

July 28, 2018

“My Journey for a Healthier Life”

My journey began on September 21, 2016. I know this date because it came from my journal. Yes, I kept a journal, actually I have four journals to date....I would like to share my story with all of you. It is not an atypical one. However, it is one that has resulted in an amazing life style change. In the end the life style change has equated to higher self esteem, better health, and generally a better life. We only have one life after all. Why not make the most of it?! As for me, making the most of it began with taking care of the one body that I have. Hopefully this testimony will help some of you. Hope so.

The Beginning

I was a 62 year old female; 6' 0" tall; weighed 212 pounds; lived in the Southeastern United States, was married with children and grandchildren; took medication for high cholesterol; and needed a right knee replacement. Other than the cholesterol and the knee replacement, I was in pretty good health. The only thing I struggled with, and had done so my entire life was being overweight. My whole life I have been on a weight roller coaster. Up, down, around the block. I have been thin, heavy, and heavier. Overall my life was very good.

*Then a young woman helped me turn my weight loss efforts into success. Her name was Anne Kristine Etherton, and she was a Registered Dietitian (RD). I had heard of this profession, but did not really understand the scope of what someone like her could do for me personally. She became a lifeline as I journeyed along this new road. She is extremely humble about it, but there is no doubt in my mind that **I would not have achieved my weight loss goal had I not had her professional advice along the way.** She is still advising me whenever I need it. And I find there are still many questions. This journey will never be over*

Lifestyle Change

We do not gain quickly, but when gaining we are not paying as much attention to it. When we decide we want to lose, we want to do it quickly. Thus many folks resort to diets that are quick, but cannot be maintained. The concept was to be able to lose weight in a healthy manner and be able to maintain it once I had reached my goal.

September 21, 2016 (1st Journal Began)

My RD did an initial analysis based on various demographic, physical and lifestyle factors to calculate my **initial goal calorie range, based on a goal of a 1 pound per week weight loss.**

I began Journal One. Each day I wrote down my total calorie intake. At first, it was a challenge to do this, but it became easier as the days passed. Another factor that contributed to making this journey easier for me: My husband was on the program with me. Doing this together made it much easier for both of us.

At each milestone of weight loss or hitting a plateau, my RD and I would talk and she would complete a new analysis based on various factors happening in my life.

October 2, 2016 - reassessment

November 8, 2016 - reassessment

November 21, 2016

The program was working really well for me. **I had lost 15 pounds by this date!** Here we were with Thanksgiving upon us. This would be the true test. Well, it was amazingly easy. I ate what I wanted, in moderation, counted the calories, and moved on. It was not a huge challenge.

December 20, 2016

The program was continuing to work and was getting easier. **I had lost 23 pounds by this date!**

January 23, 2017- reassessment

This was the date of my total right knee replacement surgery. I was still at 23 lbs. lost. I am convinced that having lost the weight helped tremendously in my recovery. My husband says I was the poster child for knee replacement surgery. It too, was a life changing event for me!

I had three weeks of physical therapy rehabilitation after my knee surgery. During this time my RD said, "You will not be as active, so I need to reevaluate your calorie level." She did so with the goal that I wanted my weight to continue downward during my therapy. I was very diligent about sticking with

All Foods Fit!

My personal experience has been NOT to deprive myself of something I REALLY want. Go ahead and eat it. Then cut back on something else that day, or the next day.....it works. This way I was not constantly thinking about all of the foods I could not have. I knew I could have them, if I REALLY wanted them. Believe me when you start to see the weight coming off, the clothes getting loose, and people treating you differently because you are thinner, "It is worth it!"

Maintainable and Realistic

As every January, I began to notice the weight loss products and gym memberships advertised. People were now beginning to worry about those extra holiday pounds. It was so very easy with the new healthy lifestyle to maintain and move on into the new year without the worry.

this calorie range. **After the holidays, I felt pretty good that I had maintained the weight loss of 23 pounds.**

February 18, 2017

Five weeks had passed since my knee surgery. I had lost another 5 pounds while going through rehabilitation. **Total lost 28 pounds by this date!**

I had gotten complete rotation back in my replaced knee, was off of all pain medication three weeks after the surgery, walked without a limp five weeks after the surgery, and had my mobile life back. Having lost 28 lbs. to date helped with this evolution.

I knew I would have to continue exercise of my knee for good maintenance. Fortunately we live in an area that has a state of the art athletic club. Never having been a gym person, this was all new to me. The help of a professional trainer was enlisted to teach me the knee machines I would need to do to keep my new knee healthy.

April 4, 2017

Began working with my trainer to learn the knee machines at the athletic club and learn the recumbent bike. **Total lost 33 pounds by this date!**

May 7, 2017 (2nd Journal Began)

Everything was going very well for me, and my husband. I consulted with my RD often to make sure I was still on track. Just knowing she was there was a huge factor in the mental ability to maintain this. I had lost so much now my body was changing; plus, the exercise program was not only helping to keep my knee healthy, it was helping to keep my overall body shape going well. Once I lost weight, the body was sagging here and there. The exercise helped to firm all of that up. **Total lost 37 pounds by this date!**

June 4, 2017

I had never felt better in my entire life. Folks I had not seen for awhile were asking me if I was okay because my overall look had changed. When we lose weight, people immediately think, are you sick? I assured them I was not. It was a planned process. And it was working! **Total lost 43 pounds by this date!**

July 26, 2017

The weight was not coming off as fast at this point, but I was continuing on. My body was adjusting to the new me. The good news was no weight gain. My RD had reviewed different health parameters with me and asked me if I

Support System

It is very important when trying to develop a healthier life style for yourself to have someone you can call for support. My Registered Dietitian was that person for me. It was easy to lose the weight and has been easy to keep it off.

Not a One-Size-Fits-All Plan

*If I may digress once more, to lose weight and maintain a healthy lifestyle there are many factors. It was equally important to count calories, eat specifically for my particular medical needs, exercise, and mentally decide to persevere. It was important to have a the support from my RD and my athletic trainer, to give me guidance along the way. The body is an amazing machine, but like any machine it needs to be carefully maintained. We should never take it for granted nor abuse it. **After all, we only have one.***

had a desired weight. My range was to maintain between 160 – 165 pounds. When I reached this range that would put me in the (BMI) Body Mass Index range of 22.8% which falls in the healthy weight range. My RD reviewed the importance of other health factors too, and that BMI is just one factor to consider. **Total lost 44 pounds by this date!**

September 14, 2017 (3rd Journal Began)

Where was the year going? I had gone through a solar eclipse party over the United States in August. Of course this had all of the food befitting any large gathering. All the while, I continued to document my daily calorie intake. It had become almost as natural to document calories, as breathing. The good news was that with the internet now there were many fitness applications that helped; plus, just checking food nutrition online was very easy now. The other good news was that as I did the documentation, I began to know the amount of calories a certain food would have without even looking it up.

Total lost 47 pounds by this date!

November 4, 2017

Well here I was again, Thanksgiving! Personally all of the holidays are very special to my family. This would mean lots of good food.

I consulted with my RD about how slowly the weight was coming off at this time. However, I was almost at my goal in any case. She pointed out to me that because muscle weighs more than fat I may gain some of the weight back as I continued to go to the athletic club. I was now lifting weights for upper body strength. I had never felt better in my life! **Total lost 48 pounds by this date!**

November 11, 2017

The more muscle I got the more calories I had to burn. I needed to eat additional calories in protein per day to still lose weight.

At the athletic club, I often saw folks working out with weights and machines who I believed did not know what they were doing. It was important to ask the professionals when in doubt. Otherwise I felt maybe I would not be using the correct technique, wasting my time, and potentially getting injured. In my humble opinion this was the only way to get a healthy result.

November 17, 2017 – enter maintenance

Knowledge that last forever

Digressing again, many of you may have high blood sugar, high cholesterol, heart disease, and the list goes on and on for human disease. Remember, a RD can help you to learn what food sources to eat and which ones to avoid. Weight loss and maintenance is a very doable thing. It just takes knowledge of what to do and the committed desire to make it happen.

Accountability

We apparently burn 50 calories just when we are sitting. I did not know this. There was still much to learn. I was very happy that I had my RD helping me. If I repeat that this positive result was because of the professional help given by my RD, it is because I believe it!

I seemed to have struck a good balance between calorie intake, exercise, and my weight loss had continued. At this point, I became concerned about the end goal, and being able to maintain the weight loss I had achieved. **Total lost 50 pounds by this date!**

February 7, 2018

Here I was into a new year! Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas all behind us for another year and still on the program. Wow! It felt great!!!

I was on a maintenance calorie range. This had not ever been a rigid range. Just remember that. Anything rigid would have been too difficult to maintain.

My gym activity had become second nature too. I went to the athletic club every third day. This gave my body a chance to recover from any workout I did. Fortunately exercise was also something that I felt was a very important tool to maintaining my health. **Total lost 51 pounds by this date!**

February 26, 2018

I had made it through Valentine's Day and all of the chocolate. However, I did learn that moderate chocolate is not a bad thing. It gave me the sweet taste, but was not that high in calories. My husband surprised me with a small box of five chocolates. We split it. How funny it was to listen to us groan over the taste! I believe we really appreciated that chocolate.

I was beginning to think about long-term maintenance for my healthy lifestyle. It was time to consult with my RD again. **Total lost 52 pounds by this date!**

June 8, 2018 (4th Journal Began)

Since February 26, 2018 the months had been filled with many family events, church activities, travels, and life. But, one thing had remained constant for me was the healthy eating and exercise. It is wonderful to know that I can still live life to the fullest, and maintain the weight loss and my health. People continued to ask me, "Are you getting thinner?" I stepped on the scales just to assure myself all was good. It was.

July 28, 2018

At present, I am maintaining quite nicely. The biggest problem is that I have to eat up to my calorie count many days.

I still follow a maintenance calorie range and exercise three times per week. I adjust my intake based on my lifestyle, routine and daily activity level.

Mindful Balance and Maintenance

*Some days I ate more than I should, but the next day I ate back in my range. The next day was always another day. **But just like walking, breathing, and talking. Thinking about the foods that I was putting into my mouth had become second nature. I suspected it always would be.***

This is “My Journey for a Healthy Life.” *Life is good!*

Health Summary

Start weight: 212 pounds

Final weight: 160 pounds

Total weight loss: 52 pounds

Total time: 14 months (to hit 50 pound loss)

average of ~0.8 pounds a week loss

Start BMI: 27.3

Final (BMI) Body Mass Index: 22.8

Other Health Parameters

Total Cholesterol:

August 30, 2017—206

January 24, 2018—197

May 23, 2018—166

Range recommended less than 200.

LDL:

August 30, 2017—122

January 24, 2018—104

May 23, 2018—81

Range recommended less than 100.

Direct HDL Cholesterol:

January 24, 2018—63

May 23, 2018—68

Range recommended greater than 49.

As of May 23, 2018 I am no longer taking any cholesterol medication.