

# On the Technique

## The Power of a Smile

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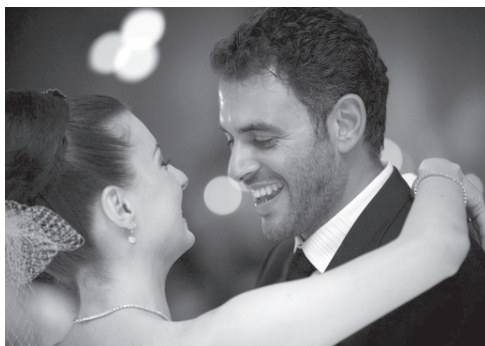
US Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing



The dance floor is an excellent place to wear a bright smile especially since dancing is an activity that already promotes a heightened state of joyfulness. Smiling is the universal expression of joy. It helps people to feel less stressed and thereby promotes an overall feeling of well-being. This is an excellent habit to cultivate on the dance floor as it expresses one's pure passion for dancing.

Smiling is a valuable personal attribute that creates the potential for positive social interactions. It makes one appear more self confident, and accepting of others. It has many other benefits to our physical and emotional well-being. Studies have found that people who smile are perceived to be more approachable. Moreover, it has the effect of eliciting a smile in another person. This is always a good way to break down shyness barriers that may exist at a social dance setting.

Have you ever seen dancers that are not smiling? You may occasionally notice



someone with a blank stare or even a frown. It is good to avoid these facial expressions on the dance floor as it may convey disinterest, insecurity or even irritation to name a few. A blank stare or a worried look does not support the joy of dancing. Smiling sets up an internal chemistry that creates a more positive mood. It enhances one's entire personal experience in a profound way. However, it is always a good idea to make it a genuine smile and one that you can effortlessly sustain throughout the dance. A smile should be natural and not forced. A forced smile is unnatural and may have quite the opposite effect on what a smile is supposed to convey. In some cases, a forced smile may appear as though one is not genuinely enjoying their experience on the dance floor. It may also appear a bit intimidating to other dancers.

The eyes are a key feature that reveals the nature of a smile. Smiling with your eyes expresses friendliness, sincerity and warmth. This aspect of smiling was studied by the French neurologist Guillaume Duchenne in the mid-19th century. He characterized several distinct types of smiles. The smile that is coined after him is known as the 'Duchenne smile'. This is a very natural smile that involves facial muscles that raise the corners of the mouth as well as the cheeks, thereby making the eyes more expressive. In fact a Duchenne smile is also known as "smiling with the eyes" or "smizing". When the eyes are engaged in this manner your smile will have the power to charm others. Conversely, his insights have also revealed that the muscles around the eyes are more isolated and not naturally engaged during a forced smile. This is known as the Pan Am or Boxtop smile. This fake type of smile is likely to have been learned early in life as a mechanism for social politeness. Of course, unnatural smiles can also be used by some as a tool of deception.

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Smiling really is the ultimate ice breaker at a social dance event. It is said that the eyes are the window to the soul. Did you ever wonder if you smile because you are happy or perhaps are you happy because you are smiling? This aspect of smiling has also been studied; however, either way, a smile strongly suggests the presence of a positive emotional state. This is interesting because a smile not only communicates our joy to others but also has the power to help sustain the same for ourselves. A smile actually signals the brain to release feel good chemicals. This sets the stage for maintaining the natural state of joyfulness on the dance floor.

A smile not only creates a pleasant internal feeling but also reveals our joyfulness to others. Moreover, it encourages others to feel good in their experience as well. In essence a smile has the potential to create good feelings in oneself and one's partner. Just think of how this can be magnified when both partners are smiling. This is an easy way to bring more joy to your dance experience as well as to influence others in a positive way out on the dance floor.