

Aerobics By Any Other Name

By Susan Carter

Chris told me that I should write about what I am passionate about. My most recent passion has been the latest attempt to firm my fat. I finally reached the right weight to be included in a special program at work that requires me to keep up with the steps I walk and any food I consume each day. Oh, and they have suggestions for what I should eat. So I have had to become almost obsessive about my food and exercise. The program really hasn't been that difficult, just more of a time consuming process.

I chose swimming for my preferred exercise for the simple reason that fat floats, and I thought that it would be much easier on my body as a whole than jumping out of step with some teacher in an aerobics class. I personally hate aerobics due to the fact that I am possibly the whitest woman in America, and exceptionally rhythmically challenged. Really I count myself lucky that my eyelids actually blink at the same time. Because my feet and my hands can't seem to be coordinated enough to follow what seems to everyone else the simplest movements. So when I hurt my shoulder, doing God knows what because I can't remember, I had to change my workout from swimming to something else. I think that walking in place on a treadmill is terribly boring only exceeded by walking in circles on a track. So after a few laps I walked down to see what type of exercise class was about to start. I was told that it was "Total Athletic Conditioning" that combined weights with kickboxing. Great! I took three years of martial arts, I could do this, no problem and since I just broke up with my boyfriend of nearly a year, the idea of kicking and punching at an imaginary target seemed like an added bonus. The class started well with the weight bar and soon turned to the kickboxing section. The reality of the class became apparent in all its true horror. I was in an aerobics class disguised as kickboxing. The punches and kicks were no nearer to the real thing than I was to being able to keep up with the adult cheerleader in the front of the room. The whole thing quickly lapsed into absurdity until near the end I was making up my own steps, like the invisible jump rope, which was amazingly similar to jumping up and down in place. I soon gave up and left the class after about thirty minutes to the laughter from the other suckers, I mean students. I found that I didn't care if they laughed I had over achieved on my daily steps, and needed to get out of there as soon as possible. I may never achieve the ability to be in step with the others in that class, but being in step with others is over-rated anyway.

The thing that I am most grateful for is that I lost three pounds this week even with the hamburger, fries, and milkshake that I had to comfort me after the break-up. So I guess all that work was worth it in the end. Working myself to utter frustration for the sake of others or to gain their approval isn't the key to happiness; it's finding my own steps or just knowing when to walk away.