

A Summary of Progress as it Relates to Learning

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Unconscious Incompetence (Zone 1)

This zone is not so bad, as you are usually completely unaware that you may be doing it wrong anyways. This zone represents the very beginning of learning something new. If you discover that you really like to dance, the next zone will confirm just how great your desire is.

Conscious Incompetence (Zone 2)

Perhaps the absolute worst zone to be in. By this point you've seen enough capable dancers and may be wondering if you will ever be able to dance like the rest of them. This is when you know what you're doing wrong, but just can't do anything about it---YET! Your mind understands the desired result but your body may often refuse to cooperate causing a not so desirable outcome. This is the stage we all pass through before we can begin to master something. Dancers who are at this stage are about to embark on a lesson in perseverance. Hang in there! Your confidence will be restored in zone 3.

Conscious Competence (Zone 3)

This is where it finally starts to come together. You're doing it right and you know it! Still a little shaken from the previous zone, but nothing a little practicing can't fix. This is the intermediate phase of development and perhaps the longest. This is when a new dancer begins to discover that their feet have a mind of their own and that follow/lead is not the name of the team you're on. Your physical response time is quicker and your mind often feels left behind. This is called "muscle memory". This is the time to liberate your body & feet with a less conscious approach. Trust them, they just might surprise you.

Unconscious Competence (Zone 4)

Your efforts and commitment are well worth the results you are realizing about now! You are confident in your ability to learn anything new that comes your way. This is the point that your dancing begins to soar. You have a source to tap into for movement to rhythm. It feels almost unconscious and effortless. By now you know that the entire body dances. The music has become the basis for your choreography. You've developed a stronger repertoire and you hear music differently. You're testing all the rules to see which ones you can break. The advanced dancer can look forward to feeling good, looking good and getting only better! You will find different areas of development that will take you back to zone 1 but this time you're ready and willing to experience the wonderful frustrations that can be a part of learning. From here on the only thing to stop you is your desire.

Don't forget zone 2: Share your experience and ability with others. Remember what it was like when you were just starting? As an experienced dancer you can have a tremendously positive influence over someone who is at the beginning. Be kind, as you can also have a very negative effect. Don't offer your advice or correct your partner on the dance floor unless they ask you. This, as I hear it, really bothers most dancers. Besides, you never know who you are offering (what may be) the wrong advice to. Leave the teaching for teachers and do your best to make your partner feel good and enjoy dancing with you.