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Pole Mama

A Gravity Defying Instructor

By: Katie Petersen

KP: What made you decided to start pole dancing?

Mel: I was 39 years old and had a much younger, cuter friend who also happened to work with my husband. She wanted to take pole dancing and I think that kind of made me feel a little insecure – that she would be talking about pole dancing to my husband and maybe he would think she was better, or cuter, or more attractive than I was. So, I decided to take classes with her. I had NO IDEA what I was getting myself into – 6 years later and I am still doing pole! So, I guess the reason I started was to keep my husband interested in me and not in some other “girl”.

KP: When & where was your first class?

Mel: My first class was in April of 2008 at Studio Soiree in Sugarhouse. One of the largest Pole Studios in North America at the time.

KP: Tell me about your first pole dance experience. What was the class like? What emotions did you have during and after the class?

Mel: So, my first class was AMAZING. I learned all the basics – in fact, I still teach the same steps that I learned the first time I took pole! – fireman spin, dip around the pole, how to get up pretty, Sunwheel spin, ½ turn pirouette, hip circles, floor work. I was HOOKED! I was not very awesome, but I wanted to become awesome. I had a blast and laughed my whole way through the first class. But, something else was happening too, I was beginning to feel my muscles and loosen up. I started to wish I was stronger so

I could do amazing things. After my first class I just wanted more.

KP: How would you describe your pole dancing style?

Mel: Every time I dance for other people they mention how Graceful I am. I laugh, because I was NEVER a graceful person before pole. I would say that is my style – I become very SELF focused when I am dancing and performing. I love to close my eyes and just FEEL the dance happen. I like to become someone else when I dance and that person is strong and graceful and sexy and can dance her heart out!

My greatest success is when I help someone else become successful!

KP: What has been your biggest struggle with pole dancing?

Mel: My image of myself. I had the hardest time looking at myself dance and NOT seeing the flaws only. I had no boobs, my hips don't move very well, my legs don't always go straight, my pointed toes are sickled, my body doesn't look sexy.....and on and on. Every time I saw myself in the mirror while dancing, I would cringe! I had to learn to accept what I had and work with it. I would never have D cup boobs – and I learned to accentuate other parts of my body. I got really strong so I could do amazing, beautiful aerial moves that challenged me. I learned to be patient as I perfected a new move.

KP: What has been your greatest success?

Mel: Becoming a really good instructor has been my greatest success. I LOVE teaching Pole. I love seeing others do something and KILL IT! I love the look of amazement that crosses their faces when they realize they just did something really hard! It feeds my soul and makes me keep going. So, my greatest success is when I help someone else become successful!

KP: What is your favorite trick/combo?

Mel: I LOVE Jasmine to Scorpio to Superman. This combo was one of the most difficult for me to learn. It scared me and I just could not make my body do what it needed. After much practice, I ended up DREAMING about it. I dreamt that I was doing the move, and saw what my leg needed to do. I woke up and went to my pole. After a few tries, I did it. I then took that move to International Pole Camp in Canada and taught it to everyone there.

KP: How long have you been instructing?

Mel: I have been teaching pole for about 5 years. I started my certification process a year after I started taking classes and that included shadowing other instructors for about 20 hours. I started teaching right after I certified (about a 3 month process).

KP: Why did you decide to start instructing?

Mel: I am a smart cookie. And, I love teaching – Sunday school teens, substituting for elementary school teachers, etc. So, teaching pole came a little natural to me, however, body muscles and mechanics were really foreign to me so I had to study muscle groups and anatomy really hard to pass my exam! But, it made me a better instructor and gave me a passion for proper alignment of the body.

KP: What is your favorite part of being a pole dance instructor?

Mel: Seeing the faces of people who just “get it”. That moment when the trick or combo or spin finally connects with their brain AND body! I LOVE THAT!

KP: Tell me about being an owner of a pole studio. What is your favorite part? What is your least favorite?

Mel: Being an owner was really just an ego boost. One I would NEVER do again. I am a great employee and a great instructor, but I am NOT an owner! I liked being in the know about everything and I hated keeping information quiet. Ugh – never again!

KP: Have you ever competed? If so, what competition?

Mel: I competed in Utah’s first Pole Competition – Fetish. I was the oldest competitor and did it as kind of a lark! I just love

performing and thought it would be fun. I entered as an Intermediate level dancer.

KP: What place did you take?

Mel: I actually won 3rd place! I was so shocked I said the F word aloud when they said my name! It was a thrill!

KP: Tell me about your competition experience.

Mel: I just wanted to have fun, but I realized that not everyone had the same ideas that I did. People were really touchy, stressed out, and kind of mean! I had a complete melt down about how I wasn’t sexy like the other girls before my competition. Lorinda – one of my mentor trainers – talked me off the ledge and told me to accentuate what I am good at – have fun, BE fun, and do things I like. So, I did and went into it with a really fun attitude. I learned then that I am a performer – not a competitor.

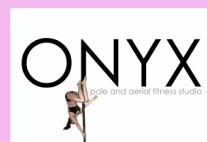
KP: Do you have a goal or dream when it comes to pole dancing?

Mel: I want to train the next Olympians! And I want to get my gosh darn dead lift before I die! I also want to continue to bring talented pole dancers to Utah to teach everyone and broaden our thoughts about pole dancing.

KP: Do you have a favorite pole dance moment?

Mel: I think the most fun I have ever had has been training and rehearsing for my Halloween performance with Katie! It was so relaxed and we did such a great job! We got very creative together and it was delightful. Also, dancing with SALT has been a secret dream since I was little – I always wanted to be part of a dance troupe, and now I get to hang out with some of the most fun and talented ladies in Salt Lake! And, I get to perform! And, I’m 45! It is kind of amazing how much younger my body feels – and my mind too. All because of pole dancing!

Local Pole Studios in Salt Lake:



8385 S Allen Street
Sandy, UT
(801) 652-9575



2464 W. 12600 S.
Riverton, UT
(801) 302-5720



1850 S 300 W
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