

# Lessons Strictly could teach the world

As *Strictly Come Dancing* arrives in Lancashire for its annual showpiece at the Blackpool Tower Ballroom RSPB volunteer **Laura Feinberg** considers what society could learn from the show

**D**rawing the curtains and settling down to autumn evening television, with its contrasting sparkling entertainment programmes and relentless gloomy news reports...

What has *Strictly Come Dancing* got to do with saving nature?

A bit about nature...

Nature remains, despite man's best efforts, untameable, captured perhaps only on the artists' easel, through the photographers' lens and in the poets' notebook.

Yet left to its own devices there is beauty in the overall balance created by and existing in nature, an awe-inspiring blend of power and gentleness, heat and cold, light and darkness, movement and stillness, elemental variations existing and being transformed in a split second and over millennia.

As human beings we are part of, yet also separate to this rich tapestry. We live breathe and rely on what nature has provided, yet

we also distance ourselves, physically in cities, mentally in our intellect and on our computers, and spiritually through denying our own connection both to ourselves and the wider community and environment.

Rising rates of mental illness worldwide reflect this, concurrent with increasing environmental devastation. None of this is news sadly.

Awareness of these issues is now globally widespread, if denied by some, and vast numbers of individuals and groups, such as the RSPB where I work as a volunteer, are collectively doing their bit to try to make things better in the future.

A bit about *Strictly*...

*Strictly Come Dancing*, I believe, is enduringly popular for many reasons. Of course, the drama of the contestants in their rehearsals, their 'journey', the glamour of the set and the glitter of the costumes, all play their part.

But time and again I have seen contestants morph across the span of the series from celebrities hoping to inject some sparkle in to their

**10m**  
average weekly  
Strictly  
viewers



Strictly Come Dancing in the Blackpool Ballroom

careers to individuals who 'fall in love with the dancing'.

To reflect on the beginning of this article and what appears to be lacking in society today, perhaps *Strictly* exemplifies the opposite - that of which we need more.

Alongside the relationship between the dancers which includes partnership, connection, teamwork and trust, even humour, poignantly, it could be said that what we are witnessing in the dance is also... power and gentleness, heat and cold, light and darkness, movement and stillness, a sense of witnessing elemental variations existing and being transformed in time.... the same qualities of nature as listed above.

The music plays, the titles roll, the news crashes into our living space once again and the spell is broken.

Where we are now

Human nature remains as it is, and some retain a pessimistic outlook. However, cultures can and do change. We have lived in a paternalistic society for millennia, perhaps for all time with a few exceptions.

Traditional male energy, independent, war-like with

## What do you think?



It is one of TV's favourite shows but why do you like *Strictly Come Dancing*?

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ego and competition at the heart is reflected in much of current society.

Traditionally female energy, more about teamwork, cooperation and relationship, the qualities as seen in the dancing, are those of which it could be argued, we need more in society.

Women such as the suffragettes and everyday 21st century women more recently have had to fight for equal rights, embodying male qualities to facilitate change, visually demonstrated, for example, by the shoulder pads of the 1980s.

But fighting for dominance is so yesterday as

proven by our current global trajectory.

What is the answer, and could it be right under our noses every Saturday evening on our television screens come the autumn?

Women have come a long way in their bid for equality but what does equality mean? The same? In the spell-binding dance the man and woman are both strong and beautiful, yet they are different and complementary in their expression. Trusted by the woman, the man leads - there is teamwork here.

And the result? Breathtaking television. Judging by the popularity of the programme this is something most of us want to see.

## Author

Laura Feinberg is an RSPB volunteer. To find out about volunteering for the RSPB, visit [www.rspb.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.rspb.org.uk/volunteering) or email [volunteers@rspb.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@rspb.org.uk).

Which brings me to my original question;

What has *Strictly Come Dancing* got to do with saving nature?

Everything therefore.

And nothing of course, it is a television show.

It is environmental staff and volunteers, such as those working for the RSPB, as well as everyday

people aiming to save nature by making sustainable choices on a daily basis who make a difference.

Having said that, almost each dance, as we approach the final,

for me, captures a visual and emotional glitter-ball of an image, a representation of the teamwork that both nature and our society needs, and we could do well to mirror - and in the meantime, why not enjoy the dance?

For more information on how the RSPB are aiming to bring this balance to life through their equality and diversity agenda, please contact [eandd@rspb.org.uk](mailto:eandd@rspb.org.uk)

**18,000**  
RSPB adult  
volunteers



Laura Feinberg