

THE PERFECT TIP

Last night we danced The Perfect Tip. That happens once in a while, but it seems like we haven't had one for a long time. Made us remember why we continue square dancing.

What made the tip Perfect, you ask? Was it our Favorite Music? Well, not really... It was just a couple of nice tunes, with good rhythm and beat, and loud enough to be able to hear and recognize. Music that makes you want to smile.

Were we dancing with Perfectly Good Friends, you ask? Well, not really... We hadn't danced with two of the couples for months, and the fourth couple was only a nodding acquaintance of ours. But when we stepped up to the square, they all made eye contact with us, and they were all tapping their feet or swishing their skirts, and they didn't look around like they wished we were someone else, or that they were somewhere else. And they all smiled like they meant it.

Was it a Famous Perfect Caller, you continue? Well, not really... The caller called smooth calls, so we were always in position for the next one. The calls were a little different than the dance he called last week. He also put a new twist on an old favorite move, and it worked "neat", but he wasn't trying to prove anything and it didn't feel like we'd been issued a challenge to "keep up" with some fancy drill corps move or his cleverness. And as we danced, we all kept smiling because we weren't concentrating too hard, and subconsciously we felt like we were pretty smart to "get it".

Were we all Perfectly Experienced Dancers, you ask? Well, not really... One of the couples had just graduated, but they didn't step up to the square apologizing for it. And we all smiled because they had obviously been dancing at least once a week: they knew their basics and were eager to learn what they didn't yet know.

Did the caller have a Perfect Voice, you ask? Well, not really... He knew how to use the mike confidently, his voice was strong and pleasant, we could hear it all the way in the back where we were dancing, and he was obviously enjoying performing for us. He also knew how to use the voice he had, making it soar smoothly, kind of like the flight of an eagle. And we all kept smiling because it made us feel good.

Did we Dance Perfectly, you wonder? Well, not really... We actually broke down twice in the patter. But all eight dancers immediately stepped up to lines without milling around looking for their original partners, and we were ready when the caller called the next line move. And we all kept smiling because we didn't care who had caused it, just that we could keep dancing.

Was everyone doing Perfect "Fancy Dancing", you ask? Well, not really... Two couples put in pretty steps, but obviously they had practiced it before they stepped up to our square. And we could all keep smiling because they didn't expect us to participate, they only did it during the singing call, they didn't make our dancing less smooth by making us wait until they finished their fancy stuff, and they didn't surprise us with "clever" moves that made us miss beats or feel like we weren't part of the "in crowd".

Was it a Perfect Hall, you ask? Well, not really... The room was actually warm, but we kept the

square small, shoulder to shoulder so we weren't wearing ourselves out, the fans and the swishing skirts kept the air moving, the break had been long enough to rest a bit, and we all smiled because it didn't feel like work to enjoy ourselves.

Did we have a Perfect Piece of Cake before the tip, you ask? Well, not really... The dance was in a kosher hall, and no one had had time to put out more than candy and water. But we smiled at that because one reason we square dance is for the exercise, after all.

Were we in a Perfect Mood, you ask? Well, not really... We'd had a fine "discussion" on the way there, but we decided to leave it in the car. And we all smiled because we were in rhythm with the music, able to forget for 10 minutes the fight we'd had, the kids, everyone's mid-life crisis, the workload this week (and next week), the price of gas, and the grocery shopping we have to do tomorrow.

Were we all dressed up in Perfectly Matched Square Dance Outfits, you ask? Well, not really... There were several western shirts, a couple of crinolines, a prairie skirt, a comfortable-looking pair of jeans, and a pair of shorts. But we all smiled because the clothes didn't affect our dancing a bit.

Did we all just Feel Perfectly Good, you ask? Well, not really... At least we hadn't all felt good when we started. One dancer had a wrapped knee and was obviously limping, my aspirin hadn't kicked in yet, my partner was pooped, and we knew one couple was just over a virus. But we were doing the best we could, and it made us feel good enough to keep smiling while we were doing it.

We finished the tip grinning like Cheshire Cats, with as fine a feeling of Fun as we'd had for some time. And as we all said "great tip", we realized that's why we keep doing it: smiling (and meaning it) feels perfectly good. Nothing was really perfect, but, yes, it really was The Perfect Tip.

TH-A-A-A-NK YOU!!!!

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