



ARE YOU BEING A BULLY ON THE DANCE FLOOR?

by Jean Goh

I've always prided my scene on being welcoming to new dancers, both beginners and visitors from overseas. The senior dancers are always asking the newbies and guests for a dance, and they also take the time to chat with them. Many visitors have commented that our socials have a welcoming atmosphere, and our community feels like a family.

So, it was with some distress that I heard that some of the dancers are actually bullying beginners. How? By doing the following:

Putting them through difficult moves that they have yet to learn or can't understand.

You can usually tell when this happens, by the utter look of confusion on the recipient's face. They also look like they're moving in a way that seems out of control. Sometimes it results in near-falls or worse, injuries.

To the leaders who do this - *What exactly is the purpose of putting a beginner through advanced moves like rotisserie, tilted turns, or circular head movements?*

Why do you need to do difficult moves on a beginner? Is it to feel superior about yourself? Are you just trying to "teach" them something new? Or is it because you have a limited move vocabulary, and that's all you know?

The only thing you'll achieve is making them feel intimidated, lose self-confidence, or worse, get injured. Many

especially when we involve our entire body.

Beginners already feel intimidated when they come for socials. Don't bully them by throwing complex moves at them. Instead, dance to their level, help them to feel competent about what they've learnt and encourage them to enjoy the dance.

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advanced moves require proper training and body awareness, to build the necessary skills to move in that manner. You cannot "teach" someone by repeatedly putting them through such moves, especially if you are not a trained instructor. And adding "force" is one of the worst thing you can do.

A good leader knows how to adapt and use different leading methods, for example, using other parts of the body, leading earlier, using breath, etc. We can

Saying, "Oh, that was supposed to be a [blank] " with a disapproving look, when beginners can't follow your moves .

Do you often express disapproval at your dance partners' response to your lead? And then proceed to "teach"?

Dancers go to a classroom with the expectation to learn. Being corrected is



always lead in more obvious ways, part and parcel of that. However, they go to a social to dance, to have fun, to forget their worries. If all they do is receive disapproving looks, and feel like they can't do anything right, they're going to stop coming. And when beginners stop coming, that is the beginning of the end.

Be patient with them and celebrate the

And regardless of dance genre, body awareness and strength all take time to build.

The best thing you can do is to say, "That's ok. You'll learn it in time to come. Don't worry about it". And STOP correcting them. Or if it's a move they've already learnt, ask them to check with the instructor, who will do a much better job

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fact that they're even coming for socials. Being there takes a lot of courage and we should recognise that.

Just like you, everyone starts dancing Zouk from ground zero, regardless of dance background. Each dance genre has its own peculiarities and rules that need to be learnt progressively. Zouk, in particular, has a unique movement philosophy, and involves different planes of movement (as compared to dance genres that don't have head movements).

of breaking it down and explaining it.

Let's all learn the art of making every dancer feel good; especially beginners. That in itself is a very important skill, beyond all the moves in the world. Instead of complicated moves, why not apply musicality to simple moves? Use breathing techniques and body tension to slow things down, or speed things up. Work on your preparation, and your smile.

Give every person you dance with, a reason to fall in love with Zouk.

