



**Sweaty She Monday (6/15/09):
Kissing Is The New Hugging**

By Susan Farago

Weekly Sweaty She postings can be found on "Sweaty She" on Facebook.com.

I'm not a hugger. I'll just come right out and say it. I'm not. If someone offers to hug me, I'll reciprocate but it's not a natural tendency. I think it's a spatial thing for me. I prefer to have a large "personal zone". I like my space. But I do have a few friends who I know are huggers. I see them coming and I say, "OK, here comes the hug." And I'm good with that. And then I have friends who think it's funny to hug me just because they know I'm not a hugger. I think they think they can convert me. Good luck.

For some odd reason the exception would be hugging after a race. I have no idea why it would seem more natural to embrace someone while we're both wearing spandex, covered in sweat and who knows what other bodily fluids. Perhaps it's the result of sharing the same experience and the hug signifies a bond that says, "We went into battle and emerged victorious!" Or maybe it's just that we're so dang happy not to be breathing hard anymore.

But I recently had a new experience. It has transcended the hug. It was...the kiss.

I'm not talking full on, mouth gaping, slobbery kiss. I'm also not talking about the European cheek "kiss, kiss, kiss" either. That one always confused me. Is it two kisses? Three kisses? What if you finish at two but then the person goes in for a third?

The kiss I'm talking about is more like something you would receive from your mother – if you were on good terms with your mom that is. It was a nice, amicable cheek kiss. Just one. And I was warned ahead of time that "it was coming". Good thing. Otherwise I would have thought, "What happened to hugging?"

But this person informed me that they are very endearing and affectionate and that's just how they are, and (in my own words) I'd just have to deal with it. I can appreciate that type of honesty and directness. So I dealt with it.

Perhaps back in the day hugging was the new handshake. And now kissing is the new hugging. If so, I'm glad I was warned ahead of time.

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