

Tips for Your Tips

A series devoted to helping you become a more confident dancer

By Jan Thompson

Guide to Being a Great Angel

1. Smile! Be encouraging. Be gentle with your attitude and words.
2. Wear your name badge; it helps to make things more personal and friendly.
3. Do not talk during the tip. The students need to hear the caller/teacher clearly and without distractions. Save any comments you want to make until after the tip.
4. Do exactly what the caller/teacher calls. For example, do not do a Swing before a Promenade unless it is called.
5. Do not rush through a call. Students need time to process what they hear the caller/teacher say, and then they need more time to react.
6. Help to keep the formations neat. For example, lines and columns should be relatively straight. Try to keep your lines and waves parallel to the walls (not diagonal) and to each other. This will make it easier for the students to identify both the formations and their position in them.
7. You are the example the students see. Do the calls accurately, without taking short cuts and without adding flourishes. Examples: During Do-Sa-Do, a dancer faces the same wall throughout the call. Circle to a Line is not defined as Slap and Veer. There are no hand contacts in Weave the Ring. Do not add a twirl after a Swing.
8. Use hand contacts consistently to establish formations and keep them neat. Establish eye contact with everyone in your square, especially the person with whom you are about to interact. (Refer to Tips for Your Tips articles.)
9. If you notice someone repeatedly making the same mistake during a tip, at the end of the tip (A) you can give the student the name of the call and suggest he/she approach the caller/teacher for clarification, and/or (B) you can give the caller/teacher the student's name and the call involved and let the caller/teacher handle the matter as he/she sees fit.

Thank you so much for being there!

If you can, review the call definitions before the classes. It will help if you have recently familiarized yourself with the definitions as listed by CALLERLAB. They can be found at dosado.com/lists/defs/bs-msdef.htm.

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