

# SCHOOL'D BY FUNKMODE

You want to become a Hip Hop expert? Learn the info below and you're on your way, yo!

## THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF FUNKMODE - PART 1 (Cara and Mighty)

FUNKMODE has been bringing you many informative lessons on the origin and history of Hip Hop, but what is the origin and history of FUNKMODE?

To understand how FUNKMODE began, you have to look back at the history of its founders, Mighty and Cara. Both of them have been dancing since they were children. Cara got her start in ballet classes at the age of three. She fell in love with it immediately and then started also taking classes in Ballet, Jazz, Tap and Hip Hop. When she turned 13, she began dancing competitively and won many awards, even at a national level. She also danced for her High School, Carondelet in Concord, CA. There she danced for what is said by many to be the best football team in the history of High School football, the De La Salle Spartans. Dancing for that team gave her the opportunity for many performances, including a game at the Oakland Coliseum. After High School, she continued pursuing dance in college. On a scholarship, she got admitted to Arizona State University, whose dance program ranked in the top 5 in the country. She graduated with a degree in Dance Education and has been working as a choreographer, performer and teacher ever since.

Mighty took a much less structured path through the world of dance. He was born into a family for whom dance was a regular part of their social lives. Everyone he knew danced ... aunts, uncles, parents, grandparents, friends ... and they all danced any time they got together. He discovered break dancing through a cousin at 5 years old. He was amazed at the combination of style, skill and danger involved in the moves and was drawn to start learning immediately. At age 6, he choreographed a break routine for himself and two of his friends for a talent show. This was his first try at choreography and his first performance. His mother saw that he loved dancing/performing and tried to encourage him to take classes. However, Hip Hop was what he loved and there were not classes for that style at the time. He wasn't as interested in the more traditional styles and his mother said he complained that those classes were all "full of girls!" Therefore, he continued dancing on his own, learning with friends and from watching music videos. He danced every chance he could get and although he wanted to perform, he found few chances to do so. When he graduated High School, Mighty found opportunities to dance at parties and dance clubs but he wanted more. However, not having been raised in dance classes and not knowing any professional dancers, he had no idea how to take his love of dance farther.

At the beginning of 2002, Mighty took one of his first Hip Hop dance classes at a Fitness Club. The teacher was not dancing to Hip Hop music and her moves were more of the Jazz variety. When Mighty went to talk to the club manager about the class, she told him that the instructor wanted to quit teaching and that she needed a new instructor. For reasons that he still does not understand, she asked him if he would be interested in taking over the class when she left. He told her that he had no formal dance training but she explained that all he needed was to come up with choreography that he could teach to the group of students. Mighty was a freestyle dancer first and foremost, but he had choreographed dances for years with friends and family. Furthermore, he also had many years of experience teaching large groups. So although the idea of being a Hip Hop dance teacher seemed a bit sudden and strange, it also seemed somewhat comfortable and familiar. He accepted the offer and began teaching that class twice a week and continued with it for years. While teaching there, he met a local dance studio owner who had come to take his class. She asked him if he would be interested in teaching at her new studio and he accepted. As she was also working there, it was at this studio that Mighty met Cara. THIS is when FUNKMODE really took off!

... for the rest of this story, check out Part 2 of this special School'd lesson on the origin and history of FUNKMODE!

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## HIP HOP WORDS OF THE WEEK

On the DL: On the "down low" or information meant to be a secret. EX: "I'm pretty sure I'm gonna get a new bike for Christmas, but keep it on the DL, cuz I don't want my parents to know I know and I don't want my little brother to get jealous."

Flip the script: Completely change things around; do the opposite. EX: "I thought I was going to the movies tonight but my homie straight flipped the script on me and said he can't go cuz he forgot he hates all movies."

Cop: To get something. EX: "I'm bout to go cop the new Outkast album. I heard that thing is FIRE!"

**BONUS:** Create a sentence using all words of the week

## EXTRA LEARNING

- 1) When did you first know that you loved Hip Hop
- 2) When did you first know that you loved dancing or performing?
- 3) What would you like to do with dance, performing or Hip Hop that you have not yet done?