

# ***"When you are through changing, you are through."***

Bruce Barton

We saw the above quote and thought it really captured the reason why west coast swing stays so popular even as other dances fall in/out of favor - and also why it can sometimes frustrate people too!

**No other partner dance adapts to trends like West Coast:** every decade and music style since the '60s has dramatically shaped the look and feel of this dance. But like everything else today, the *pace* of change seems so much faster now! Years ago, **California dancers used to introduce exciting concepts or styles that gradually spread across the U.S. This could take many months/years. Now thousands of people see them mere hours or days later on *You Tube* and champions live and teach coast-to-coast: there's less "lag" time!**

**Sometimes the ever-changing nature of west coast frustrates or intimidates people who may have learned the dance many years ago or learned it differently – especially those who learned it mostly as a leader-dominant, “pattern-oriented” dance - and feel a bit lost as they see less structured and more interpretive partnership elements dominate the look and feel.**

**It does take work to “unlearn” certain habits, to make room for something new and challenging.** But if you can keep an open mind, you'll find the many layers of this **dance can be so fascinating - so *different* from any other partner dance. The catch? We gotta get out of that comfort zone...and it's seldom easy!**

**Of course, many people still prefer the dance the way they first learned it.** They may not agree with new styles/evolved techniques or simply don't have time or interest to take classes/lessons. Sometimes this deteriorates into arguments of "right and wrong" among dancers.

**No matter how you like to dance swing, our hope is that more of us can agree that there's really no “right” or “wrong” in social dancing as long as you** (1) do not physically hurt your partner; (2) do not criticize him/her while you dance; and (3) try to make the dance fun for you both. Swing has so much room for different styles: even top champions disagree amongst each other on certain points. Unless you're competing, the only judge who gets to decide what's "right" for you is you.

**If you're happy dancing swing the way you always have, *that's perfectly fine!*** However, if you like the way the more advanced dancers look today; wish you could lead/follow others more confidently outside your immediate social circle; or ever want to try a Jack & Jill contest one day, make sure at least one of the teachers you work with actively invests in their own continuing education. Whether they take private lessons themselves with judges/champs; attend national events, compete, or use a combo of approaches, teachers who stay current on the dance can give you a fresh perspective - and may inspire you all over again!

**We see the ever-evolving nature of swing as challenging AND a huge blessing!** Without change, this dance would die out. As each talented new generation of national competitors/leaders puts their "twist" on it, they keep this dance fresh and inspiring for all of us to enjoy at every age.