

One Amazing Year...

I look in the mirror and am still in awe that this is my body now, that this happy, lean and fit woman smiling back is really me. From November 2015 when I was mired in depression and had binge-eaten my way to the heaviest I'd been in years, to twelve months later when I'm the leanest, fittest and happiest I've ever been in my entire life, I have come so much further than I dreamed I could when I started this journey. I set simple goals to lose weight and get fit, but I could have never guessed that I would have found an authentic sense of self-worth along this adventure.



I was depressed. I wasn't living anymore. I was merely existing; doing what was minimally required of me and then escaping into the safety of my television. At some point each day I would drive to the corner mini-mart, purchase Hostess Ho-Ho's, a king size Milky Way bar, M&M's, Nachos Doritos and a Coca-Cola and then retreat to the safety of my vehicle. Once inside, I would consume it all within minutes. There was no savoring of the flavors. I didn't taste the chocolate. I didn't enjoy the salty cheesy cheddar flavor of the chips. I just consumed one item after another, and washed them down with Coca-Cola. When I reached my destination, I would immediately put the evidence of my binge in the closest trash can. If no one saw what I was doing to myself, no one could be disappointed in me. I wasn't hungry but rather numbing my feelings of worthlessness, loneliness and failure. I wasn't interested in treating myself with love because I didn't believe I deserved it.

Until one day I realized I did.

But it wasn't the day that I had to buy a new pair of jeans two sizes bigger. It wasn't the day I was in physical pain from the waistband of those same jeans. It wasn't the day when I bought leggings that looked like jeans because the stretchy waistband felt better. It wasn't the day I realized that I constantly felt sluggish because I was filling myself with garbage day after day. It wasn't the feeling uncomfortable in my own skin that got me to realize it. It was seeing the weight and unhappiness on my round face in a photograph with my son that finally got me to see what I was doing to myself.

I began with a round of Whole 30, detoxing all the processed junk out of my body. It was a structured plan, very strict paleo, which I'd had success with in the past. Within three weeks I'd lost my first 10 pounds. With that success came some confidence. That confidence got me thinking about working out and motivated me to start moving my body again. Showing myself love in my food choices led to more self-love by getting myself off the couch and away from the television.

Whole 30 isn't meant to be Whole Life, so I shifted my nutrition approach to that of tracking macros. I was nervous to choose a way of eating where nothing was off limits. But I kept my goals in focus and I chose to eat in a way that honored those goals. Did I eat perfectly each of the last 365 days? Hardly. What I did was continue to believe in myself, continue to believe I was worthy of reaching my goals and to remind myself that one day of off plan eating did not mean I was a total failure.

I started getting up before work to get my fitness in. I started running again. Even though I wasn't a member of a CrossFit box at the time, I was proving to myself that I could still find fitness at home that held my interest. I was working out consistently and I was getting stronger not only physically, but mentally and emotionally as well.

Shifting my mindset completely transformed me in a way I never expected. It was what finally silenced my inner mean girl. She's the one who told me I had to be perfect or I was a failure. She's the one who told me I had to wait to be happy until I reached my goals. But I figured out that it was okay to be happy right now! And in fact, not waiting to be happy actually was the best choice I made along this journey! Focusing on the positive in my life actually made my entire life feel more positive!

Over the last 52 weeks, I created a solid foundation of self-love. Each accomplishment I made cemented the realization that I was worthy of reaching my goals. When I stumbled and didn't give up on myself, I gave myself increased confidence to keep going even further. And that self-love has translated into a physical me that is nearly 32 pounds lighter, more than 26 inches overall smaller and from 35% body fat to 23.75%! In just one year!

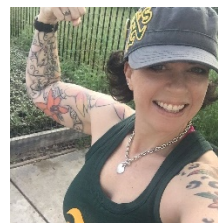
I kept my goals clearly in view this entire year. I made choices in my life that were in keeping in line with those goals. I have lost weight and gotten fit. I've finally not only healed my metabolism, but my relationship with food. I am proud to say that I have not binged in a year. I have not had a soda in a year. I learned that you need to find your nutrition and fitness

path by doing what you love; for me that's tracking macros, running and CrossFit.

My days look much different now. Gone are the daily convenience store stops. Now I meal prep with my incredible boyfriend. I bring meals and snacks to work every day. If I'm going to be out, I plan for that too. Is it a lot of work? Sure, but I keep my goals in mind and I use food to fuel my body for running, CrossFit and powerlifting workouts. I no longer feel sluggish, but alive and full of energy, and the extra work is worth it! I am worth it!

When I look at the picture of myself from a year ago, it makes me sad to see where I was, but at the same time I am grateful that I had the courage to take the first step. To say that I am proud of the woman I am today would be an understatement. I never dreamed I could be this authentically happy. I just wanted to lose weight and get fit. But what happened was that I ended up leaner, fitter and stronger (both inside and out) than I have ever been in my entire life! I am ready for the next chapter, ready to take on new challenges and ready to keep having the time of my life!

Author bio:



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