

Hijacking in the 1960's & 1970's

by: H. Leon Raper

I have been reading a lot lately about Hijacking as though it were something new. It is not new. It only has a new name. In the 1960's and 1970's several of the world class women swing competition dancers used pattern extensions at their will - including their own unique styling. Some of the dancers were Jackie Cobb, Darlene Goree and Dawn Manganeli. They were absolute experts at the art of what is now called Hijacking. When I say experts, I mean the man knew without a doubt when they were entering and ready to leave a Hijack pattern. There was no surprise, the Hijack just seemed to flow. It was very exciting.

I really enjoyed watching Jackie Cobb work out a Hijack. It was like watching someone create a masterful piece of art right in front of you. The crowds viewing the competitions would go wild watching her work out. It was a great feeling. Not only did these ladies use Hijacking referred to today, but they did it at 160 to over 200 beats per minute. Most dancers preferred faster dance music in the era.

Hijacking can be either wonderful or total chaos for the man. A good Hijacker knows how to let her partner know when she wants to extend a pattern and do her thing - and this doesn't mean verbal calls. She also knows how to let him know when she is finished and ready to turn the lead back to him. Call it "back lead" or whatever you want, but the lady has to communicate her intentions to the man. I don't know how the ladies of that era did their communications. You knew without a doubt when it was happening and when it was time for the leader to take over again. I have also danced with ladies who didn't yet have the expertise to indicate the start and end of a Hijack. That was very uncomfortable. However, everyone has to learn somewhere so I suggest that ladies tell a man when she wants to work on her Hijack techniques. Most advanced men dancers will be very accommodating and help by giving the lady feedback on their interpretation of her execution.

BEGINNERS

When dealing with beginner dancers you must realize they would not be in your class if they knew anything about dancing.

You may look at what you have been teaching and feel you haven't taught very much. It is a sign of a good instructor when their students can do what has been presented and do it well. It is not how much material you have introduced, but how well your students dance that is important.

As instructors, know your material well, keep your students coming to class by helping them become good dancers, not by the amount of material you cover. Students biggest complaint is that too many teachers show too much. It is not how much you teach but how well you get it across to the students and how well they can do it

by: Kelly Gellette



HUMAN RELATIONS

The most important 6 words: "I admit I made a mistake."

The most important 5 words: "I am proud of you."

The most important 4 words: "What is your opinion?"

The most important 3 words: "If you please."

The most important 2 words: "Thank you."

The most important word: "We."

And the LEAST important word: "I."