

## ***Your Invitation to a New Kind of Relationship Dance***

***Can We Dance?* represents a revolutionary transformation in the way you approach preparing for, seeking, and being in a relationship.**

Think of all the people in your life. How many of them have a happy and fulfilling relationship with a partner? We are confident that there is a deep yearning in your heart for a wonderful relationship that lasts, but you may not know how to accomplish it.

Does the following scenario seem too familiar?

Mark and Stephanie's relationship is getting off to a great start. They met recently at a local seminar, and they were instantly attracted to each other. Almost every evening, they go to movies, restaurants, plays, or other events going on in the city. They are amazed at how well they get along and what a wonderful and sexy couple they are. They are certain they were made for each other.

Mark and Stephanie begin excitedly sharing the details of their relationship with close friends and coworkers. However, within weeks, they are complaining about each other to the same people. They fight regularly, because they keep making assumptions about what each other is thinking and feeling. One pushes the other to open up more and share their life, but the other resists. They criticize each other, and communication breaks down between them. Soon, they end their relationship in disappointment and frustration.

Relationship advice from friends, relatives, magazines, books, television talk shows, or the Internet often provide more confusion for you than solutions. Currently the media's message is that you have to find "the one right" person in the world for you based largely upon physical appearance. The media portray sexual chemistry and love at first sight as the ideal you have to attain. Mark and Stephanie believed all of this. However, none of these factors provides the essential foundation to make a relationship extraordinary.

Instead, the message in *Can We Dance?* is to prepare yourself for a relationship first and then go into it with Both Eyes Open™. This means clearly seeing and knowing what you expect and need in a relationship and understanding all the important aspects about your partner. Of course, your partner will need to know you thoroughly as well.

A vital part of knowing yourself and your partner is understanding the character qualities you each bring to a relationship as strengths. For instance, these can include generosity, patience, enthusiasm, kindness, or courage. **This book will help you to develop each of your many character qualities and use this knowledge to help you observe your partner's qualities. Character qualities are foundational for the success of a relationship.**

Through expanding your knowledge and participating in activities and reflection, you will gain **vital new skills** that help you to discover a special partner and build a strong friendship and relationship together. Friendship is also a foundational aspect of relationships. **The greater the depth and strength of your friendship with a partner, the stronger your relationship will be.**

You will learn new ways to communicate with a partner, such as how to speak Character Quality Language, and communicate encouragement, support, and love to your partner. You will also understand how to avoid common communication pitfalls in relationships. Society has promised you a quick fix for everything, including finding someone and having a relationship. **In fact, it takes commitment, effort, and excellent communication skills to establish a great friendship and deep love with a partner.**

*Can We Dance?* is an extraordinary guide to a new and realistic approach to having a lasting relationship. It helps you to make significant new choices in how you and a partner create a relationship.

Here is what can happen if Mark and Stephanie try a different way of interacting:

Mark and Stephanie's relationship is getting off to a great start. They met recently at a local seminar, and they were quickly attracted to each other. They decide to pursue getting to know each other. Over the next few weeks, they spend time together doing activities they both enjoy, such as going to plays, museums, and restaurants. In addition, they participate in a community service project, exercise together, and discuss the books they are reading. They have meals both as a couple and together with friends and family members. Mark helps Stephanie with solutions for a challenge she is experiencing with work, and Stephanie helps Mark with a problem he is having with a relative. They work through occasional communication challenges together, and they become close friends.

Stephanie wants to see Mark in a variety of settings. It is important to her to observe his character and see that he can be consistently respectful, compassionate, trustworthy, and friendly. To Mark, it is also important for him to see trustworthiness in Stephanie. In addition, he wants time to observe that she is consistently truthful, cooperates easily and readily with him, and, like him, has a strong connection to spirituality and family. They are confident that they are establishing the foundation of a lasting relationship.

Having this type of relationship may seem unattainable, but the answers to these questions are in this book—if you are willing to learn and practice what it will take to create a happy, lasting friendship-based relationship!

Consider what you really want from a relationship. Together you can:

- Develop full partnership with respectful equality between you
- Fulfill your purposes and goals in life
- Encourage each other and help each other to be your best
- Reach your full potential as people who contribute to your families, workplaces, and communities
- Develop a deep and wonderful bond of friendship and love
- Develop communication skills, so you and your partner experience a deep connection between you

**You have probably taken more training to get a driver's license than you have to be successful in a committed relationship or marriage. However, a relationship and marriage have far greater impact on your happiness, success, and well-being in life.** Relationships can change your life forever. They have long-term implications that require skillful handling. Books, DVDs, CDs, websites, workshops, coaching, counseling, and more are all resources to empower you to be confident in your choices and actions. The more you know, and the more skills you gain, the better the outcome will be.

**We are continually fascinated and amazed at how important character, friendship, and communication are to successful relationships.** We invite you to begin your adventure in learning new ways to perform the relationship dance. It is time for you to explore yourself, discover a great partner, and create a happy, lasting relationship.

***Welcome to your relationship dance class!***

*Susanne M. Alexander, Relationship and Character Coach  
with John S. Miller, Character Coach*

**What Does Dancing Have to Do  
with a Book About Relationships?  
Foreword: by Carmen Valverde, Ed.D.**

A professor once said to me, “Dance is such a pleasurable thing to do, that it makes you wonder why there are people who do not like to dance. That would be an interesting question to answer.” The same can be said for being involved in relationships in general. Some people are happily married, and some, for various reasons, avoid a committed relationship.

Imagine that you are attending a party or an event that has lively music and dancing. You watch others having fun on the dance floor. You think of asking someone to dance, but you are afraid of rejection. Or, from the other perspective, someone approaches you and asks, “Would you like to dance?” Depending on a number of variables, you will answer either “Yes” or “No, thank you.”

You might decline the invitation if you do not know how to dance, or you think you are not good enough to dance with the person. You may not like the way he or she looks or behaves. You may believe that you just do not like dancing—it does not appeal to you. It is also possible that you tried dancing in the past, and you felt awkward, someone made fun of you, you learned more slowly than other students in your dance class and felt inferior, or your dance partner stepped on your toes. Maybe a friend put dancing down and ridiculed people who danced.

The same possibilities exist with your feelings about relationships. It looked like fun, so you tried it. You were hurt, though, and decided that a committed relationship is not for you. You might blame yourself. You might blame your partner. Maybe you never learned to trust others. The truth is, as in dancing, people need to learn how to get along in relationships. There are basic principles to follow and techniques to learn.

First, you need the desire to learn. Just as you might want to know how to dance well, you want to know how to have a fulfilling and love-filled relationship. This book presupposes that you do want to learn; otherwise, you would not be reading it. The first step is learning to BE a great partner. In dance, this means learning the basic steps. In relationships, you do this by developing your skills and your character qualities. Personal integrity is important on and off the dance floor. Then you learn the skills to find a lasting friend and partner.

To learn how to dance, you need good instruction, a good example, practice, feedback, correction, encouragement, and more practice. You need to commit time, effort, and energy to the task. You need to master the important principles and techniques of movement and then how to work with a partner. Being with a partner in dance or in a

committed relationship requires you to find a special person, and then to have proper positioning, compatibility, connection, and good communication.

Dancing well involves equality and respect, cooperation and communication. There is give and take, leading and following, obeying the rules of the dance floor, and especially kindness and courtesy to your partner and everyone around you. You need to learn the steps, timing, and how to improvise when something or someone gets in the way of you and your partner. With unity between you, when you trip, stumble, or get off the rhythm, you can recover quickly and continue dancing together.

Everyone can dance. The question is HOW WELL do you want to dance? In this book, the authors offer you principles, methods, techniques, steps, and exercises that will help you to develop and improve your ability to dance the dance of relationships. It is worth the effort—good dancing and fulfilling relationships make life worth living.

*Dr. Valverde teaches at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, United States. She has been teaching dance for over 30 years, and she met her husband while dancing. She also assisted with the dance metaphors throughout the book.*

