



seniors

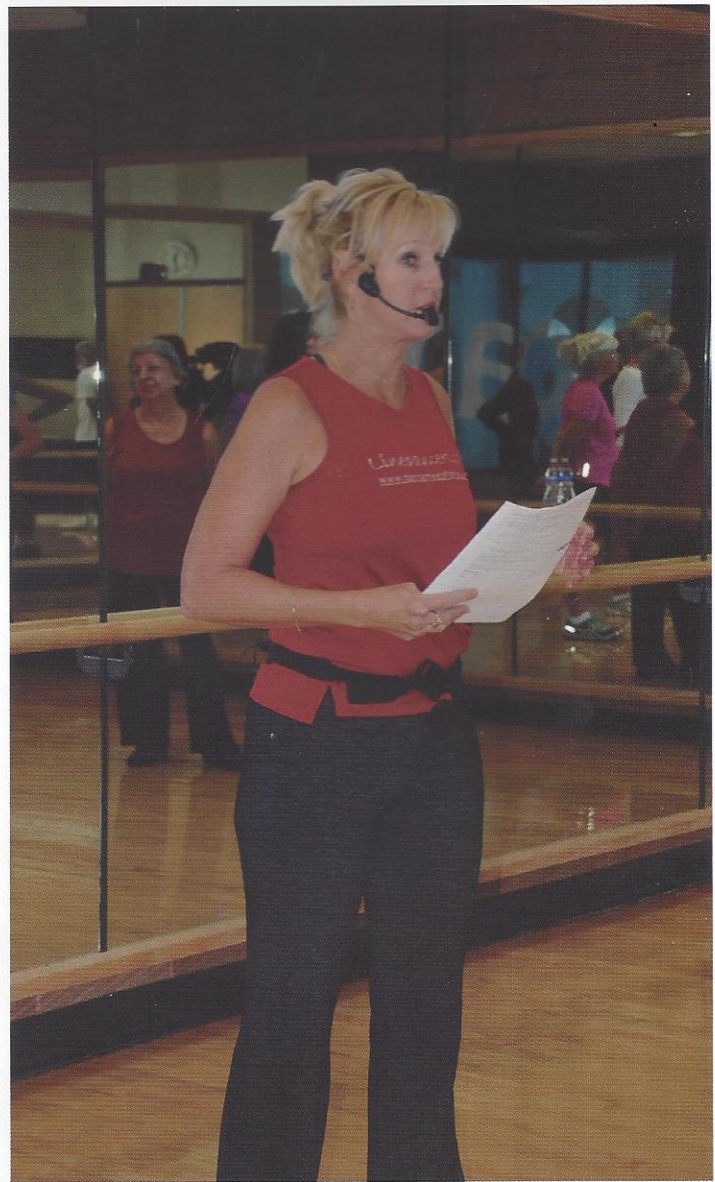
...it's about time!

Carrie-fied!

By Dr. Madelaine Paschal | Photos by Wendy Bates

As I sit across the restaurant table from her, giggling at her on-stage-like sense of humor, infectious laughter, and girlish, pretty features, I realize that when she's finally a senior, like me, she will be a funny one, a wise one, and a physically fit one. But she's still not one, yet... she's her own wonderful self, so full of life... so willing to take on the world... so Carrie!

And I embrace her. And from my vantage point, I watch how she's so in control of her thoughts. She has all the talking points down already. Like, how she got to be an exercise coach. She worked hard, diligently, and never gave up. Or like how she's enjoying her longish, substantial marriage. She worked at it, and never gave up. Or like how she has raised her great kids. She's worked at it, and never gave up.



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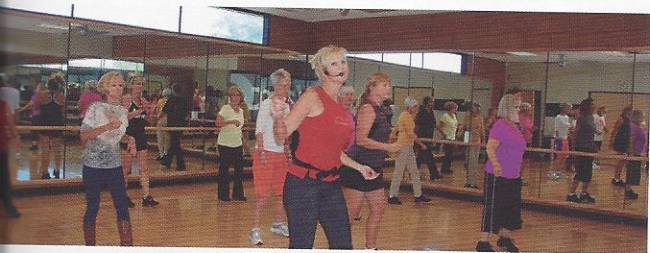
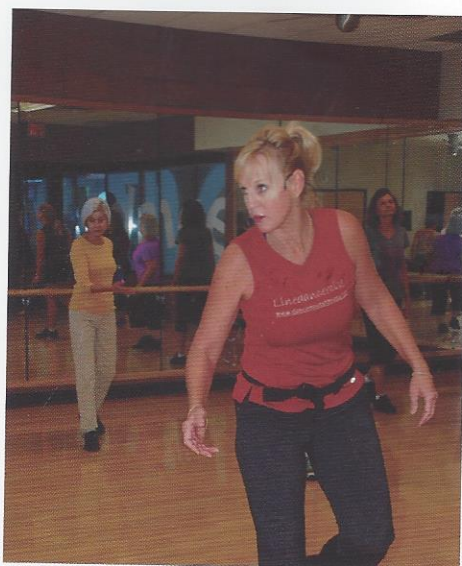
Bobby Bofman,
BC-HIS, Ph.D.

And I write down what she is telling me about how she began her life as a little tap dancer, grew into a forward-thinking teen with strong ambitions to be 'management' material, went to college to do just that, and came out on the other end, a logistics expert.

I listen to her as she orders a unique offering from a large menu, and think to myself... she's always done that... quickly and confidently. I think back about my first visit to her very popular-with-senior's line dance class just recently, where she slides effortlessly into her own choreographed 'ballroom-like' line dance routines to each rapid beat, talks us all through every step, sandwiches patter and humor in between, and watches all twenty of us – quickly and confidently.

I obsess about the way she defines life... deftly and happily. Life to her, she smiles, means doing what you can do with what you have at the moment you need to do it and not looking back, ever. Never mind the fact that her whole heart is in every life

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...ge, every 'starting over' spot, every challenging moment...
... and happily... and not looking back... ever.

I absorb her feelings poured out about her wonderful pilot
...nd of twenty-five years. Beginning with learning to love mili-
...life, couples' lives, and then family life plus children. And with
...new point, the 'starting over' was just a natural transition into
...next phase of creating the Carrie who sits across from me today.
...Carrie who is a credentialed aerobics trainer, certified line
...instructor, degreed purchasing and logistics manager, and the
...person in the world from whom I would try my hand at this
...of recreational sport... dancing in a line of people (all ages and
...sexes) and sweating to my favorite pop songs.

I think of the other 'seniors' in her now-accepting-enroll-
...classes who are just like me... a little apprehensive, a little
...d, and a lot scared and asking ourselves 'what if I can't
...s,' or 'what if I can't remember the routines,' and 'what
...back side is seen more than my front side'(OMG)! And
...remember the other 'senior soldiers' who came up to me on

my very first day, smiled and introduced themselves. Lorraine
said, "She makes us laugh, keeps us coming back, and is excel-
lent at all she does. She is way cool!" Gayle chimed in, "Carrie
McNeish is a hoot and is a great teacher!"

I, being out of breath and feeling older than all of them, think
that if I make it to session number two, I will laugh loudly,
because she is extremely funny; try harder, because she tries so
hard to make it easy; and will take deep breaths, because I know
I can do this! At least she thinks I can... thinks we all can...
even if most of us are seniors... she loves us anyway and totally
... and we know it... because she's Carrie!

Our Carrie! The Carrie! Carrie McNeish! And we're all danc-
ing... and it feels so good! And we're all Carrie-fied! But I dare
you, dear reader, to line up, slide the slides, kick the kicks and
turn the turns. You may just become Carrie-fied too!

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