

# Strictly ballroom – belonging



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I will be exploring how 'Strictly Ballroom' is a film with a strong theme of conformity influencing belonging. Firstly, I will explain how conformity is a key issue with belonging. Then, what the two main characters had to challenge before they could find their sense of belonging. And finally, how the individuality of a character influences if they conform or not. Conformity is a key issue when discussing the concept of belonging. Conformity in the film, Strictly Ballroom, is how the characters are expected to gain belonging in the federation.

Barry Fife is the controller of the federation and decides on the rules; he is perceived as powerful. His character tells the Scott that if he wants to win he must follow the rules and the federation steps. This is his way of making sure Scott does as he is told, by threatening him into conforming to the rules. Doug on the other hand, does the opposite of conformity. When Barry is trying to stop Scott and Fran dancing in the final scene by turning off the music, Doug comes out of the crowd and claps a beat, so Scott and Fran can dance again.

This break of conformity lead to his sense of belonging; his wife danced with him again and his son got to dance his own steps, which Doug had wanted him to. In Strictly Ballroom, the two main characters found belonging by challenging conformity. Scott and Fran wanted to dance their own steps, but the federation forbid them from doing so. Neither Fran nor Scott belonged in their families, but by dancing their own steps they found their belonging.

Fran's family didn't really belong, but when she started learning her own steps with her father, they found a common ground they shared, and started

to have fun together. Scott didn't belong in his family; his mother was yelling and telling him he wasn't doing what he was supposed to. When his father started clapping in the final dance, he realised his father was supporting him, and wanted him to do his own steps. Individuality influences the conformity of a character, into whether they belong or not.

Fran does not wear the same clothes as the other female dancers, when she is practicing and in the final performance. Her clothes for the final dance are much more cultural than the clothes of the dancers when they perform, which are unrealistic and overly colourful. Her dance steps are from the cultural Spanish steps her father taught her, these are much more individual than the federation steps they are supposed to dance. She also discovered these steps with Scott, who she is falling for, and is called the 'dance of love'.

Fran's connection with these steps reduces her want to conform to the federations rules of their steps only, also she finds her sense of belonging outside the federation. In conclusion, the conformity of a character has a large impact on whether they find belonging or not, and where they find it. By either conforming or challenging the rules each character found some sense of belonging in their world of ballroom dancing and home life. By breaking down the rules of the federation, Scott and Fran allowed many more people to find their sense of belonging in the world of dance.