



## Being a Gentleman

### Introduction

- Teaching a man to dance is one thing. Teaching a man to be a gentleman, is quite another. It deserves its own section.
- Some of **the basics** you should already know include:
  - Opening doors for ladies, walking on the road side of a lady, offering a seat to the elderly, offering to help people in need, table manners (this is a big one), patience, smiling, being friendly, paying compliments, including everyone in conversation, posture, being polite to everyone and thanking anyone who does something nice, or lets you stay at their residence.
- I remember at an early age my grandmother taught me all about manners, but after I moved from small-town Cairns to the city, I just looked around me and thought: what's the point. I guess all those romantic ideas of being a gentleman died – I thought of it as something that existed in the “*good old days*”; a time before coloured television and media corrupted society, a time when men wore suits and rimmed hats everywhere, and a time when people were more conservative and less obsessed with themselves. In today's busy lifestyle, boys dress in fancy designer clothes and everyone seems to walk around oblivious to everyone else, people don't talk on the buses, and very few students seems to offer their seats to grown-ups. What is this place?! But hey; that is a REALLY bad attitude!
- Just recently I realized that it's not all in vain. It will always be possible to be a gentleman. Maybe not like quite like the stereotypical ones in the old movies, but a gentleman non-the-less. I know at least three people, including two of my friends from the dance club, and my uncle, who I think of as real gentleman. I'm sure you too know of a few guys who you think of as fantastic role models.
- Being a gentleman is not just about knowing the basics in manners and etiquette, it's about **believing in it**.
- But, in my option, the most important thing is to remember is that, **being a gentleman requires you to be ATTENTIVE!!**
- Knowing what to do and when is tough! In fact, it's almost as tough as the skill of knowing what to say and when! I think the important thing is to recognize when there is an opportunity to do something kind, and leap at it.
- Instead of walking with your head down, and thinking about your assignments, you have to make sure you look up and pay attention to what's going on around you.





- Some examples:
  - You can see a woman is walking toward the same door as you – *walk in front and open it for her, bow your head and smile!* 😊
  - A man and his young son just got onto bus – *vacate your seat so they can sit together.*
  - Your housemate/father forgot to take his washing off the line – *do it for him, fold it neatly and leave it on his bed.*
  - A mother is struggling to carry her shopping – *offer to help.*
  - Someone is looking sad and/or crying and sitting on the sidewalk – *ask if they are okay, and if you can help.*
  - A guest is visiting your house – *never forget to offer a drink!*
  - You're walking past someone on the sidewalk – *don't be self conscience about eye contact; look at them and smile, and say "hello".*
  - A girl you are with looks cold – *offer her your jacket you too!*
  - A person with a backpack looks completely lost – *they are either a student or a tourist, say: "you look lost" and see if they need directions.*
  - There is litter on the ground – *pick it up!* (okay, so this one isn't a typical gentleman thing, but it's still a good thing to do occasionally)
  
- Those are just a few examples, but hey; if you open your eyes, you'll see all kind of opportunities to help people and demonstrate courtesy; and when they smile and respond to that, well that's its own reward I think. When I've done a good deed for the day I feel good about myself, but good deeds don't happen if you have your hands and head buried in your pockets!
- More than that, being gentlemen is about always smiling and being polite – asking people how their day was, buying people a little somethings (like chocolates) without it being their birthday. The thing is, it's is really, REALLY easy to forget sometimes, and that's what you have to avoid.
  
- In case you are still wondering where this is all going I'll tell you. Dancing lends itself to being a gentleman. If ever you wanted an opportunity to be a gentleman this is it!



## Being A Gentleman When Dancing

*Excerpt from "Dancing Tips for Beginners"*

- When dancing with a girl, **the most important thing is to make sure the girl feels comfortable**. You might be the nicest guy in the world, but if she's just met you she won't know that... in fact, depending on the environment she might assume that your being friendly with her means you are sleazy. Sad but true. Men are not always good at reading facial expressions and body language, but hopefully it will be pretty obvious that if she smiles, she is comfortable with you, if not, she is probably new to dancing, shy, not comfortable with the idea of dancing with any guy, or she doesn't trust you yet... and with lots of girls it can take weeks of getting to know you before she does trust you!
- The first time you dance with a girl you don't know **the open hold is a great idea**. The open hold is much less confronting than the closed hold. Having said that; if you pick a girl who clearly has a lot of experience dancing (especially if she's an instructor!), then she might prefer to do it properly/by-the-book; and in professional dancing couples don't use the open hold much. Try to read the signs; if she is clearly comfortable with you, closed hold shouldn't present a problem for her – if she looks nervous/uncomfortable, use the open hold and try some small talk.



**Closed hold**



**Open hold**

- It's always easier dancing with someone you know, or someone you know through a friend, than dancing with a stranger – and it also depends on what environment you're in (workshop/social event/night club) and her personality type. As a guy thought, it's polite not to hog all the best girls! And hey; it's also **great to help**



**your friends out** – so if a male or female friend wants to dance with someone then offer to introduce them. The more different partners you dance with, the better you'll get.

- **Don't worry about skill level.** When you ask a girl to dance you probably won't know her skill level (unless you've watched/seen her on the dance floor) – she could be really good or really ordinary... but this isn't for the rest of the night; it's just one dance! I find it's fun dancing with novices because you have a chance to teach them, and if the girl you ask happens to be way better than you she will probably enjoy giving you some tips (if you ask for them). When you play a game like tennis, playing with better players is how you improve. Likewise in dancing, the best way to improve is to challenge yourself by dancing with girls who are really good – so don't be frightened of them!
- **If you see a girl who looks left out, ask her to dance!** No girl (or guy for that matter) likes to feel left out, so keep a look out for girls who are sitting back and looking shy and/or neglected. Approach them and say *“hello, I was wondering if you would like to dance”*. As soon as you ask she'll (probably) smile because she feels special that you asked. Nevertheless, even if she WANTS to dance she'll often tell you she is too shy or can't dance. This is your cue to persuade her – tell her that everyone else is dancing, and that there is no need to be shy and that you can teach her the steps. The more you practise asking girls to dance (and being a strong lead) the more confident you'll be to dance with girls who claim they can't dance.  
*“I don't know this dance sorry” “That's even better, because I can teach you”*
- **When you ask a girl to dance, your smile is very important.** But what I'm about to tell you now is a something I was almost too selfish to pass on and share. Well hey – I want to have SOME advantage over other guys! ☺  
In fact, I can't take credit because Nadim was the one who started this (so I'll have to get his permission)... if you want a girl to feel really special when you ask her to dance then **it looks really good if you bow** – (just a little) – and put your right hand out ready to take hers when you ask her to dance. If you are feeling REALLY Sean Connery/James Bond/John Travolta then you might even try saying something really gentlemanly like *“may I have the honour of this dance”*. And as a little style tip, **it's looks good when you put your left hand behind your back** when you spin a girl, and even better when you ask her to dance.
- Actually, I've just realized too that I've been using the words *“girls”* and *“boys”* a lot. In truth age doesn't matter. If you see a happy looking forty year old or sixty year old who looks like she wants to dance, ask her – you'll probably both get a kick out of it! And hey; who knows – she might have a daughter/grand-daughter nearby who will want to borrow you for the next dance! ☺
- The fact is, at dancing venues, and dancing lessons **most girls are just WAITING for you to ask them.** So be a gentleman and don't keep the ladies waiting – because **if you hesitate to ask them to dance they will disappear.** If you are learning to dance, then asking girls to dance is virtually your OBLIGATION! So don't use shyness as an excuse, and don't be upset if they say



no – its all practise. And hey; there are often more girls than guys in these situations. Don't be intimidated by that; it just means there are even more girls who want you to ask them. Sometimes the ones that want to dance sit back, and will look shy and maybe even a little sad that no-one has asked... in other cases, the girl will be standing upright, almost on the dance floor – and these girls are practically begging you for a dance. They may as well have a sign that says “*dance with me*”, and if all the guys ignore their signs they will be pretty peeved off!

- And my final tips in being a gentleman. If someone is thirsty, offer to get them a drink (and I'm talking water here – don't bring them anything else unless they ask for it). If a girl is cold, offer your jacket (massive brownie points for that). And, when a girl you know (and who trusts you) is leaving then it's a good idea to walk to her car/bus/train. It's not only a sweet gesture, but hey; it's the safe thing too.

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And before I go, I should probably admit that I don't really think of myself as a gentleman. I try to be, but hey; I think I'm a bit out of practise; certainly not a pro! In my case I'm often off in my own dream world, so often I won't notice opportunities! But hey, I do try.

I hope my document has in some way convinced you that you should always strive towards being a nice guy. It won't pay off straight away, but people do NOTICE... and people will appreciate you for it.

Sincerely,  
Andrew Noske.

**PS:** For more information on being a gentleman use GOOGLE!! 😊