

**A Personal Practice of Reflection and Renewal
for Individuals of All Faiths and Traditions
During the Twelve Holy Nights of the Year
December 25 til January 6**

The Tenth Holy Night - January 3

Leading and Following

Tonight we go ballroom dancing. The dance floor is our soul. The music is our destiny. The dance floor is filled with couples - all the polarities we have been working with.

I have worked with ballroom dancing as a metaphor for healthy relationships often. It is important and lovely to think of all the polarities of our inner life as dancing partnerships.

The other metaphor for the interaction within polarity is the battleground. It is not surprising that in a time of war and terror, ballroom dancing has become a cultural fascination. The dance floor and the battleground are opposites and opposites attract!

The reason the dance floor is so opposite to the battleground is the peaceful polar presence of leading and following. If we do not understand the gifts of this dancing polarity, all other polarities will find themselves at war rather than moving to music.

On the battleground leaders dominate and followers submit. The poles, in constant imbalance, exaggerate their difference and create a destructive soul life. On the dance floor, leaders are responsible and followers responsive. Both poles enhance each other and enrich the soul.

BallroomDancers.com has a learning center that is full of insight on successful leading and following. These insights are worth considering as metaphors for the healthy, creative dancing of the polarities.

Both poles need TONE. Tone is strength. If one pole is weak, the dancing is awkward and unbalanced. It takes strength to lead or to follow.

Both poles need to be ACTIVE. Each pole needs energetic vitality and the ability to transmit and receive signals. An active pole creates an electric pulse or tension between leading and following. The poles breathe life into each other.

Both poles need MUTUAL AWARENESS. There is a sensitive and subtle conversation going on between leading and following at all times.

Ballroom dancing teaches us that leading and following have nothing to do with dominance and submission and everything to do with harmonious action and reaction. The lead determines the rhythm, the direction, and the steps. The follower must maintain a slight resistance to the lead creating a vibrant

tension. The follower responds with a magical sensitivity which makes two appear as one. This is the gift, genius and miracle of the polarity of leading and following, *the two appear as one*.

Becoming one requires practice, patience, perseverance and forgiveness. The concordant outcome of strong leading and strong following is an elegant and graceful dancing soul.

Questions to Contemplate...

Understanding the polarity of leading and following in the frame of a dancing couple appearing as one, empowers us to lead or follow comfortably in all kinds of life situations. Think of a few situations where you were resistant to or had difficulty with either leading or following. Why?

Play some leading and following games with a willing friend or colleague. Follow their movements for five minutes. Discuss the experience. Now reverse the leading and following roles. Discuss. You will learn something new about your experience of leading and following every time. Life in the world and in your soul will become more peaceful and creative.

Now explore the polarity of leading and following as it functions in all the other polarities in your soul life. Do the other polarities dance as one? Are some polarities into domination and submission?

Are the poles equally strong? If one is weak and submissive, can you give it some extra attention? Was this pole wounded or abandoned in your life? Is one pole a dominant bully - always demanding your soul's attention? Consider the reasons for one-sidedness in any polarity.

Imagine a conversation between the poles. Write the conversation down in your journal.

Watch Fred Astaire movies and Dancing With the Stars.

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