

## **What Sports and Entertainment are Popular among People? : A Report from the Standpoint of Their Relationship to Women**

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Gender agendas are ever present in our every day life, even in sport and entertainment areas in which we typically relax and unwind. This even applies to ballroom dancing, a sport that I have enjoyed for quite some time.

Having waltzed, tangoed, cha-chaed and jived for more than 2 years, until most recently when I reflected on my progress, I have never questioned the rules of ballroom dancing. For me the rules are simple; when my dancing partner has more experience, I follow; when I have more experience, I lead. Most of the time I have followed the lead of men in the ballroom, and sometimes I take the initiative in leading new dance moves, which my gracious partners have followed. I was thus very shocked when I learned that a woman was kicked out of a modern jive class after trying to lead her male partner.

It seems that in a ballroom and in life, some people believe in the adage that 'men always leads'. This is perhaps why I was told that in ballroom competitions, any violations of this rule would result in severe mark penalties for the defying couple. Why has ballroom dancing not evolved in accordance with the liberation movements for gender roles in our society? And why do we, myself included, often accept gender rules without questioning or challenging them?

There are many reasons that men lead in ballroom dancing; namely, it is traditionally done so, and men believe that women prefer it. But do women really prefer it? And how can men assume this to be the case without asking their dancing partners about their real preferences?

There are an increasing number of female leaders in society. Yet, I have heard of many examples in which leading and powerful women have been severely criticized as being unfeminine and unfit, for being assertive, standing up for what they believe in, and succeeding financially and intellectually. And it is sad to notice that those who criticize these women include both men and women alike. Unfortunately, in today's modern society, in the ballroom and beyond, there are men who believe that they are the superior sex in everything they do, and women who have been taught that they are nothing without a man. And there are those who say that a woman has to earn less than her husband in order to have a happy marriage, and that women who rise up the corporate ladder have increased difficulty in getting married.

Every day, young girls growing up are often confused by conflicting messages, which result from gender stereotypes, from their elders, the mass media and their peers

about the need to conform, and at the same time, how far a woman can walk in her life without giving it all up and losing herself. Some are taught that they must never speak of their hard-earned achievements in order to avoid the jealous glares of others, and some are taught that they have to be biddable and sacrifice their own dreams to fulfill the dreams of their families in order to be lovable.

As said in one of my favorite TV shows, “the human genes control how we are and what we are; the human spirit controls who we are and how far we go”. Yes, men and women are different physically. However, while our physical state is determined at birth, whether or not we treat each other equally is our choice. Yes, gender stereotypes are ever present, and here is a question for men in the world. Do you out of fear dissuade your sisters, wives, and friends from finding vocations and hobbies of their choice, or support them to break free from gender stereotypes and become the most successful persons that they have the potential to be? On the other hand, I also have a question for women in the world. Do you allow slanderous comments or attack on your gender corrode your self-esteem and sabotage your well-earned success, or do you hold your head high, take pride in how far you have come, and proudly celebrate the fruits of your hard work, before you embark on your next adventure? Your everyday choices affect your future happiness and success. And yes, dear readers, you have the power to choose!