **dance** is the way we express ourselves when words are insufficient. The joy we feel over new found love, the determination we have in the face of great sorrow or adversity, the passionate fire of our youth and the peacefulness of our softer and more graceful years – maybe they are never expressed more fully than through a waltz, or a tango, or a jive. We all want to be understood, and if we could truly speak the words that describe our feelings, how deep and powerful they would surely be. But alas, those words never seem to come to us just right.

Nothing can beat cha cha to lift both one's heart-rate and spirits. Still, we do not need to dance to acquire a sound mind and body. So, there must be more reasons why we do so. There must be something glorious about dancing that is more than just intangible; it must be almost imperceptible. We cannot seem to explain it, yet we all know it so well that we do not hesitate to tap our feet to a Gershwin melody or pulse with the percussion of a samba rhythm. So why do we dance?

Perhaps dance is the way we express ourselves when words are insufficient. The joy we feel over new found love, the determination we have in the face of great sorrow or adversity, the passionate fire of our youth and the peacefulness

of our softer and more graceful years – maybe they are never expressed more fully than through a waltz, or a tango, or a jive. We all want to be understood, and if we could truly speak the words that describe our feelings, how deep and powerful they would surely be. But alas, those words never seem to come to us just right.

### **MAYBE DANCE IS SIMPLY A TRANSLATOR FOR THE HUMAN HEART.**

Perhaps **dance** is the medium through which we show the world who we truly are and who we can be. All of us, if we are honest, believe deep down that we are not ordinary. We know ourselves to be wonderfully unique, with many layers of personality and talent woven in such a way that no one on earth could possibly have our same make-up. We know it. We just do not always know how to prove it.



### **MAYBE DANCE GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY.**

And perhaps **dance** is how we choose to remember, how we hold on to the past. It is how we relive the fun-filled days of our youth or the time we looked in their eyes and knew they were the one. It is our tribute to the heroes of yesterday who jitterbugged like carefree boys and girls, when tomorrow they would march as men and women to defend freedom's cause. It is the chance to be a princess again, waiting for an out-stretched hand and the call to a

romance that is graceful, true, and not as forgotten as the cynics say. When **we dance**, we can remember them all a little better, feel the butterflies once again, and if only for a moment, return to the purest part of our lives when time was of no matter...for **we were dancing**.

Why do we dance? Every answer will be different, and that is as it should be. Perhaps the better question is, "Why would we not?"

David Thomas Moore is the Artistic Director and Resident Choreographer for Dance With Me USA. He is the also co-writer/choreographer for the stage show, *Sway: A Dance Trilogy*.

---

The best part is... literally anyone can do it. With the right teachers, it's fun and easy to do. Literally the hardest part is taking that first step... to pick up the phone, to schedule a lesson, to walk inside a dance studio. Once you take those first steps, the steps on the dancefloor are as easy as a breath of fresh air.

**TELL US IN THE COMMENTS WHY YOU DANCE!**

**Share this article with a friend who you think could benefit?!**