

## My Story of Inspiration

My journey started about 6 years back and is still developing to this day. Six years ago I weighed in at approximately 270 pounds, or that is when I stopped getting on a scale! My outward image was on a larger scale, but in my opinion, not a 270 pound scale. I was an active teenager who participated in all sports. I loved the sport atmosphere, but hated to put in the hard work, so I paid in many other ways. My weight increased and my performance went down. After sports, my activity level steadily declined with many excuses in tail. Jobs, school, and friends seemed to take precedence over my health and weight. Then the big life changing moment came for me, I got married. Married life took a toll on me personally, you get comfortable as well as my schedule, which was no longer just about me. About a year in to my new life, I was finding myself unhappy at times and even dissatisfied with myself. I knew this feeling was in relation to my weight gains so I decided to try a new regime which included some exercise and changed eating habits, or what some call a “diet.” Well like most people who set out to loose weight with an improper mind set, I slacked off here and there and eventually dropped the entire workout, eat healthy scenario!

It wasn't until I had my son that it all made sense to me. Yes, I needed to be healthy for myself, but I also had someone else depending on me to be healthy. With this new found motivation, I started walking. That was all I could physically do at the time, but you have to start somewhere. I progressively added on to my normal walking routine, and even challenged myself to do the unthinkable, run! I never thought of myself as a runner, partially because I never wanted to work that hard. With small goals of either weight loss or the addition of laps ran, I progressively started to see a change. This routine continued for about a year, in which I took off about 70-75 pounds. This was a great accomplishment for me personally, but I wanted more for myself physically. With my plateau in full force, I decided to add in weights to my routine. I even added a variety of aerobics classes to my workout to give it diversity so that boredom did not set in. I found out through trial and error that things have to be changed up every now and then or your body stays where it is at and the results you desire are no longer coming.

With this new found lifestyle, I managed to drop about 100-110 pounds and gain a more positive outlook on life. With all of the changes that I made to my outer appearance, I made many to my inner self too. I feel that loosing the weight was a stepping stone, a very steep stepping stone, which allowed me to venture out into a foreign location, the “healthy world” and discover a new life.

With the weight loss I was able to do many more physical activities for myself and for my family. I once considered myself an inner athlete, this being when I was sedentary. I knew in my heart that I could be active, but did not want to try, due to the fear of failure. I set small but achievable goals along the years, as well as some that were pretty large. Never thinking of myself as a runner, I completed 1 full marathon and 2 half marathons along with becoming a certified aerobics instructor. Looking back at who I was and who I am now, we are two different people who needed each other to create the end product. I personally feel that I had to experience the weight gain to appreciate who I am now and to help drive myself to stay this way. Everyone is different in this area. Some may never experience weight gains of 100 pounds or more, but whatever the weight gain may be, that addition to one's body can be damaging to physical activity and appearance as well as your health.

My goal with telling my personal weight journey is to show other people that it can be done at any weight or age if it is something you truly want. I also want to show that it doesn't matter how long it takes or the many tries you may encounter along the way, you have to persevere through the hardships to reach success, just as everyone does with life. Take your own personal journey to discover and appreciate who you are and who you want to be!

Sharon