

“Dancing Like No One’s Watching” Takes Hard Work

“Dance like no one’s watching.”

There are two ways to put this advice – which applies to far more than just dancing – into action.

The first and more common way is about rejecting social pressure to dance a certain way. This is a good thing. But it frequently looks like the decision to stop trying too hard. You let it all hang out. You flail around a bit. You make questionable dance moves and forsake all rules of rhythm.

The second way is less common and much harder. The second way is to become so good (or so engaged, or passionate) at dancing that you really do become unaware that anyone else is watching.

Of course, it takes a lot of hard work to reach the point of self-abandonment in any activity. To enter into “flow” and to become secure enough to live in the moment takes intense dedication and passion and effort. So if you want to grow past self-consciousness in an activity in a meaningful way, you’re probably going to have to pay the price for it.

You can’t just be messing around. The “let it all hang out” way can be born out of a rejection of social pressure (admirable), but it isn’t born out of a love for dancing itself. It’s also self-conscious in its own way – by setting out to dance in spite of people watching, you may become all too aware of them.

But if your dance is about the dance, the watchers simply won’t matter as much.

Fortunately, while real “unselfconsciousness” is hard work, it can come at any and every point in the journey. You still have to be on the journey, though. You still have to be working hard and bringing passion to the dance, to the project, to the company.