



“WHAT IS DANCE LIFE COACHING?”

My passion for Dance started when I was three years old, and I had already decided that I wanted to become a dancer. My original dream was to be a ballet dancer, but at nine years old being on scholarship in one of the best ballet schools in NYC, I was told that my back was not strong enough for Pointe work. What a disappointment that was at such an early age. I then decided to pursue other styles of dance: modern and jazz. None of this was easy, since my father died when I was nine, and my mother worked just to put food on the table. So in order to take dance lessons I had to get scholarships.

At age 18, I landed a job that was a turning point for my career, being part of “The Discothèque Dancers”, an act that wound up touring with the Beatles for three weeks. This changed my life forever, and I continued my career dancing on Television and Broadway.

During these years it seemed I always needed to work some type of part time jobs in order to make ends meet. Between my financial circumstances and my family always trying to get me to have a more stable career, I finally left my dancing passion and pursued a business career. I had many great jobs including managing a modeling and merchandising school in New York. Dance was still my deep passion, but no one ever coached or mentored me as to how to move forward in a dance career and be successful. Years later, one night I was invited to attend a free ballroom lesson at the Fred Astaire Ballroom studio on Fifth Avenue in New York City. That was it for me and I was hooked. After a short while being a student I became a professional, eventually danced with David Van Hamilton, and we became champions in Theatrical/Exhibition and American Style. We also had an adagio act, toured and traveled all over. Then later I worked for Arthur Murray International and with David wrote their Theatrical Syllabus. I became a coach and judge, yet always saw that couples needed more than just dance coaching.

In the years David and I danced we had many wonderful coaches that choreographed and coached our dancing. David and I got married, but eventually got a divorce. Had we had a coach that was trained in dealing with more personal life issues I believe our lives would have benefited greatly, and our decision-making would have gone in a different direction. Through difficult life circumstances and dealing with my mother’s dying I had an encounter with God. After years of college study, I became an ordained minister being trained to counsel and help people with personal issues. When I returned to the Ballroom Industry I wanted to help dancers in an area that I was never helped in, so I became a Dance Life Coach. Some of the areas I coach in are: emotional stability, stress, being able to cope with the pressures of competition,

getting along with your partner, managing money, achieving future dance goals, and life decisions in general.

There is a proverb that says: *“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who listens to counsel is wise.”* The type of counsel you get affects your decision and future. Everyone needs a voice in his or her life that anchors you to your purpose. Beware if you are the smartest and stop seeking advice. Everyone who leads people must have someone who speaks to them, if not they are in pride. Going higher in your career requires you seeking someone out that can expose your weakness. When you take a dance-coaching lesson, you seek the coach with the skills you want to be better in. The coach will correct what they see wrong, then you have to practice the steps and technique given. It is the same in life coaching, a person who cares and is interested in your well-being will help you in your fears, anxieties, issues you are dealing with so you can move forward with your goals. We invest in coaches for our dancing skills but do we invest in coaches for our personal skills?

For many dancers they need a coach not just in their dancing, but to help in their life choices and more serious decisions. I have had the privilege of doing Dance Life Coaching with many couples and individuals, and have been a part of their lives being changed for the better. Here are two comments with names withheld from ballroom dancers that I have helped and coached: *“You help guide us with your experience. I have been dancing for 8 years now and am especially grateful for the insights you have shared.”* (Female dancer) *“Hi Susan, It was your words which I wrote down over the phone that day which really helped. Brought that with me on the plane. You took time to answer and asked questions and thought carefully about your answers. That meant a lot.”* (Male professional needing to make a decision whether to continue with his current dance partnership).

My joy comes from being able to help these dancers move toward their dreams. Dance Life Coaching is not counseling, or psychology, it does not dwell on the past, but looks to the future and the resources available within yourself to achieve and reach your biggest dreams. Here are some points and questions I tell people to consider in making your choices and decisions.

Slow down; do not make a decision under pressure.

Do you have all the information you need in order to make this decision in wisdom? Will you be happy with the choice you are making now a few years later?

Every right decision you make helps reverse a wrong decision from the past. You must take responsibility for your decision.

So many people live regretting their present circumstances, but they don't realize they can make choices to change their future. It does not work to keep doing the same thing the same way and hope for different results. A lot of what sometimes needs changed is our own behavior, or patterns we have developed. Your dancing is a journey, not a destination. Picture your future and take the necessary steps to move forward towards it!