

“I have dealt with weight issues my entire life. Once I reached my teens I found that by starving myself I could easily lose weight in a short period of time. That began my years of yo-yoing back and forth. I literally lost - and gained - the same 30 pounds eighteen or twenty times from the time I was 14 to the age of 36. I would barely eat for a couple of months, then gorge myself to make up for all I had deprived myself during my “diet”. Of course this just led to gaining it all back. Each time I would gain back a little more then make the decision and start the cycle all over once again. This pattern repeated itself until I hit about 34. I was on the heavier end again, tried to lose weight, and was only able to lose a small amount. I gained it back, tried to lose it, and was unsuccessful. This time I gained more and more and was heavier than I’d ever been in my entire life. I tried my hardest to lose weight and it absolutely would not come off. I faced the fact that my years of losing and gaining had caught up with me and my normal “starving” route just wasn’t going to work anymore.

My decision to get a handle on my life and health was due to a couple of factors. The first was my total lack of energy and feelings of being constantly exhausted. As a high school teacher I’d lost my gumption and did not have the energy to devote to my students. The biggest factor was definitely due to my health. Even with being heavy I’d always been fairly healthy and a routine physical showed that I had become borderline diabetic. I have a family member with horrible diabetes induced problems and the thought of that happening to me was unbearable.

I’d heard and read several stories of people who’d been successful with loosing and keeping their weight off through the Weight Watchers program. The biggest obstacle with joining WW was with my own issues about the cost; I just didn’t want to have to lose weight *and* have to pay to do so! I’d tried other diets previously but had never officially joined or paid for any programs. Then I heard about our state’s DelaWELL program and that they offered 100% reimbursement for simply signing up for and attending 80% of the WW meetings; so I reluctantly decided to join. Little did I know that this decision was going to completely change my life.

Thanks to DelaWELL, Weight Watchers, and a lot of hard work and determination, it is now 14 months later and I am 94 pounds lighter! I have fifteen more pounds to lose to reach my goal weight. I have never been this size or felt this well – in my entire life. I have more energy to devote to everything in my life: my job, my students, and most importantly myself. My health is near perfect and there is no threat of any weight induced diabetes. One of the greatest differences is all I’ve learned about exercise, nutrition, and eating a healthy diet. I now know that there is no such thing as a “diet” and the changes I’ve made are permanent lifestyle alterations that will continue on for the rest of my life. Another change that has helped me be successful is I’ve learned that I can not deny myself treats and that I can have anything I want, just with moderation. I know that I do not have to starve myself then overeat due to total deprivation. I am officially now addicted to exercise and love the exhilaration and energy I feel from making my body healthy and strong!

Some of the toughest obstacles I had to overcome where not giving in to temptations and not getting discouraged when the scale didn’t tell me what I wanted! As with anyone who has quite a bit of weight to lose I had to face plateaus and resisting the temptations of returning to the old ways and patterns of life. This took quite a bit of stick-to-itiveness, preplanning, and making the mental decisions beforehand as to how to react in certain situations. Pre planning is an absolute

necessity for me. When I'm prepared and/or bring alternative food options with me to gatherings I have already made the choice – in my mind – as to what I will eat and making these decisions on the spot does not become an issue. Prior to my Weight Watchers training, the only thing I thought ahead about food would be the thousands of calories I would consume!

Since losing almost 100 pounds my life has dramatically changed. I feel like a new, younger, rejuvenated, healthy person with so much to live for and offer! There is a certain “feeling” and or confidence that one has which I can't really explain with words. Many tell me this is written on my face which makes me happy because that means others are noticing, and the entirely brand new wardrobe helps as well! The best advice I could offer anyone faced with the challenge of losing weight is that it is possible and DO NOT GIVE UP. As with any hard task in life there are ups and downs and harder components than others'. The key is to stick with it and the rewards will come.

Although I do not discount my own hard work and determination, I truly feel that if it weren't for the incentives offered by DelaWELL I never would've joined Weight Watchers, been so successful, and learned what I need to know to obtain and maintain a healthy weight and lifestyle. My sincerest thanks goes out to the developers and sponsors of the program. A price tag can not be placed on my new feelings of enthusiasm, energy, and good health!” – *Liz Snyder, Lake Forest School District, Story submitted May 13, 2009*