

Lead/Follow - Course Outline

Lead/Follow	Lead	Follow
Week 1 (Directional Walks)	Transmit	Receive
Week 2 (Fwd Return, Concertinas)	Position	Prepare
Week 3 (RHS/LHS Pull Through)	Consistent - Directions & Angles	Aware - Directions & Angles
Week 4 (Surprise Turn, The Thing)	Points of Control	Pliability
Week 5 (Fast Roll Across, 2xSpin)	Consistent - Rhythm & Tempo	Aware - Rhythm & Tempo
Week 6 (The Bob, Rotating Gate)	Transparency & Inevitability	Go With It!

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Week 1: Transmit/Receive

(Directional Walks)

- Audio
 - “Vocal leads” - not really leading and unreliable when:
 - The floor is crowded and noisy
 - Your partner doesn’t recognise the figure you’re referring to
 - The figure moves quickly from the completion of a prior action
 - Discussion with partner:
 - On the floor is fine, but off the floor is better. If there is a particular figure or aerial you want to work on, agree to this with partner before stepping on the floor.
 - Define boundaries, particularly if certain actions cause a problem for you.
 - Percussive actions:
 - Footwork (Stomps & Taps) - very useful to establish stance and indicate changes in rhythm or as a “full stop” for sequences.
 - Hands (Claps & Clicks) - useful to establish rhythm changes or as a component of the lead for defined figures.
- Visual
 - (F) Looking at your partner is not optional! Visible changes in stance, body angles, and relative position provide essential information. Even facial expressions can be useful.
 - (L) Floorcraft requires an awareness of other dancers on the floor. Unfortunately there is rarely enough room on the dance floor to simply dance unrestricted. Observation of the position, pattern of movement, and dance behaviour of others helps keep you and your partner out of trouble and ensure that there is space for the appropriate actions for a figure to occur.
 - Avoid “Secret Signals” as they lack commonality and suffer many of the drawbacks of “Vocal Leads”. Rather, visual actions (i.e. arm and leg movements, points, and (more generally) extensions) should be used to indicate the lead intent in a manner that is complimentary to the motion and actions required for the figure.
- Frame
 - A visual, pressure, and positioning related element of leading and following that dancers should be aware of and work to consistently. This ensures a “clear signal” may be both transmitted and received.
 - Body motion and momentum - be aware of how your motion with and around partner affects frame and consequent connection pressure.

- Know where you're going!
 - (L) Know where you want your partner to be.
 - (F) Track the man's movement (RH shoulder) and be ready to move/position accordingly.
- Point of Reference:
 - (L) Dance to the Follow - your partner should be centre to frame unless you are positioning to lead or execute a figure.
 - (F) In conjunction with observing basic shifts of frame or stance, monitor the Lead for variations in body movement and angles/directions through the execution of figures that denote a change of frame.
- Pressure
 - Wrist & Fingers - The first point of contact in most instances and, hence, our primary tools to Transmit/Receive.
 - Core Body - Provides strength, clarity, direction, rhythm and tempo. Connection pressures are typically generated to/from the core body.
 - Whole body - Provides subtlety and fluidity. Allows for the smooth transition from one figure to the next.
 - Direction & "Weight" - Determines what actions are possible, the ease of implementation of figures, and the overall movement of the dance.
 - Hold your own weight - default pressure should be inwards and upwards to partner.
 - Transfer vs. Distribution of Weight
 - Directional pressure - the key element for blocks or continuous motion.
- Rhythm & Tempo
 - When is as important as What. The right signal at the wrong time at best remains meaningless for the Follow, or may result in confusion and potential injury.
 - Musicality and Phrasing. *Dancing is not performed to the beat of a metronome!*

Transmit/Receive in practice: Directional Walks

- Frame
- Directional Pressure / Core Body
- Wrist and Fingers
- Variations - Whole of Body / Percussive Footwork (*introduction to concept*)

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Week 2: Position/Prepare

(Forward Return, Concertinas)

- Good Basics!
 - Consistent basic FRAME and PRESSURE. Leads cannot be interpreted well when the fundamental dance position and connection keeps shifting.
 - Small and controlled footwork by default. Place your feet - do not let them land as they will.
 - Constant communication! The lead/follow process does not start/stop with an action, figure, or movement but takes place across the entire dance.
 - “Tune In”
 - Connection pressures are in constant flux; they are not on/off.
 - It may be argued that lead/follow starts the moment you step on the floor and does not stop until you step back off.
 - Look at partner!
- Distribution of Weight
 - Footwork Changes - getting on the correct foot.
 - (L) Coming into or out of matching footwork with partner.
 - (F) To allow (more comfortable) execution of a figure.
 - To allow footwork variation.
 - Body Position - directional pressure, body movement, and control.
 - Where you start from strongly influences where you can go.
 - How you start strongly influences how you can move.
 - Support and counter balance.
- Distribution of Pressure
 - Differential motion & direction -
 - In / Out ... Stretch / Compress
 - Linear / Rotation / Stationary
 - Counter Rotation
 - Rolling (Wrist/Body), Swinging/Pulling (Arms), Turning (Fingers/Palm).
- Make It Clear / Know The Mechanics.
 - (L) He who hesitates is lost...
 - Once you start a figure, complete it (don't pull out).
 - Half a figure ahead: know your set-up.

- (L) The Follow can't dance through you!
 - Use your Frame and know your position(s).
 - (F) You can't dance through the Lead!
 - Don't auto-adjust to move around the Lead. If he is in your way, it should be deliberate!
 - With different body positions come different (im)possibilities in the dance figures that may be employed.
 - (L) Remember that you may use body position to *indicate what you will not do*, as well as what you intend to do.
 - (F) Gauge the Lead intent. Particularly on a crowded dance floor, the capacity for the lead to clearly establish position for a given lead may be impaired. *Do not confuse this with what you expect from a lead or entry position.*
 - Dance from head to toe!
 - Hands, arms, legs, and feet don't work as well when they operate in isolation to each other or the body.
 - (L) A good Follow does not just work from your arm leads and body position, but also through body motion and pressure. Connect the actions through the top half of the body with the bottom to allow matching or complimentary motion.
 - (F) A good Lead uses your body motion and position to more clearly define leads and accentuate direction and movement. Connect the actions through the top half of the body with the bottom so that "whole of body" leading can be employed.
- (Refer further to Points of Control / Pliability)

Position/Prepare in practice: Forward Return

- "Tune In"
- Distribution of Weight / Place Your Feet
- Small Footwork & Frame

Position/Prepare in practice: Concertinas

- Distribution of Pressure - Stretch / Compress
- Body Position - Counter Balance
- Dance to Partner
- Dance Head-to-Toe

Week 3: Consistent/Aware - Directions & Angles

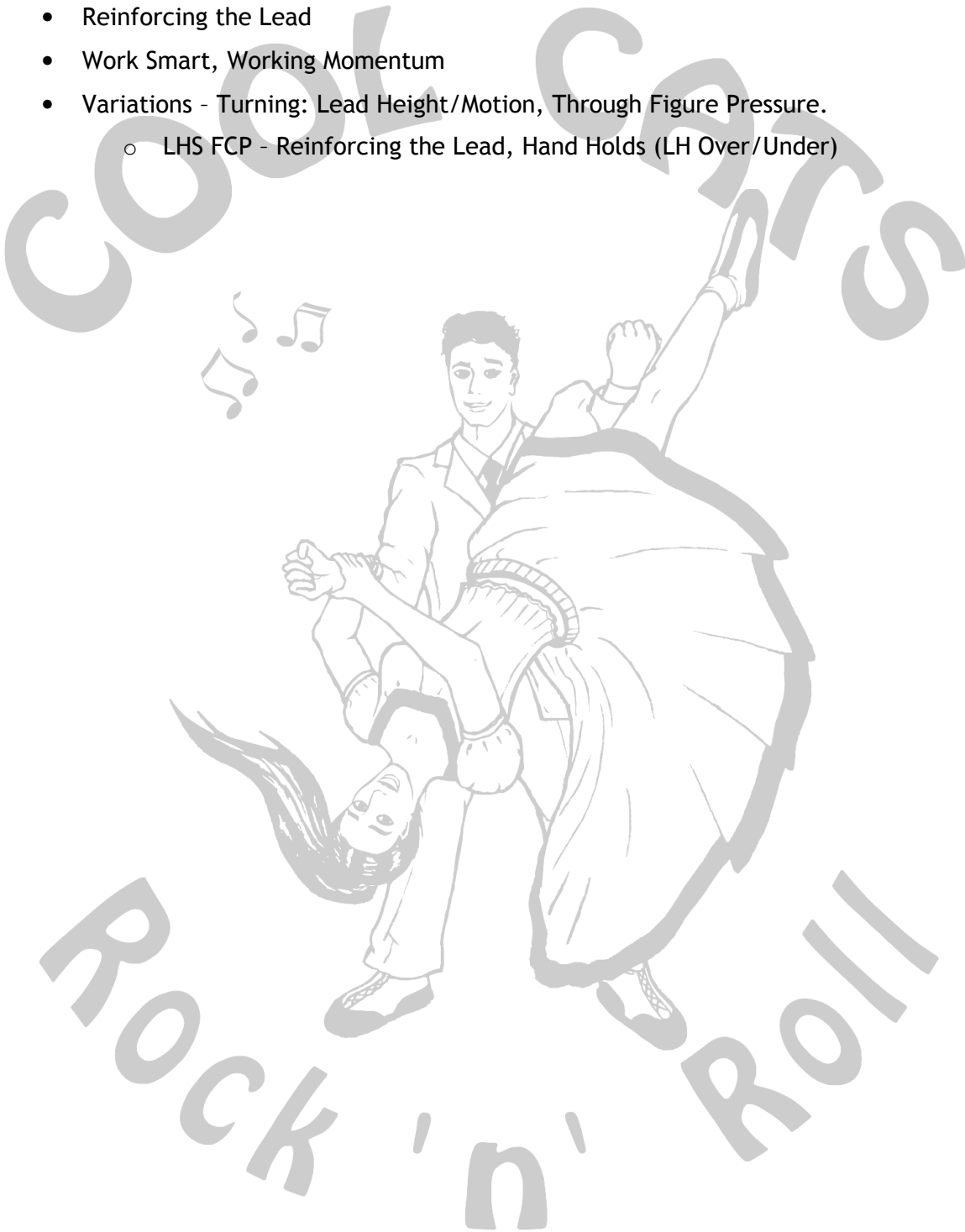
(RHS/LHS Pull Through)

- Dance Structure - What is the characteristic pattern and motion in which the dance usually moves? *Standard Directions & Angles*
 - Can it change? How? Why? When?
 - Ascertain the dance space. Be aware of how the standard dance structure may adjust (by choice or necessity) as your space changes.
(Refer further to Position / Prepare)
- Complex Body - while very versatile, the body moves only in certain ways (BODY MECHANICS).
 - You can only put the body into so many different positions.
 - You cannot get to every position directly from other starting positions.
 - Some positions transition easily (“naturally”) to other positions. However, most transitions require a combination of complimentary motions in both partners.
(Refer further to Points of Control / Pliability)
 - *Don't use a hammer to drive in a screw* - subtle and sneaky is less stressful on the body, requires better control, and is consequently way more impressive.
 - *Follow the use recommendations...* You may often be able to “get away with” not using a particular lead/follow element and still execute a figure reasonably well. However, it will never look or feel as smooth as it should and repetitive strain may result in injury.
 - You can achieve far more working with the body (yours and/or your partners) than without - accentuate motion and momentum (i.e. body and dance directions) to allow the body to do the bulk of the work.
 - *Work smart, not hard.*
 - *Volume control and graphic equalizer* - working with the flow of dance allows for easy shifts in tempo and accentuation through figures.
 - Don't overdo it.
 - Understand the body mechanics in relation to the dance.
 - LHS/RHS - The same concepts, often slightly different implementations. Body movement is not optional!
 - Over/Under - Sequence order and rotation directions will typically differ and result in differing hand holds.
 - The Thumb - selective use.

- Directions - working momentum...
 - (L) Where am I? Where do I want the Follow to go?
 - (L) How can I move the Follow into position?
 - Often there are multiple options to achieve a position. However, not all will be equal and should be considered in conjunction with the existing flow of dance.
 - What do I want the Follow to do once in position?
(Refer further to Consistent / Aware - Rhythm & Tempo)
 - (L) When can/should I initiate the lead?
 - (F) Do I have control of my body motion? Am I prepared to move according to the direction established by the Lead?
 - *Are you dancing, or allowing yourself to be danced (by the music, the Lead, or the motion of the dance itself)?*
- (L) Make the distinction! / (F) Spot the difference!
 - Arm heights and positions relative to Frame
 - Hand holds and catches
 - Stance in relation to *Line of Dance (LOD)*
 - Directional Pressure (& Rhythm)
 - Moving In/Through/Away - through figure pressures and directions.
- (L) Reinforcement of Directions & Angles
 - Present LOD - dance Head-to-Toes
 - Frame, stance, and body lines
 - Through body motion and complimentary actions
 - Visual connection - use the eyes!
 - Dampen/amplify the signal.
 - Differential motion & direction.
 - Multiple lead components - use them all to create the correct sequence, mix, or balance of motions in the Follow.
(Refer further to Points of Control / Pliability)
 - Clarity, while enabling *light & shade*.
 - Consider the “fit” with current dance motion and the ease of Lead/Follow options.
 - *Sometimes you could make it happen - but probably shouldn't.*

Consistent / Aware - Directions & Angles in practice: LHS vs. RHS Pull Through

- Stance & LOD
- Reinforcing the Lead
- Work Smart, Working Momentum
- Variations - Turning: Lead Height/Motion, Through Figure Pressure.
 - LHS FCP - Reinforcing the Lead, Hand Holds (LH Over/Under)



Week 4: Points of Control/Pliability

(Surprise Turn, The Thing)

- (F) Pliability
 - To get the most out of the dance, the Lead needs differing amounts of resistance / give / “stickiness” from the Follow.
 - Play-Doh . Wood . Spaghetti .
 - Hold your own body shape unless consistent and/or distinct pressure is applied at *Point(s) of Control*.
 - Stick to the Leads fingers/body/arms unless “released”. *Don’t let the Lead get away from you by accident!*
 - According to BODY MECHANICS and the established momentum of dance, certain points of the body will resist / give / “stick” more than others. These are the *Points of Control*.
- (L) Points of Control
 - POCs are a similar concept to the use of *Directions and Angles*. There are pivot points and hinges throughout the body (or in connection with partner/floor) where adjustments to motion may be readily achieved or, in contrast, where the body is relatively immobile and may be used for support, frame, and the application of directional pressure.
 - Centre/Lower Back, Side of Body - (Immobile).
 - Hips, Wrists - (Hinge, Pivot)
 - Shoulders, Fingers - (Hinge)
 - Elbows, Arms, Body - (Immobile, Hinge)
 - POCs should not be used as a forcing mechanism, but rather as assistance to the Follow to improve lead clarity or the flow of dance.
- Control & Flex - movement into/away from the body.
 - Into - maintain tension and frame:
 - Fingers → Palm
 - Elbows → Hips, Side of Body
 - Shoulders → Back & Down (roll)
 - Away - extension and/or positioning:
 - Swinging Arms
 - Push - into the body; usually through the hips, but occasionally through the shoulders or side of body.

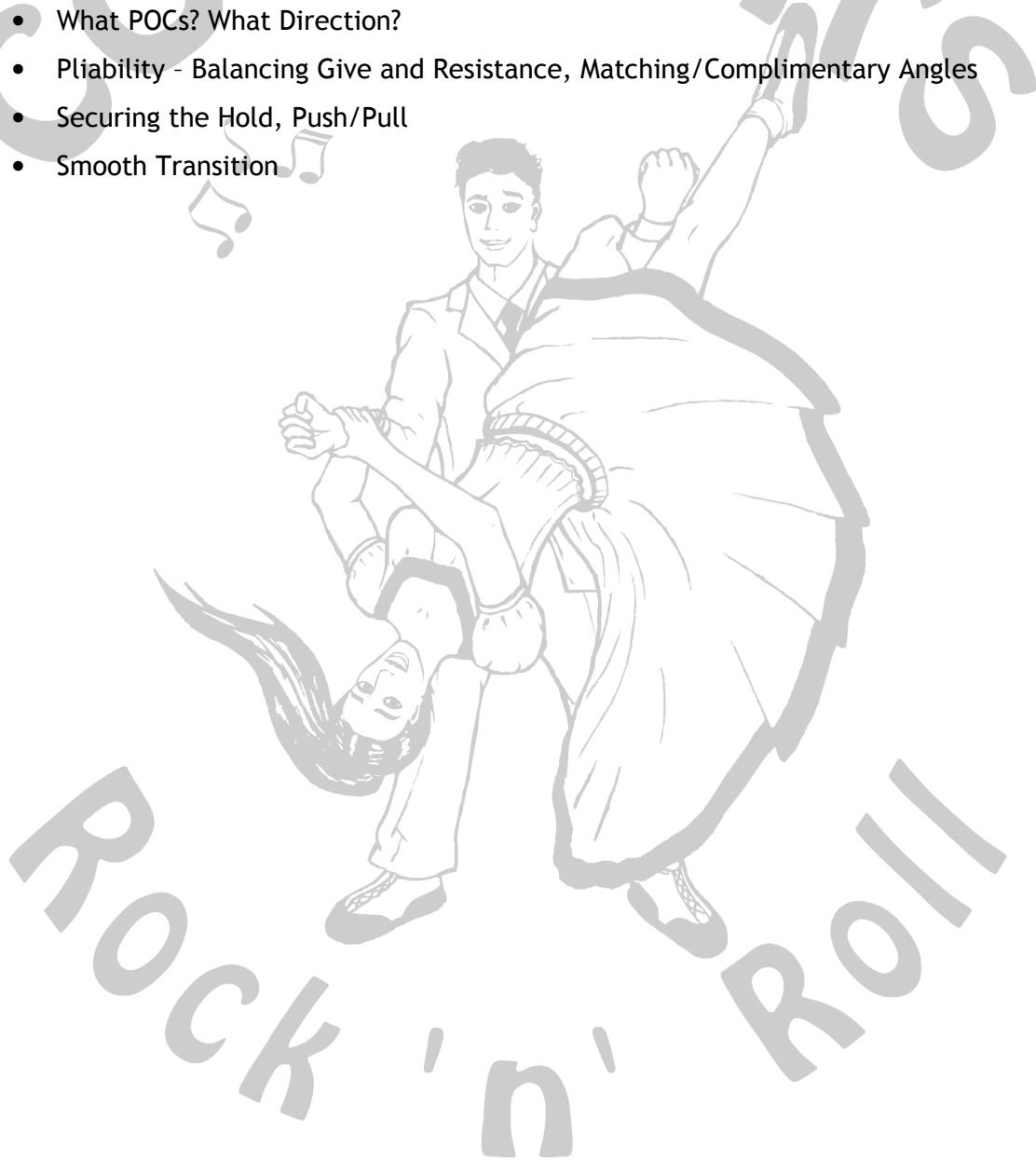
- Into & Away - Stretch/Spring
 - A balance of extension away from the body while maintaining tension and frame.
 - The elbow(s) and arm(s) generally extend away from the body, while the fingers, wrist(s) and shoulder(s) maintain a contraction into the body.
 - When using a spring through the arms, the inward tension gradually increases to achieve “maximum stretch” before the elbows and arms rapidly contract back toward the body.
- Neither “Into” or “Away” is an on/off process (as evident through the Stretch/Spring motions) - rather there is a smooth transition from one to the other.
 - POCs and the appropriate degree of Pliability are fluid and may not remain exactly the same for a given figure, but are likely to shift as the tempo, rhythm and motion of the dance changes.
- Control & Pressure into the Floor
 - Some movements/figures dictate greater pressure into the floor to provide control. This is particularly true for the Follow, who is more often required to spin/turn.
 - Keep your body over your feet while transitioning through a figure, unless using Counter Balance.
 - Where balance may be an issue, it may be useful to adopt a slightly lower body position through the knees and ankles. This lowers the centre of gravity and aids in maintaining balance.
- Securing the Hold/Catch
 - Wrist (Angle) & Fingers (Position).
 - *No tentative hand holding!* Greater connection and security is achieved with greater physical contact.
 - (L) More to hold...
 - @ Wrist, @ Elbow, @ Shoulder
 - Care is required - do not abruptly halt the Follows momentum.
 - Balance - falling into/away from partner makes securing a hold/catch (and any subsequent lead) more difficult. Be aware of the transfer and distribution of your weight and of your partners.
(Refer further to Position / Prepare)

Points of Control / Pliability in practice: Surprise Turn

- What POCs? What Direction?
- Pliability - Balancing Give and Resistance, “Sticky” Fingers
- Balance / Securing the Catch
- Into or Stretch

Points of Control / Pliability in practice: The Thing

- What POCs? What Direction?
- Pliability - Balancing Give and Resistance, Matching/Complimentary Angles
- Securing the Hold, Push/Pull
- Smooth Transition



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Week 5: Consistent/Aware - Rhythm & Tempo

(Fast Roll Across, Double Spin)

- Working with Rhythm & Tempo is essential to a good Lead/Follow. It establishes both *the when and how* a figure (and the overall dance) is performed.
- Rhythm - establish pattern & direction.
 - The earlier the better. Base dance rhythm should be evident during the first figure danced (if not before), unless working the musical introduction.
 - (L) Employ complimentary, figures, motions, and positions to facilitate the action and rhythm of other figures. This helps maintain flow and reduces non-compliance with the lead.
 - (L) Ease into it. 'Sliding' from one position to the next is much easier to follow than sharp changes in direction. Quick actions and shift in direction can (and should be) used, but require good (firm & gentle) blocks and preferably advance pressure indications.
 - (F) Be aware of the shift of pattern, change of motion, or preparatory signals provided by the Lead.
- Tempo - the pace of motion.
 - Base timing (as indicated by the musical time signature) does not generally change. A shift of tempo is therefore not about dancing to a faster/slower beat.
 - Tempo refers to the energy and typical rate of movement through the body, actions of a figure, or across the floor.
 - "Standard" Tempo = Relaxed. Actions occur at their regular pace, movements with and around partner are neither exaggerated nor constrained, and basic counts are employed.
 - "Up" Tempo = Greater Energy/Motion. More actions may be employed per beat, motions may be exaggerated, movement across the floor is typically greater.
 - "Down" Tempo = Less Energy or Emphasised Motion. Fewer actions may be employed per beat (e.g. hesitations, slides, and walks), movement across the floor may be minimised (i.e. *dancing small*), and positions held or drawn out through the execution of figures.
- Standard Rhythm & Tempo - the importance of the underlying motion of dance.
 - Without a consistent base "signal" it is difficult for the Follow to interpret changes in action and movement as distinct leads, rather than background 'white noise'.

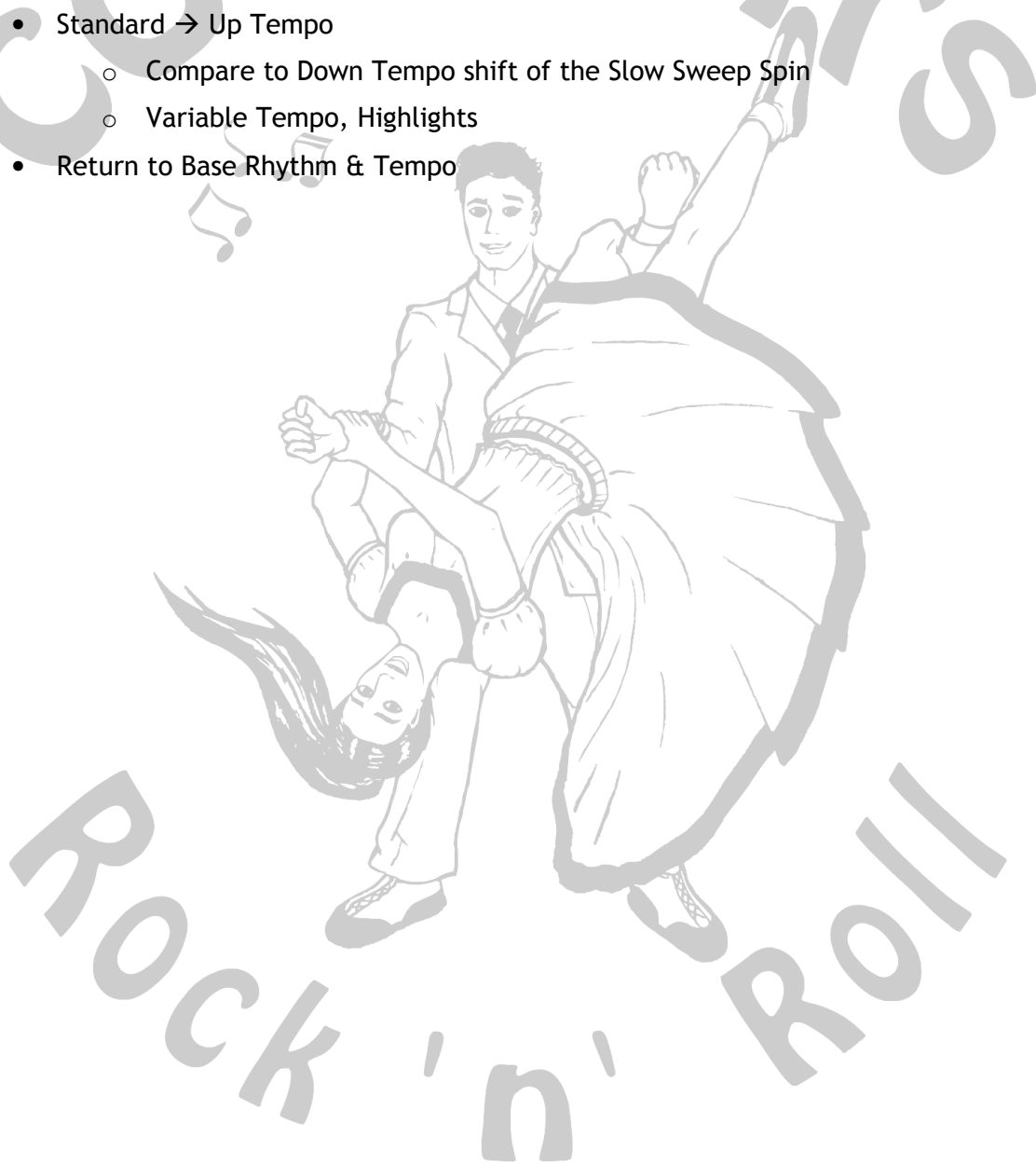
- (L) Dancing at a consistent point of the beat allows the timing of lead actions to distinguish between figures, particularly those executed with different rhythms and tempos.
 - Leading “late” on the beat → Relaxed
 - Leading “early” on/through the beat → Up Tempo shift
 - “Dragging” into/through the beat → Down Tempo shift
- (F) Come back to the base dance rhythm once the tempo shift is finished (typically indicated by the shift of Lead body rhythm):
 - A shift into Up Tempo motion does not mean that figures finish faster (ahead of beat), although sections of the figure may be “squeezed” or “stretched” relative to the beat.
 - A shift into Down Tempo motion does not mean that it is time to rest and relax (although it may be time to play ☺)! Be ready to shift to Standard or Up Tempo motion, with relatively little notice (i.e. a partial beat preparation).
- Musicality - dancing to the music, not just the beat.
 - Spot the musical pattern:
 - (L) Phrasing - Starts vs. Finishes
 - (F) Expect potential dance rhythm and tempo changes according to key shifts in the music - but wait for it!
 - (L&F) Be aware of how the music can change and what typical elements of the dance you may extend or cut accordingly. Certain styles are more flexible in this regard.
 - Choose the figure to fit the music.
 - Highlights, Breaks, & Runs
 - Consistent Motion
 - Variable Tempo
- Body Rhythm - work the music.
 - Good connection is essential to keeping rhythm with partner, but mutually reinforcing once matching/complimentary body motion is achieved.
 - Don't work across the grain! Work with partner using matching or complimentary body motions.
 - (L) Prepare the Follow and/or prepare yourself.
 - (F) Go With It!
(Refer further to Transparency & Inevitability / Go With It!)
- Practice and don't be afraid to “miss it”!

Consistent / Aware - Rhythm & Tempo in practice: Fast Roll Across

- Up Tempo (Start), Down Tempo (Finish)
- Spring, Consistent Motion
- Body Rhythm (Whole Body Action)

Consistent / Aware - Rhythm & Tempo in practice: Double Spin

- Establish Pattern (Body Rotation)
- Standard → Up Tempo
 - Compare to Down Tempo shift of the Slow Sweep Spin
 - Variable Tempo, Highlights
- Return to Base Rhythm & Tempo



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Week 6: Transparency & Inevitability / Go With It!

(The Bob, Rotating Gate)

- Leads - Clear & Early vs. Telegraphed
 - (L) It is a fine line between a clear lead and an obvious (blatant) lead. The important distinction is that leads are for the benefit of your dance partner, not everyone else.
 - (F) Tune In!
 - Small but definite - subtlety
 - (L) Pressure & Points of Control
 - (F) Aware - Use all of the information provided by the Lead. It may be easy to focus solely on one lead element, but this may result in other important signals being overlooked or, more commonly, recognised too late.
 - Complimentary actions
 - (L) Obvious visual leads are acceptable when the actions fit the existing flow of dance or intended motion (e.g. presenting *Line of Dance*).
 - (F) It is not typically expected that you will need to do the exact same motions or footwork as the Lead (*he is working to you...*), but rather note and be prepared to move in the indicated directions.
 - Complimentary visual and pressure connections can yield subtle but transparent signals, provided that follow remains Aware and Pliable.
 - Go with the flow!
 - Rhythm & Tempo
(Refer further to Consistent / Aware - Rhythm & Tempo)
 - Direction & Angles, Frame, Bodylines
 - Rotation & Contra Body Pressure (CBP)
 - Even if a figure comes apart, working with the flow of dance (L&F) will facilitate easier and less obvious recovery.
- (L) Get the attention of the Follow!
 - Break the standard pattern
 - Rhythm & Tempo
(Refer further to Consistent / Aware - Rhythm & Tempo)
 - Small variations (e.g. use alternate footwork, catches, or hand holds)

- Big changes that don't affect the motion of the Follow
 - Pull Through / Push Away
 - Alignment & Stance
 - Let her (or help her) continue the Spin / Turn / Walk
- Halts and Pauses
 - Percussive leads
(Refer further to Transmit / Receive)
 - Keep changing things up - try to avoid patterns in content.
- Don't Mix The Signals
 - (L&F) Body Control.
 - (L) Define each figure - what, where, when, & how.
 - (F) Know the potential changes
 - (L) Plan ahead! / (F) Don't think ahead!
- Blocks - Body/Wrists/Arms/Foot
 - Used to indicate and prepare a change of direction. The Follow cannot be expected to suddenly switch the motion of her dance without prior notice.
 - Eliminate other possible directions or actions.
 - Strengthen Frame
 - Don't force a direction -
 - (L) Against momentum - *put the brakes on slowly*
 - (F) Against the block
- (L) Use Rhythm and Momentum
 - Into Hold / Release
 - Balance, Spring - *no time to think!*
 - Don't hesitate, while reinforcing the lead - transition consistently and smoothly through multiple points of control so that there is never a "dead spot" in the signal.
- (F) Go With It!
 - *Let the Leads do their job!* Accept the rhythm, tempo, and momentum of the dance established by the Lead. There are often multiple patterns discernible in the music or motion of dance that may be more intuitive or "natural" for you - but these may not be what the Lead is working to.
 - Be aware of the overall rhythm, tempo, and momentum of the dance and music and expect figures or actions consistent with these patterns.
 - Do not fall into the trap of "tuning out" to other figures/actions.

- Regardless of tempo, let each part happen in its time - don't try to "make it happen" or "fit". Through and across figure timing is the responsibility of the Lead.
- Don't be intimidated at moving directly toward the Lead if that is where the direction pressures and body positioning indicates. Remember, the Lead is capable of moving too - or may want you to come straight in ☺
- Remain pliable (i.e. don't take control), while working off the lead. This provides better "feedback" for the Lead through a figure and can aid in reinforcing the lead or implementing minor corrections (e.g. balance).
- *Put yourself into the dance!*

Transparency & Inevitability / Go With It! in practice - The Bob

- Small Variations (Hand Hold), Big Variations (Push Away, Stance)
- Define the Figure / Know the Changes
- Rotation, Blocks
- Follow the Lead Pattern. Complimentary Actions

Transparency & Inevitability / Go With It! in practice - Rotating Gate

- Plan Ahead
- Use Rhythm & Momentum, Don't Hesitate
- Body Control
- Variants - Continue the Turn/Rotation, Multiple Patterns, Work Off the Lead