

I Just Wanted You To Know...I Don't Like You...

A month ago, a gentleman came up to me and asked me if I knew who he was. I responded that I knew "of him" though I didn't feel I "knew him". I'd seen him at several dances, and I knew that he was a caller, but I'd never had any kind of personal communication with him.

I wasn't sure where this was going, but it didn't take long for me to be wishing for my "security blanket" again. The next thing he said was, "I just wanted you to know...that I don't like you." Not knowing exactly what to say, I said, "I'm sorry to hear that." When I didn't ask, he asked me if I'd like to know WHY he didn't like me, and I said that if it would make him feel better, Sure!

It turns out that somewhere between 15 and 18 years ago, I said something on the microphone that this gentleman felt was the rudest and crudest thing he had ever heard said at a square dance. He didn't tell me exactly what it was I said, but 15+ years later, he felt it was time to tell me that he didn't like me.

His timing simply could not have been worse as it was at the beginning of a callers school that I was in my first position of "authority". Like it or not, we were going to have to deal with each other for the next four days. Now I can't even begin to remember what I might have said at a particular dance on a particular day 15 years ago, but I CAN tell you (as I told him) what my general policy has been when I am on the microphone. My policy is pretty simple. If I wouldn't say it in front of my mother...I won't say it on the microphone. And for the record...my mother is a bit of a prude. (I love you Mom!)

I think that the most risqué thing I have said (and continue to say) on the microphone is when I have boy-boy-girl-girl ocean waves, I will say, "boys trade, girls trade, same sex trade, centers trade, if you like sex trade". It's usually good for a slight pause and murmur between dancers to be sure they heard me correctly then a big laugh when they realize that is exactly what I said. Is that phrase of calls 100% politically correct? NO. Is it something that a person should harbor resentment for 15+ years for? I sure hope not!

Now...I can't say for sure that this is what I said that night. I MAY have said something worse. It was 15+ years ago, and I was a kid in my mid-twenties. I have always had a slightly "off-center" sense of humor, and I try to walk that "fine line". Sure, there are times that I've stepped over that line, but come on folks! If I offend you...let me know! Don't harbor something inside for 15+ years! That's simply not healthy!

I wish that this gentleman would have come up to me, called me, wrote me a letter or an email that night. How many people did he share his negative experience with along the way? Had he approached me, only one of two things would have happened. One, I could have apologized for offending him, or two, I could have told him to jump in a lake. Either way, the issue would have been resolved that night. If he was still mad, well, at least we'd both know why.