

It takes two to tango says a lot about the essence of Argentine Tango.

It takes two to tango, and that is what makes it so ... so... so....

When you watch Argentine Tango, what do you see?

Beautiful choreography? Impressive leg work? Incredible combination of steps?

All of that exists.

However most of these steps can be done by the individuals alone.

In fact, Argentine Tango dancers practice steps and combination on their own to train their bodies on how to move, execute steps and combination and hold optimal position. It helps develop body awareness and create muscle memory, all very helpful later in the dance.

Yet, it takes two to tango.

So how do dancers move from steps to dancing?

Most of Argentine Tango is an improvised dance, only stage tango is choreographed.

So in the case of a choreographed dance, it is clear that both dancers can practice rehearsed patterns and steps and let music be their master. But what happens in Milongas (Argentine Tango dance clubs) where all is improvised? How do the partners know what step to execute when while there are some 700 possible combinations?

The secret is **COMMUNICATION**.

Proficient Argentine Tango dancers are not two bodies sharing a dance but one body of four legs and a core united in the dance.

While you may be looking at the dancers' legs, the communication and the dance truly happen at the level of the torso/chest. You may have to be told what to look for to actually catch on what is happening. But once you know, your understanding of the dance dynamic changes and you will never look at Argentine Tango dancers the same way ever again.

There are many ways to communicate.

Some forceful, some gentle, some demanding, some inviting. Some subtle, Some rough. In truth, there are as many ways to communicate as there are personalities out there. But the smoother most beautiful dance happens when there is a dialog between the two partners. The leader invites the follower to a step, she responds and then it is up to the leader to respond to the follower's new step. Together they create the dance.

Going back to our starting point: "it takes two to tango."

What does it mean or rather what does it imply?

It implies that there is a share in responsibility.

Both partners create the dance.

The dance could not happen without the other half of the couple. Each contributes to the dance. And each has its role to play as exemplified by the appellation of leaders and followers.

It takes two to tango implies that there is an equal responsibility to the dance. The concept of leaders and followers does not equate to one dominates and the other obeys. It only means that there is a division of the responsibility. The same as in rally car races, there is a pilot and a co-pilot. Both as necessary to the victory as the other. The same applies to Argentine Tango.

When I reflect on Argentine Tango, I realize that the most beautiful exchange on the dancing floor happens when both partners come from a place of personal strength and at the same time where both surrender to the other. You may remember that last month, I mentioned that AT is a journey. Here is an example of that journey. We do not enter Argentine Tango strong and yet able to surrender. But Argentine Tango will make you strong, help you find/improve/strengthen your bodily balance. It will teach you to find your center. It will awaken your senses to the Argentine Tango music, guide you into establishing a physical/artistic relationship with another person and develop the new skill of communicating without words. It will open a world where you can maintain your integrity and be yourself entirely and at the same time make one with your dance partner for the span of a 3-minute song.

When I went to learn Argentine Tango I only knew I liked the music and I wanted to meet people, I did not know I would discover a metaphor for life and a guide to become better at relating to people and at relationships.

In relationships, we tend to use the phrase “It takes two to tango” in a context of negativity, when one wants to lay blame. But let us turn the phrase around. It takes two to tango as it takes two to create beauty as much as it takes two to make a child. As one progresses on the Argentine Tango journey, one comes to Argentine Tango with the intent of sharing a connection, strong and well centered There is no attempt to lean on your partner or use one another. Instead communication , dialog and respect of each other’s creativity leads to the creation of a piece of art. But I am ahead of myself.

Many watch Argentine Tango and say: “It is beautiful but no, not for me. NO. I can’t do that.” You might be right, But I think that you are wrong (and you just don’t know it yet).

A friend of mines told me that when she started Argentine Tango, she had two left feet, a deaf ear and no confidence in her ability to ever be able to dance Argentine Tango. She is now a well-sought after Argentine Tango dancer. It is not where one begins that matters but the journey and where one ends. Or if not ends (as life like Argentine Tango stops only at death) but the landmarks along the way. Have you ever considered that no-one is born knowing anything? Everything takes learning. One does not become an expert at everything. But one can learn enough of Argentine Tango to have fun. It is a journey. One goes just as far on the way as one chooses. Every step of the way is enrichment and a joy.

Despite popular belief, Argentine Tango could be danced without the partners touching. However the embrace that is so characteristic of Argentine Tango and unique, in many

aspects, to that dance is essential to Argentine Tango's healing properties. Do you want to know more about the power of the Tango embrace?

Read on.

Next month.