

My Mic Is My Security Blanket

Lots of people get stage fright speaking or performing in front others. I don't have that problem. My microphone is my security blanket, and up on that stage, I am invincible! (Notice I didn't say outstanding, or even exceptionally good...I said invincible!)

Before you start rolling your eyes and slapping me down for my huge ego...I KNOW I have a huge ego! In fact, I keep it in my storage unit. It is a 2 foot tall, florescent orange letter "E" on wheels with a pull string. It was given to me as a gift by one of my classes at the Riverside Squares many years ago. All night long they made me pull my "Giant E-Go" around behind me!

Sure, I screw up plenty when calling a square dance. I miss corners. I miss notes. I miss words to the songs, but I still feel safe and comfortable on that stage. Nothing can hurt me while I've got my mic in my hand. I've got my security blanket, and I am in complete control.

And then the tip ends...

I put down my microphone and step off the stage, and I lose complete control. People have accused me of being aloof, or standoffish, or antisocial. Truth be told...I am terrified. Without my microphone I am terrified. I am terrified that I might say the wrong thing. I am terrified that I should have said something but didn't or did say something I shouldn't have. I am terrified that I'll ask the wrong question or not know how to best answer yours. Without my security blanket...I am defenseless and until now, most people have never heard me admit it.

We all have our strong points and our weak points. Unfortunately for me, I work in a very social activity and being social isn't one of my strong points. I've always looked at myself as one of the castaways from "The Island Of Misfit Toys". As we all know..."Nobody wants a Charlie in the Box! Or a train with square wheels..."

I sincerely wish I were better at meeting and greeting people, but it goes beyond uncomfortable for me. I get physically ill. If you attend one of my dances, you'll probably notice the tips are a little longer and the breaks are a little shorter. This isn't an accident. This is so I can spend as much time with my security blanket as possible.

Why am I telling you this? Well...mostly because I don't want you to think I'm intentionally rude. If I walk by...it's not because I don't want to hear what you have to say...it's because I fear that I will have nothing interesting to say. Making friends is a very difficult process for me. While there are several similarities, Paul Cote off the stage, is very different from "The Round Mound of Sound!" on the stage. Off stage, I still see myself as that "Charlie in the Box".

So again...why am I telling you this? To ask for your patience and understanding. I continue to try to be more social, but it is a long, difficult process for me. Please know that deep down in my heart I genuinely like people...even if I have a hard time expressing it off stage.