

A Closet Groupie Set Free

by [Susan Jacobs](#)



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Are you a groupie? Susan Jacobs shares her story about being a closet groupie and how she was set free.

Have you ever totally let your hair down, so to speak (says this short-haired woman), thrown caution to the wind not caring if you made an utter fool of yourself? If not, try it, it is highly liberating and plain old fun!

One of the great perks during my long marketing and communications career in the entertainment business was sharing. Back in the day, expense accounts were flush, car service usage was a given, and bonuses were jaw dropping.

Once, when working at a record label, after a couple of dates with a guy that I liked, I surprised him with a care package of CDs. This just meant that my assistant picked out an assortment of 20 or so from the supply closet and sent them Fed Ex with a note that said, 'Happy listening.' My total vested time: 3 minutes. Total out-of-pocket cost: 0.

Clearly, working in a 'normal' non-entertainment job, this otherwise smart man completely misunderstood my intentions — thinking that I had bought the CDs and paid for shipping.

His interpretation: I was acting like we were already in a relationship, rather than simply sharing my business perks. While appreciative of the care package, there no more dates! Lesson learned – always provide a disclaimer before gifting free stuff while in the early stages of dating.

Over the years at film and music events, I was either the producer or handling the PR, red carpet arrivals, and press lines. Basically, working my butt off for anything I got into for free.

It was therefore with huge joy that I accepted an invitation from a TV Guide journalist friend to see SWAY: A Dance Trilogy at Hammerstein Ballroom several months ago, starring Dancing With The Stars' Maks and Val Chmerkovskiy, Tony Dovolani, season winners Rumer Willis and Meryl Davis, and other guest dancers.

Surprisingly, our 'comp' (complimentary) tickets were \$592 each, in the third row, where we were sandwiched between screaming fans that had come from as far away as San Francisco to see the show in NYC, paying up to \$1,000 for a single ticket. Can't say I would ever do that, but these ladies were happy as could be.

I came late to getting hooked on Dancing with the Stars — still a newbie entering my fourth season, but I can stand on a rooftop and shout that I love Val and am a die-hard fan!

So, in my \$592 seat, I forewarned my friend that I was going to live out my groupie fantasy, hopefully not embarrassing her too much. I screamed and cheered, gave standing ovations, took photos and videos, and saw heart-shaped cartoon bubbles in my head imagining Val dancing with me instead of those other women. I swooned with our seatmates as we shared our favorite memories of the last season, debated about which we thought was the hottest guy (you know my vote) and the sexiest woman, and how envious we were of the female dancers – their grace, talent, and uber-femininity.

I bought ‘merch’ (merchandise) at an event for the first time ever, which I had no business doing since having storage bins filled with virtually a lifetime supply of t-shirts, baseball hats, sweatshirts, and other free giveaways from projects I have worked on over the years. These items serve as souvenirs and memory refreshers of my career, and now the \$30 t-shirt I bought that says, ‘Dancing is F**king Awesome,’ will ultimately serve as a memory, or perhaps be passed on to a friend. But for now, I wear it proudly.

SWAY was fantastic. I tried to catch Maks’ attention when he jumped off the stage and began pulling women from the audience to dance with him in the aisle. Had it been Val, I would have stepped on people’s heads, taken them down, to get to him. Think a Beatles concert... But alas, I was too far from the aisle, and it was Maks, not Val, so even though I was itching to jump and shake my boobs and booty for the salsa song, I behaved. Still, getting to watch just a few feet from the stage was pretty awesome.

After the show, with press badge in hand, we pushed our way through to the step-and-repeat line for photos with the cast. I’ve worked with a lot of high-profile celebrities and never, perhaps foolishly, did I ask to take a picture of them or have one taken with me. So, the fact that I stood on line for an hour to get a celebrity photo was a different experience. Totally uncool and unprofessional had I been working, yet completely to be expected as DWTS groupie!

The set-up was highly organized, with the house photographer using each person’s phone or camera to take the picture. The cast was incredibly generous engaging with the fans, and it seemed that they truly enjoyed each other’s company and mutually shared respect.

I so wanted the picture to be perfect but hadn't dressed for the occasion because who would have thought... When it was my turn, with heart pounding from nervous excitement, I told the cast I loved them all but loved Val the most. He blushed and gave me a big hug which was captured on camera and is now saved in multiple locations or multiple devices. Perhaps it's my imagination run wild, but I'm choosing to believe that he felt something too!

During this three-hour interlude, I stepped out of responsibility, ego, caring what anyone thought of my behavior, and was able to just be silly and have fun. I was an adoring fan who let my short hair down and experienced life as a groupie. It was exhilarating, energizing, and reminded me to not take things so seriously, to let go, be present, and know that my to-do list will still get done.

With the world moving at warp speed and levels of external stimulation at a piercing decibel, it is sometimes challenging to even remember a simple train of thought. Stepping outside of your comfort zone, your daily routine filled with responsibilities and jumping into the metaphorical sandbox, playing with crayons, and getting mud all over your face can be surprisingly exhilarating. For me, becoming a groupie for three hours did the trick and I was able to then return to my reality with a bigger smile on my face and added vigor in my step!

About the author

Susan Jacobs

Writing has been part of my DNA, career, and creative outlet for as long as I can remember. My joy is bringing to life stories of the world, its people, and its cultures.

I'm filled with an insatiable curiosity for life off-the-beaten-path and love to share stories of the unheard voices I find along the way.

Giving voice to things that matter, raising awareness, and expanding perspectives is what lights my fire and is the heart and soul of who I am and what I do.

I have contributed a chapter to two books: "Step Forward and Shine," published by RHG Media Productions, and "Pain, Purpose, Passion," published by The Round House Press. I'm a contributing blogger to Huffington Post, Identity Magazine, Thrive Global, Yogic Living, and Medium.com. My personal essays and writing have appeared in Pink Pangea, FourTwoNine Magazine, Extreme Sailing Series 2018 Official Magazine, Aquarian Times, Spirituality & Health, PR Week, and IndieWire. I'm working on my first memoir.

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