

## ***Syaheeda Sapari, 22 years old.***

I first met Dee Dee in March 2008 when I signed up for an aqua aerobics class. Back then, I weighed about 85 kg. I barely exercised because the slightest physical activity would make me tired and never bothered to watch my diet. But I went for the aqua aerobics class anyway and immediately loved everything about it, from the company of others in the class to the funky music she played. So, when Dee Dee told us about her weekend classes at Tampines, I decided to give it a go and the rest as they say is history.



What I like about her is how she makes exercising less of a chore. There was just something about the vibe and level of energy in her classes that made me want to come back for more. This is especially with her choice of music to accompany her exercise routine. Exercising to the latest tunes of Rihanna and Britney Spears is always fun. That, coupled with Dee Dee's enthusiasm and positivity makes her classes incredibly addictive. I remember during one of her classes, while doing an exercise move (I think it was leg lifts); she made us all count the repetitions by screaming out ice cream flavours!! Now which fitness instructor would even want to hear the words "chocolate chip ice cream" from their students?

Furthermore, even though her classes always feel like a personal training session to me as she is extremely attentive to each and every student. She somehow manages to connect with every single one of us on a personal level and knows our physical limits. Hence, she knows

when we can be pushed further, and does so, and when we should take it a little easier in order to reap the most benefit from the workout session.

More importantly, what I find unique about her as an instructor is how she values knowledge and believes in the idea of "teaching a man to fish". She not only whips us all into shape during her classes but also shares health and nutrition tips and even personal anecdotes. She shares with us ideas on how we can eat healthily and how we can incorporate exercise during the weekdays (her classes are on weekends). She tells us her own weight loss story and I think this personally helps me to keep being inspired and motivated in achieving my weight loss goals.



With the knowledge that Dee Dee has empowered me, I have now lost 30 kg but like Dee Dee always says, it's not about the numbers but how I have now fully understood the importance of exercise and leading a healthy lifestyle. I used to fail the 2.4 km portion of the NAPFA test and was eventually

exempted due to numerous ankle injuries. Since I started this journey with Dee Dee, my fitness levels have improved drastically and my ankles are no longer a problem. I have picked up running, and recently completed my first 10k race. I still look forward to meeting Dee Dee every weekend in her classes as it is being around someone as positive as Dee Dee that keeps me inspired and motivated in achieving what I now call my fitness goals.