Argentina's favorite dance gets moving in Marcia Rock's 'Surrender Tango'

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"Surrender Tango," Monday night at 9 on Ch. 25

"Surrender Tango" dissects Argentina’s favorite dance so finely that it ends up almost a puree. It also ends up quite fascinating.

It never gets closer to Argentina than Central Park, however, since this charming, half-hour documentary was shot entirely in New York, with real-life New Yorkers.

Filmmaker Marcia Rock explains up front that she became fascinated by the deeper meaning of the tango when she started taking tango lessons herself.

So she started talking to instructors and dancers, and found that the more she talked to them, the more it seemed clear that the tango is in many ways a graceful metaphor for life.

"The more you know how to give space" to your partner, one dancer explains, "the closer you get."

The whole discussion becomes a little New Agey at times, like during an extended explanation of how the Holy Grail of tango is "finding your core."

In a literal physical sense, however, that turns out to be true. Once you know the center, everything else just goes where it belongs.

Rock illustrates her journey with film of tango classes all over the city, and she wisely does not simply film experts. She films ordinary people who love the dance, and some clearly have more skill at it than others.

So you don’t have to assume the lotus position and sit around contemplating the tango all day to appreciate Rock’s larger point, which is that the arts can work their way into our souls, elevate us and become profoundly gratifying.

Turns out you don't need a rose in your teeth to blow a kiss to the tango.