

# Beyond the Stage - The Gift of Body Intelligence

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*Prioritizing the holistic wellness  
of our next generation through  
mindset, community and  
resilience.*



There are so many reasons that people invest in dance. For some, it's the spectacle of performance or the escape through entertainment. For others, it's the marriage of athleticism and artistry, and the sense of community. Regardless of what lures you into the dance world, dance inherently gives back to its community in the most beautiful ways imaginable.

More specifically, dance teaches a multitude of life lessons and skills, otherwise known as transferrable skill sets. Transferrable skill sets are built through deliberate practice and become learned characteristics/qualities that can be applied outside of the dance setting. In our last blog post on transferrable skill sets, we discussed adaptability and how dancers are tasked with responding to last-minute choreography changes or different teaching styles.

While dancers are focusing on adapting, they are also practicing body awareness. This phenomenon, known as the mind-body connection, allows individuals to cognitively process information while executing the physical movement. Let's chat about how this is particularly special for dancers of the past, present, and future.

## **Dancers Become Sensitive to Their Instrument**

A significant part of dance is becoming in tune with your instrument - your body! Thankfully, there are people and practices that help facilitate that process. When instructors offer technical feedback, they are encouraging the dancer to bring awareness to a specific part of their instrument. It then becomes the dancers' responsibility to recall that feedback in the future. Over time, the dancer won't have to consciously apply that feedback, it will just happen. This entire process encourages dancers to continue their learning about how to sensitively respond to their instrument.

## **Dance Applies to Various Contexts and Career Fields**

As dancers learn more about dance technique and performance, they expand their understanding of muscle mechanisms and anatomy. Exposure to such topics may influence an individual to pursue related careers in physical therapy or biomechanics. It may also spark curiosity in nutrition, yoga, or strength training. Dancers not only can use this knowledge to explore additional interests, but they can also transfer their body awareness and understanding while cross-training, treating an injury, or even at the doctor's office.

## **Your Body is Your Instrument; It Goes Wherever You Go**

One of the beautiful things about dance is its ability to become encompassed into your entire being. Choreography, dance styles, and techniques become engraved into muscle memory and can be recalled after years, even decades just by hearing a familiar song. Dancers of the past, present, and future seek opportunities to dance to experience joy and bliss. Furthermore, research among elderly retired dancers reveals their ability to recall dance techniques and choreography. They don't have to think twice; the choreography lives inside their body and is just waiting to be re-awoken by a certain cue.

This emulates the immortality of being a dancer. Regardless of the last time, you took a formal dance class, your identity never leaves you. Being a dancer is something that lives within you. Once a dancer, always a dancer.

