



**Sweaty She Monday (6/22/09):
You Think You Can Tandem? Take This Test!**

By Susan Farago

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

The first time my husband Leary and I ever canoed together I knew within 5 minutes it would be our last. I, a former Girl Scout trained in proper canoe maneuvering, paddling technique, and “what to do if the canoe tips over” emergency procedures, took the whole event very seriously. Leary...did not. And while he thought it was very amusing to grab onto the sides of the canoe and wobble it back and forth yelling, “WHOAH!!! We’re going to TIP OVER!!!” I did not. Welcome to the world of “testing your relationship” – seemingly benign activities that bring out people’s true natures.

Control freaks (me) and pranksters (him) tend NOT to work well together in “team” exercises. Don’t get me wrong, there are plenty of team activities and projects we can do together, so long as we each have VERY clearly defined roles and responsibilities – ideally which don’t overlap. This is also how I know we could never ride a tandem bicycle together.

Riding a tandem bike is one of those things that people think would be fun and a great way to do something together, but how do you know if you are truly tandem-compatible? Leary and I came up with a way you can test yourself and your partner. All you need is a pool or lake and 2 swim noodles. We call it – “Tandem Noodle Training”.

Steps for Tandem Noodle Training (TNT):

1. First determine who is going to be in front and who is in back.
2. Get in the water.
3. Get into front/back position.
4. Put one swim noodle along the side your left side and hook your arms over the noodle so that you are both hanging on the same noodle with your left arm (noodle under armpit). Do the same with the right arm. It’s the same positioning as if you were carrying someone on a stretcher but the noodles are under your armpits.
5. Front person scoots to the front end of the noodles. Back person scoots to the back end of the noodles.
6. Ready? Now start aqua jogging.

You are TNT compatible if:

- a) You can get into TNT position in less than 3 minutes.
- b) You actually make forward progress.
- c) You make forward progress in a straight line.

- d) Neither one of you gets kicked or kicks the other person.
- e) You both stay afloat.
- f) No curse words are said (either in general or directed at the other person)

You are NOT TNT compatible if:

- a) It takes you more than 10 minutes to get into TNT position.
- b) Phrases are exchanged like: “What are you DOING?”; “STOP THAT!”; “Are you a complete IDIOT?”
- c) One or both of you falls off the end of the noodles.
- d) The front person makes forward progress one way, and the back person makes forward progress another way (yes it is possible to bend the noodles to achieve this).
- e) Someone drowns.

Riding a tandem bicycle isn't for everyone but for \$5.00 you can find out how truly tandem-compatible you are. And what a great date test! If you don't want to waste your time wondering if he or she is “the right one”, grab a couple of noodles, jump in the pool and find out!

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