

A Life Worth Living



I have fought being overweight, and then obese, for most of my adult life. For the last 35 years I have yo-yo dieted and tried every program out there, other than surgery--which I considered many times. Every time I lost weight through various means, I would put it back on plus more. Many times I didn't want to leave my house to go anywhere. I just kept getting bigger and bigger but, could not stop the binge eating. I found ways to hide my food like eating in my car. After my kids grew up and I lived alone, it made it easy to eat what made me feel good. However, this only made me feel worse about myself. It got to a point that I just didn't care if I lived or not. My saving grace was my children and my grandchildren. I loved them so much! Therefore, I just got through each day the best I could.

As I was approaching 60-years-old it was like a light bulb went off--I knew I needed to make some changes in order to be healthier and happier. My weight was a whopping 285 lbs. And, on top of that, I smoked about a pack and a half per day. I was killing myself slowly and I realized I would be a burden on my kids as I aged with health problems. I needed to do everything I could now to avoid these health problems in the future. The first thing I did was quit smoking in April 2007 then I concentrated on losing the weight starting in January 2008. My company started a Biggest Loser contest and I signed up to participate. This motivated me even more and I came in 2nd place in the contest. I was only beat by 3% but I felt like I was winning my life back.

For the first 9 months, I shed the pounds by changing my diet and increasing the steps in my daily activities. In 9 months I lost 70 lbs. but, it was getting harder to lose more with those changes alone. For my 60th birthday my family surprised me with a gift membership to Fit For Her and I started a workout program. Within a couple of weeks I decided to hire a personal trainer to assist me in my daily workouts. My trainer has been a life saver for me. She has helped me to realize that my life **IS** worth saving, **I DO** deserve to be happy, and my dreams **ARE** worth attaining. By changing my lifestyle and working my butt off at the gym, I reached a weight loss of 125 lbs. in July 2009! It took 1 ½ years to lose and I have kept it off ever since.

Along the way, I shared with my trainer one of my innermost secrets--I wanted to be a runner. I had never told that to anyone out of fear of being ridiculed because of my size. With the help of my trainer, I started preparing to run my first race - the 2009 Susan G Komen Race for the Cure. The bug bit and I have run in several 5k and 10k races, and even completed the OKC Memorial Half Marathon in April 2010. My trainer said to me right before I was about to start the Half Marathon race, **"IT'S NOT ABOUT ALL THE BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS YOU'VE PUT INTO TRAINING... IT'S NOT ABOUT THE TIME YOU'VE DEDICATED...THE DISCIPLINE YOU HAVE...IT'S ABOUT THE PROMISE YOU MADE TO YOURSELF TO LIVE A LIFE WORTH LIVING--YOU CAN DO THIS...I BELIEVE IN YOU!"** And, yes, I did it! I will never

forget how my success made me feel. My trainer encouraged me to continually set new goals so that I can maintain my new lifestyle. I have set the goal to run a full marathon and I'm currently working on my new passion, biking. This year I have already completed two 30+ mile bike races.

My strength has come from my faith in God, my children, family and friends--all of whom have supported me through this entire journey and have been waiting for me at the finish lines. Now, I workout almost every morning because I never want to go back to the life I had before. I am a changed person--stronger, healthier, and happier than I have been in many years. I am very grateful to my God, my family, my friends and my personal trainer for helping me to realize that I am worthy of living a great life!

For anyone out there who reads this and has their own struggles, whether it is weight or anything else, there is a better way. You can reach your dreams and begin the journey of **LIVING A LIFE WORTH LIVING.**

--Sharon W.