Only A Number

June 9, 2015 By Nicole Lemelle

“Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.” ~ Arthur Ashe

Lately, I have been extremely tired. On Tuesdays I attend an MS aquatics class but this particular day, fatigue had me in a bad way. So instead, I opted to go to the gym and use the NuStep. I love this machine because it’s a sit-down, step exercise apparatus that works both my arms and legs.

The goal for the day was 10 minutes. Just 10 lousy minutes! That’s what I usually do on good days. What made me think I could do that today even though I was too tired to go to the pool? I don’t know? Maybe it was denial, wishful thinking or both?

I entered the gym and without hesitation went straight to the NuStep. Within the first two minutes I quickly changed the tension level from 2 to 1, which is the easiest intensity.

Then five minutes in, I saw Tommy, my husband, get up and stand closer to me. I thought to myself, “I must be swaying”. So I began concentrating on keeping my balance.

At seven minutes, I could feel myself winded, sweating, and my heart rate was through the roof. And I’m still on the easiest level! Then, I made a very smart move. I pressed stop. I thought a break was called for.

Tommy asked if I was finished. “Nope”, I replied.

He gave me a sip of water; I caught my breath and started again.

“Only three minutes to go”, I said to myself. I needed to believe, “I can do this!”

I was really getting into it, when suddenly both my feet slipped off the machine. I lost my balance and my feet, legs and butt fell onto the floor. With the bottom half of my body on the ground and the upper half still on the machine my workout officially ended at eight minutes.

I just want to get better and in my delusion, this is one of the exercises that’s key to making that happen. I know you know multiple sclerosis doesn’t work like that. I know this too. But I still keep searching for an answer.

In the car, on the way home, I lowered my head in defeat once again. I muttered to my husband, “I

couldn’t make 10 minutes.”

He smiled and said, “It’s only a number.”

Then we stopped for ice cream and snowballs! Ice cream always makes defeat easier.

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