

Check in - intense start to the year - what does honoring your emotions look like?

- **Dialectics** - “a method of reasoning and understanding reality through the interplay of opposing ideas or forces.”
- Acknowledging confusion, sadness, anger, ambivalence, AND choosing to focus on what is in your control

A. The Psychology of Comparison

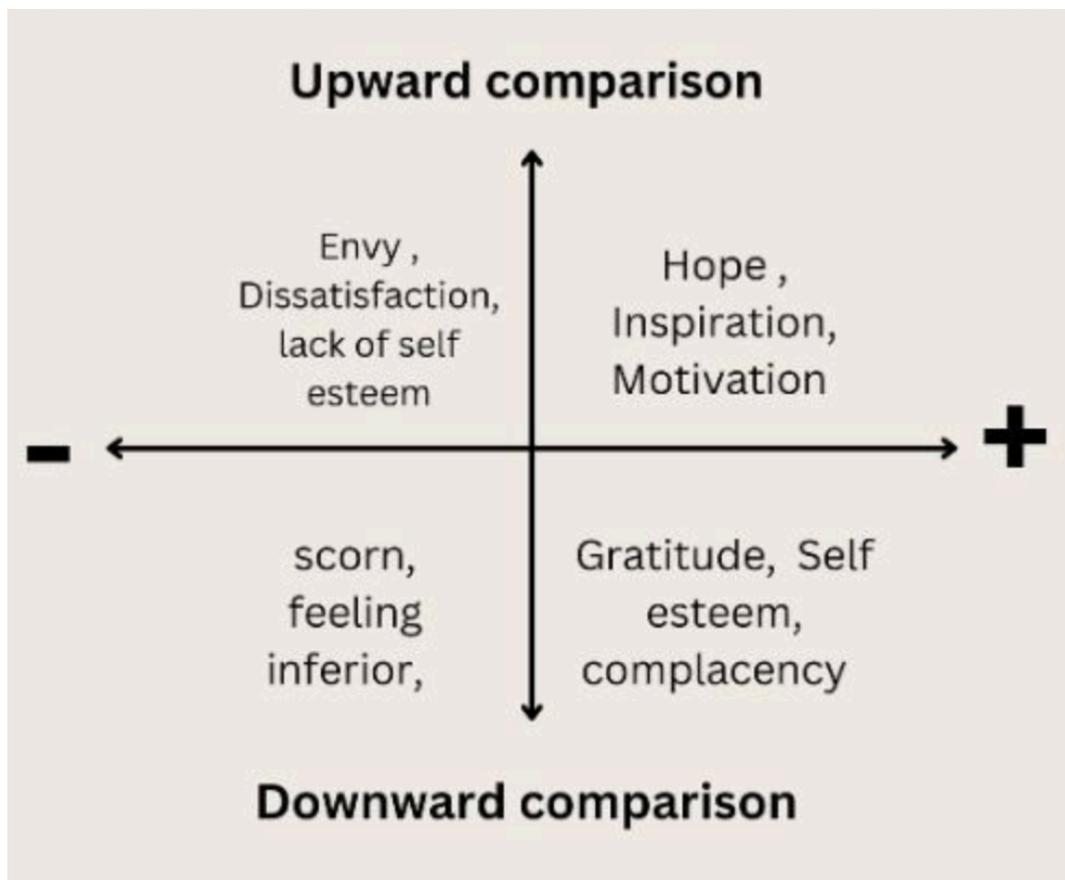
Why We Compare:

Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954): We naturally evaluate ourselves by comparing ourselves to others

In ballet, this is intensified by mirrors, rankings, casting, body-focused culture, and perfectionism

Comparison is automatic and human; **however, meta-awareness (mindfulness) creates choice (“checking in”, journaling, talking it out)**

Types of Comparison:



Who Are You Without Comparison?

- Comparison often replaces self-definition.
- When dancers don't know what they value, they borrow standards from others.

Boundaries with Comparison

Mental & Environmental Boundaries

You can't eliminate comparison – but you can limit its access.

Common Boundary Issues:

- Obsessive mirror checking
- Rewatching others repeatedly
- Seeking validation “fishing” “harpooning!”
- Doom-scrolling ballet content

Worksheet: My Boundaries Plan

Note any you want to experiment with this week:

Mirror Boundaries

- Soften focus instead of scanning
- Choose one correction per exercise
- Periodic mirror-free check-ins

Social Boundaries

- Mute triggering accounts
- No social media before class
- Surround yourself with dancers who focus on effort, not perfection

Mental Boundaries

- Limit comparison thoughts to 10 seconds, then redirect (dialectic)
- Anchor your thoughts on something more helpful (task focus vs. ego)
- Focus on the controllables (trying not to fight a battle we can't win)

B. How can we develop a healthy relationship with feedback/corrections

1. Understand what a correction means

Being corrected usually means:

- the teacher sees potential
- you're ready for the next layer
- you're engaged in the process

It is **not** a verdict on your talent or worth.

2. Listen fully before moving

Let the correction land.

Then try it with intention rather than rushing to “fix” everything at once. Taking a deep breath to recenter can make a world of difference!

3. Ask for clarity—briefly

If needed:

- “More rotation or more lift?”
- “Is this about timing or placement?”

4. Prioritize one note at a time

Choose the correction that will make the **biggest difference** in that moment.

5. Be a strainer, not a sponge!

Your teachers may be experts, but they are not experts in YOU! It is OK to let go of feedback that does not serve you!

6. Expect repetition

Hearing the same correction many times is normal.

Your body learns more slowly than your brain.

7. Stay present after the correction

Try it → move on.

Don't carry one correction through the rest of class as self-criticism.

8. Self-correct with kindness and precision

Replace vague judgment with usable feedback:

- **Not:** “My jumps are bad.”
- **Instead, try:** “I popped my heels before pushing off.”

Use **cues**, not insults.

9. Balance critique with acknowledgment

Notice what's working.

Progress happens faster when confidence and clarity grow together.

C. OK, all of these things seem simple in the moment... what happens when I get stuck in BIG emotions??!!!

T - tip your temperature

I - intense exercise/muscle engagement

P- paced breathing

S - 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 senses

*** not long-term solutions or quick fixes, but they can help us better use other skills like being mindful or comparison or using a helpful mindset for corrections