

101 Tips for Dance Leaders

James Burgess 2000

1. Maintain concentration, be not distracted by externals
2. Project your voice to fill the space; Ya Fazl. Also remember it is much easier to lead into silence.
3. Hold your own silence to quieten a group
4. Gently and firmly be in charge, develop a sense of personal authority.
5. Be clear and fair in money matters.
6. Administration skills are useful to handle fliers, e-mails, money, the business side of it all.
7. Be careful to contain expressions of self-love or self-hate.
8. Look after your voice, avoid doing things that spoil it.
9. Watch your involvement with the dancers - are you bullying, controlling, flirting, teasing, fighting...?
10. Sexual misconduct is disapproved of in the world of DUP
11. Exclude individuals who are outside your capacity to hold - e.g. those influenced by drugs or alcohol, the mentally or emotionally unstable.
12. Be aware of the real and serious risk of burn-out
13. Identify and respect the djinn.
14. Variations are occasionally improvements but often mistakes arising out of a lack of diligence.
15. Discourage excessive display of personality
16. The need for attention underlies every social interaction. Be aware of yours and others'.
17. Choose the next dance carefully, preplan the order consciously and yet be flexible and do not expect to hold to the plan, allow intuition to guide you.
18. Words can aid attunement, they can also be destructive to atmosphere
19. Choose an appropriate pitch (women often sing uncomfortably low for men) ask and adjust.
20. Use a voice that achieves its purpose - loud and clear enough to be heard, carrying the tone of the attunement.
21. Be aware of the effect of rhythm and speed on the mood created.
22. Balance your dance repertoire
23. Promote community, share food, allow time for talking
24. Improve drum skills, do not be afraid of the guitar
25. Develop rapport with musicians, be in control

26. Nerves are normal and can aid sensitivity and attunement
27. Humour is a tool to use appropriately
28. Teaching experience in various places, especially abroad, will be very growthful for you
29. A small local regular group, a large supportive circle in a marquee, a bunch of first-timers in an ex-soviet gym, a circle of prison inmates, 5-year olds, 17-year old etc: all so so different! Have a few dances that can not fail.
30. Remember that at some dance meetings members of the public attend who may have very different beliefs, attitudes and expectations.
31. We all have to learn how to create a group out of an idea and then to maintain it.
32. When sharing dance leadership - be careful not to allow another's strength to become your weakness. Try to learn from each other enough to lead alone.
33. Wear clothes that align with your intention.
34. Hugging can be confronting, healing, spiritual, sexual, rejecting, comforting ... be aware.
35. Open up slowly, let one dance flow from another as flowers unfold
36. Make all your mistakes beautiful
37. Notice the effect of dances you lead
38. Have a repertoire of exercises such as games, icebreakers, walks, breath practices, partner exercises, meditations and other ideas.
39. Behave with integrity and sensitivity.
40. Dancers may not speak English, they may not be of perfect hearing, so speak clearly and slowly
41. Attunement, words meaning steps melody: all need to be taught carefully
42. Instructions during a dance need to be loud and given early.
43. Remember (especially on camps) that your back is blocking your voice
44. Be aware that you have inherent strengths and weaknesses
45. Observe your stronger and weaker elements (earth, fire, water, air)
46. Compare SAM's dances to others
47. Musical support must not be too loud or forceful, the voices are primary
48. Consider supporting the DUP network - membership includes insurance and an information service.
49. Mentorship is a process of development and can be very rewarding.
50. What skills you don't have need to be developed or found in another e.g. musicians, organisers etc.
51. Try to create your own dances and exercises out of the solid foundation of what has gone before.
52. Show respect to all people and honour all paths.

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53. Have knowledge of the background wisdom behind a dance.
54. The dancers are your main resource, they are highly developed beings. Use them as a source of inspiration and wisdom.
55. Seal a dance at the end. Appreciate its effect in silence and listen to the echo from the cosmos.
56. Teach only what you love
57. Avoid over-teaching, some dancers may not get it anyway
58. Be willing to abort, (Amen! Is useful here). Move on.
59. A dance ends when it's going nowhere.
60. Get honest feedback on how good your own dances and variations are.
61. Always accept total responsibility for your circumstances
62. Know which dances can be long dances
63. Know when to use stun dances
64. If a musician purposely dominates, after a warning, lose him
65. Bring a dance to its end if you are bored or tired or if dancers begin to make mistakes
66. Have some stun dances always available.
67. Whatever happens, good or bad - move on!
68. Change what you can not accept
69. A good venue helps create sacred space
70. Sacred space is enhanced with candles, incense and by creating an altar; also by sound purification using Ya Hayyo Ya Qayyum or cymbals
71. Know the dance well. Look it up. Rehearse.
72. Use ceremony to focus intention; and to celebrate a special time.
73. Be fully present and fully committed
74. A ritual to begin is important, e.g. Towards The One
75. The opening walks set the tone so be clear about your words.
76. Most of us favour one tradition; it's part of our own special quality.
77. Intend to be excellent, assume that you can be
78. Your passion has its place. In particular it is a gift when it is expressing the group's mood.
79. Part of the work includes demonstrating a new ethos - more consciousness, more love.
80. Use the dances as a form of prayer - ask for what you need or want
81. Call upon Murshid Samuel Lewis for guidance and support
82. Practice humility and also develop charisma

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83. Intend to heal
84. "On the breath" sections require greater sensitivity, especially with guitar.
85. Learn how to tune in to Source.
86. Breathing practices are recommended daily
87. Use awareness of breath to moderate a group
88. Accept that sometimes dancers will go through dramatic emotional release
89. Accept that some dancers have limited abilities
90. Know and let it be known - that you also have to go through a process.
91. Let go of your mistakes, forgive yourself and others.
92. Sacredness is an inner state that can be projected onto a space or an activity
93. A few minutes meditation before a session can be helpful
94. Be creative and inspired in how you use what you know.
95. Asking people to turn within, focus in the heart and to be receptive can moderate the partner glance.
96. Be natural, be yourself, you are a channel for God's grace.
97. Love yourself, love the group, love the dances
98. Accept what you can not change
99. Try rose oil as a perfume when you lead
100. Keep your dance notes in a beautiful precious form
101. You are a priest/priestess in a temple of God.