

Fitness Inspired Transformations

Teri Karsten

Shopping for clothes was an emotional nightmare.

I was at my heaviest. I had no energy and naps were a daily event. I would come home after work, take a nap and make supper. I would sit in my favorite green chair, watch television, eat popcorn and fall asleep.

My clothes were tight. My size 16 pants would roll below my stomach. Shopping for clothes was an emotional nightmare. A larger size would work for the torso, but the shoulders were too big and pants too long. Nothing looked good on me. I would leave the store at an all time low. How did I get this way?

My emotional and physical health was deteriorating. I avoided the doctor. I did not want to hear that my cholesterol levels were too high and I was obese on the charts. The lecture was the same — I needed diet and exercise. Medicine was the alternative, but the side effects sounded worse than diet and exercise.

My husband, Paul, brought home a brochure from work about the six-week BAC Corporate Challenge. Count me in! After I pushed the “send” button on my email to sign up, I worried I would fail. Weeks later, and another brochure on the kitchen table. The teams were formed. I could not back out.

I met with BAC trainer Julie Hanna to get weighed, measured and tested. A push up? What was that? She explained the food plan, personal exercise program and journal. She would know everything I ate, drank, and how much I exercised. I knew without looking that the diet didn't include chips, popcorn and alcohol — my personal favorites. Accountability had been missing on my own. Perhaps this was good.

This wasn't an ordinary diet where you lose the same two pounds, 25 times. The program was a new lifestyle. I would eat breakfast. I would keep a journal. I would drink water. I would exercise daily.

Then it happened. My daughter called me skinny.

My first group workout came and I did not know what to expect. Now I had to exercise in front of people. How embarrassing. Would I be able to keep up? Julie was very reassuring and encouraged me to modify and go at my own pace. I felt good when I left. I knew I was not alone.

I began to notice significant changes in my body. I needed to shop for new underwear. I was ecstatic. A new goal was evolving; if I could drop one more size, I would shop at Victoria's Secret™. No more padded shoulder straps. No more 3 hook, plain white bras. What fun!

The weight was coming off. I was more confident. I even started using the BOSU ball to strengthen my core. What was that? I now knew. I also knew I was losing weight. I just wish someone would notice. Then it happened, my daughter called me “skinny.”

At the end of the six-week Challenge, I lost 16.75 pounds and 9.5 inches. I didn't win, but I won a new lifestyle. The experience was life changing. I continue to exercise at BAC. I enjoy Balletone, Aqua Fit and Sculpt.

With regular exercise, support from BAC, help from family and friends, and realistic expectations, I know good health will follow. I no longer fear cholesterol test results and lectures from my family doctor.

