

# 8 steps to joyful contra dance...

1. **Build Community** Contra Dancing is a social dance. The idea is to create a sense of community (rather than showing what a great dancer you are) This includes showing concern for others. ☺
2. **Listen to the Music** In any type of dancing, it's important to be in sync with the music. Don't forget to be on time! Being on time is much more important than twirls and flourishes. The fun of dancing in a set is for everyone to move together and flow.
3. **Be Gentle** Remember that the human body has its limits. Newcomers, especially, can be disoriented by twirls.
4. **Take Time To Thank Your Partner** When the dance ends, don't immediately rush off to find a new partner. Take time to thank your partner, and then look for someone who needs a partner for the next dance.
5. **Communicate With Your Partner** Dancing is meant to be social. Just because you like to twirl doesn't mean that your partner does. When in doubt, ask! Most importantly never use force to lead a partner (see: **Be Gentle**) A lead for a twirl should be treated as a suggestion or invitation rather than an order.
6. **Don't Book Ahead** When you routinely book ahead, you destroy the social nature of contra dancing. Trust that there will be someone to dance with after thanking your partner, and don't forget the people sitting out who may want to dance the next dance. If necessary, it's okay to occasionally sit out a dance.
7. **Appreciate the Musicians and Caller** We are quite fortunate to have such talented musicians who play for our dances and dedicated callers to lead us. Don't be shy about showing your appreciation! If you have constructive feedback about the program, please direct it to a host or organizer instead of the band/caller.
8. **Have fun!** Don't forget that dancing is supposed to be fun! Don't take yourself or others too seriously. A wise man once said: "Rule number one of contra dancing is that you're going to make mistakes. Rule number two of contra dancing is that no one is going to care!"

Credit to Yael Schy's "What I've learned in 40 years of Partner dancing and 35 Years of Teaching Dances"