

Dancing with the Star

By Mindy Leaf



Dancing saved Danny Carter's life. The award-winning ballroom dancer and choreographer credits sharp disco-dance moves, back in the day, for liberating him from the bullied-class in high school to "suddenly cool." And his life has never been the same since.

Armed with compassion for the underdog and anyone deemed "different," a creative drive toward excellence nurtured through an ongoing battle with dyslexia and, let's admit it, heaps of talent, the formerly awkward teen from Atlanta went on to found the Ballroom Dance Program at New York University, win numerous national awards both for himself and with students, and appear on stage from Hong Kong to Washington's Kennedy Center. Prestigious bio credits include performances at Lincoln Center and Broward Center, Macy's Christmas Day parade, and Ballroom Dance tributes with Barbara Eden and Tommy Tune on PBS TV.

By chance eight years ago, Danny visited a good friend at his condo along the beach, decided to move to South Florida, and has been a boon to our area's cultural scene ever since. A small, hurricane-ravaged former dance studio was given the magic Danny Carter makeover, morphing into a gleaming 2,600-square-foot dance floor with state-of-the-art sound equipment, alongside a second 1,200-square-foot ballroom, including kitchen, showers, and wet bar. Three terraces



with live palm trees "for stargazers and smokers" were added for good measure.

The newly christened Danny's Dance Moves & Lauderdale-By-The-Sea Center for the Arts sits at the epicenter of the beach-town's cultural revival. The studio schedule includes a Monday night improv class, almost daily yoga classes, belly dance, zumba, ballet, tap, modeling, and even cello lessons by internationally acclaimed cellist Udi Bar-David.

At the center's heart lies Danny's life-affirming vision, unquenchable energy, and passion for helping others. All instructors are personally vetted for attitude and empathy, in addition to expertise. For Danny, who holds certifications as a fitness trainer and motivational coach, among other healing therapies, wants to insure that everyone who steps foot into his studio is embraced by

warmth and acceptance. Doctors often refer their patients for dance's healing properties. These include the physical (great workout), the emotional (natural confidence enhancer), and the mental. Recent studies show that by working both sides of the brain and creating new neural pathways, dance rates highest in Alzheimer prevention, even above reading and puzzles. And, of course, anyone who's ever danced can vouch for its sheer fun factor and natural high. As Danny states: "When you dance, you're living in the moment, you forget all your issues, your daily problems."

At this stage in his life (he's just turned 51 though hardly looks it), Danny feels uber blessed with all that a life in dance has provided and wants nothing more than to share its multi-faceted pleasures with as many people as possible. Check out the positive testimonials on his website (I especially enjoyed the giddy raves by newlyweds about their personally choreographed wedding dance) and feel free to contact him for a personal, no commitment necessary, consultation. You can also watch the dance master in action at Anglin's Square (Commercial Blvd. and the ocean) over the next few months where he'll be offering free dance lessons on second and fourth Sundays through May, from 5 to 7 pm. Classes feature Swing, Salsa, Ballroom, and Tango. So get on your dancing shoes, grab your family and friends, and come dance with the star! All ages and levels welcome.

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