

# Belonging strictly ballroom

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Understanding nourishes belonging... a lack of understanding prevents it  
Understanding can nourish belonging and let it grow, however a lack of understanding can damage a person's sense of belonging and prevent it. This concept is portrayed in Baz Luhrman's film "strictly ballroom" and related text poem "Rhapsody on a windy night" by T S Elliot. These texts depict the way a lack of understanding may damage a person's sense of belonging and the foundation of belonging is powerful to one's self identity.

Lack of a sense of belonging is portrayed in the 'mockumentary' film "Strictly Ballroom" through the character Scott Hastings as he is treated as an outcast because he refuse to conform to the mainstream way of ballroom dance. The opening scene portrays the false, fairytale feeling of the world of ballroom dance through the motif showing big red curtains opening with matching theatrical music. The over the top fakery is shown through the fluffy costumes and over the top hair of the dancers in the opening scene.

They are shown hugging and exchanging high fives, portraying that they belong because they have conformed to the mainstream way of dance presented by Barry Fife. "You can dance any steps you like but it doesn't mean you will win." This quote spoken by Barry fife shows the power he holds because he controls who wins. Unless you perform his steps that are shown in the video 'The right way to dance' you are not going to win. In the extreme close up of his mouth, we see the crooked rotten teeth because symbolically he is a crooked rotten person.

When Scott dances his own steps the scene is shown in slow motion with a freeze frame, beautiful music with a pleasing crowd reaction to match shows that everyone including Scott was enjoying the dance. The camera switches

to the furious faces of Shirley and Barry fife showing that everyone loved the new steps except for everyone who had confirmed that sat on the federation leaders table. The Table is situated higher than the dancers and audience depicting how they are in charge. Liz's lack of understanding for Scotts love for his own steps is shown when she threatens Scott to conform to the federation steps for Ballroom dancing. I'm not dancing with you until you are supposed to" Barry has programmed the dancers like robots to follow his ' Right steps' " what did you think of the steps? ".... " I don't think! " Fran as a beginner dancer does not belong in the ballroom dancing world. Her frizzy hair, acne covered skin, thick unattractive glasses and covered figureless body makes her a target for nasty comments. The Slapstick humour when Liz and Scott knocking over Fran when she is trying to comfort them shows how she is not respected and over looked. Understanding however can give a person a sense of belonging in society or within themselves.

Fran and Scott both feel like outcasts because they love to dance their own steps and not conform to the federation " I want to dance with you your way". When the song " time after time" plays while Scott and Fran are dancing, Fran shows Scott what she is capable of proving that she is not a hopeless dancer like everyone stereotypes her to be. Scott tells her to dance without her glasses and we notice throughout the movie the tighter clothing she wears to reveal her toned elegant body structure, portraying as she feels a sense of comfort and understanding towards Scott, she starts to gain her own identity.