

A man and a woman are dancing in a living room. The man is wearing a blue and white striped long-sleeved shirt and jeans, and the woman is wearing a white t-shirt and jeans. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background shows a modern living room with a grey sofa, a yellow and white patterned wall, and a potted plant.

Merengue THROUGH MARRIAGE



VIRTUAL DATE *Night*
AT HOME

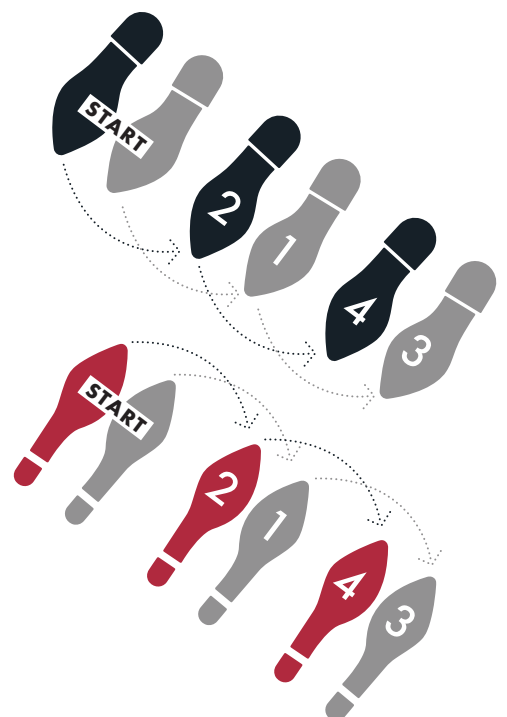
Merengue AND MARRIAGE

When some people hear the word merengue, they think about a yummy sugary dessert. Others immediately think about the dance... which can also be pretty sweet.

Whether you have rhythm or you think you have two left feet, the Merengue is a fun, energizing, easy dance for almost everyone to learn. There's an old saying, "If you can walk, you can Merengue."

The cool thing about Merengue is there is a consistent rhythm and a basic step that creates the foundation of the dance. From there, you and your spouse get to create the direction you want to go together! This makes it unique and innovative every time you do it with your partner. Spicy, hot and fun, right?!

Ya know, marriage is similar to the Merengue in a lot of ways. There are some basic steps that are really important to know if you're going to have a great marriage, but beyond that, you've got the chance to create, innovate and improvise to make it uniquely your own.





THE KEY IS TO NOT GIVE UP!

Like Martin and Nancy said, sometimes people make Merengue complicated, but it doesn't have to be. We can probably all think of times when we made things complicated in our marriage relationship when they didn't really have to be.

It's pretty likely you will step on each other's toes as you work to learn how to dance together. **The key is to not give up!** Dancing actually helps us be aware of ourselves. It teaches us to not be too rigid, take ourselves too seriously or expect our spouse to do it perfectly. It helps us learn how to lead and how to follow. It even teaches us **how to go with the flow and deal with the unexpected** as our spouse leads or spins and then does some unanticipated moves before coming back together.

Dance itself can actually be a great instructor for marriage. It's important to keep your eyes on your partner, to study their moves (Oh yeah!), get in rhythm with them, touch and hold them close - but not so much that they can't be themselves and move with you as you dance. But, even when you're aware of all of these things, sometimes you will mess up... **isn't the same true for marriage??**

If you've been married for any amount of time, you've probably experienced **stepping on each other's toes** about one thing or another. Sometimes it might be tempting to quit because it gets hard or you feel like your best self isn't shining through at the moment. Like dance though, it's when you realize that it's **not** about being perfect in marriage, **it's about being willing to be on the journey** with each other with all the twists and turns that life brings. Creating something that is unique, powerful, fun and memorable that is just between the two of you. Not perfection, but perfect for the two of you. **Your very own Merengue Marriage Dance.**

So, if you're the one with rhythm in your relationship, Merengue or any other dance probably comes super easy to you, but not so much for your partner. Just stepping out on the dance floor may make their adrenaline flow. For them, **being vulnerable enough to put themselves out there and trust you is a big deal.** And so it is with marriage as well. When you are willing to be open, vulnerable and daring with your spouse, not only does it make your heart beat faster, it etches these moments into your brain as memories. It's these moments that make you smile and remind you of why you fell in love in the first place.

On the flip side, it's also those moments when you stepped out, took a risk, and worked with your spouse to achieve something that gives you **more confidence when hard things come up in the future.**





Dance can help your marriage build resilience. Toes get stepped on, you feel foolish, the spin did not go like you thought it would, sometimes the rhythm is tricky. The list can go on, but in doing all of those things and not quitting, you are creating for your marriage what re-bar creates for the foundation of a house. When storms come, the house still stands. ***When hard times come in your marriage, it still stands.***

You could dance Merengue every day. You could choose to do the exact same moves every day, but once you felt like you mastered those moves, the dance would get boring. The same risk exists in marriage. When we begin to feel like our marriage is just ***going through the motions*** of doing the same thing day after day, we get restless. We love novelty. It's up to you to keep things spicy, surprising, creative and fresh.

KEEP CHANGING UP THE DANCE MOVES!

KNEE-TO-KNEE QUESTIONS

Right now the most hot and spicy thing about our marriage is.....

The quality I love most about our relationship is.....

What are some things we have done to build resilience in our marriage?

What challenges have we faced and together gotten through them?

In our years together, with unexpected twists and turns, what are the moves we have made that we can celebrate?

What I love about you being my dance partner in life is.....



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