

WAKE-UP CALLS AND NEW BEGINNINGS

Recognizing and readying yourself for big life changes

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There are some things in life that you just can't give up. For me, it's chocolate. It's the one treat that seems to bring me to a happy place. The only problem was that while my brain and emotions were going to a happy place ... the

chocolate was going to my thighs and other parts of me as well.

Sounds like something you've heard before, correct? So why continue to read my story? Is it another weight loss story? Yes! Did I wake up one day and realize that I was too overweight and endangering myself? Yes!

Where my story takes a turn is in the fact that I was not the most athletic child (as much as I'd like to think I was). My weight issues started around middle school and stuck with me. Did I have previous moments of clarity? Absolutely. Did I do something about it? You bet I did! Did I eventually fail myself? Most certainly.

Let me start at the beginning. My name is Amie Canfield and I've been the Sports Information Assistant at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute for the past seven years. Prior to that, I worked part-time at my alma mater, the University of Vermont in Athletic Communications and I started my athletics career as the team manager for the Catamounts Division I/III women's hockey team all through my undergraduate years.

Now to my real beginning. As a sophomore in high school both myself and my parents were worried and concerned that my weight was becoming too high. While there were a number of options, my parents and I chose Nutri-System. Now let me tell you, for a one-year period, I ate the meals that the program had packaged for me and I hit the gym and the pool like crazy.

The result ... I lost nearly 50 pounds and was amazingly a size 10, even creeping into the single digits. So what happened that turned it all around? I can peg it down to the exact day and probably the exact time if you gave me a few minutes to think about it. April 18, 1996, I was walking home from school. As I attempted to cross the street at a busy intersection, a stopped car tried to beat traffic and ended up beating me instead.

Everything changed that day, but the worst part is that I let myself change. I used the pain

of the accident to avoid working out. Food became my comfort instead of getting better. And thus, the 50 pounds I had shed came back and then some.

Did I give up on working out altogether from that point? No. I did make the attempt on a number of occasions, but as I look back now there's one important thing I realized ... I didn't want it.

Okay ... fast forward to May of 2011. On one of those rare days that I got to venture home to Vermont during Memorial Day Weekend, I had a wake-up call. Walking into the bathroom at my father's house, I looked at myself in the mirror and for the first time in a very long time ... I was angry. I proceeded to look over myself, legs, arms, belly, hips ... not one spot was overlooked and then, I cried.

When the tears had finally subsided, I moved back to my bedroom and sat down on the edge of the bed. The television was on and ironically, an infomercial for the 6-Week Body Makeover Program came on the screen. Normally, I flick away from the dieting commercials before you can even blink, but this time, I watched.

The people seemed genuine (yeah I know ... on an infomercial!) and the results were solid for every person who spoke. As I watched them break down the way the program works, I realized that I could do that. In that moment, I knew that I could do that.

So with the help of my parents once again, I ordered the program. The only problem was that I wouldn't get it instantaneously, which meant that my week-long adventure (also known as ECAC-SIDA) was still a free-for-all for me. And yes, I took advantage and ate horribly the entire week.

Upon my return to Troy, I found out that the program was there waiting for me. So I got things ready and started it on June 13, 2011. I stepped on the scale that morning and despite the 252 pound mark that was staring back at me, I was determined.

It was pretty simple. Six meals a day, smaller portions, better foods that were catered more toward my metabolism. The food was all on me. I had to shop for it, and I had to avoid the temptation of buying crap food that I didn't need.

The biggest factor ... I needed to exercise. I started simple by walking 45 minutes a day, four times a week. Two times a week, I did resistance band training to get my muscles used to the activity. After the first week, I was down

nine pounds and I felt like I was walking on sunshine.

Six weeks later after staying strict to the program, I was down 30 pounds! I honestly could not believe it when I stepped onto the scale. It was a huge amount of weight that was suddenly gone and I felt so good.

Have I stayed strict to the program since the initial 30 pounds lost? That would be a big no! I do what I can and try to be smart on a daily basis, but hey, I'm human.

What I do know is that now, just over nine months since the day that I started this adventure, I've lost 67 pounds. The key is that I haven't finished losing, but when I look back at a picture taken during ECAC-SIDA, by none other than Jon Holtz, I realize that I have come a long way in a very short time.

For the first time since high school, I'm under 200 pounds. More than that, I'm happy and proud of what I've accomplished. So that's my story. It wasn't an easy journey, but now when I look in the mirror, I can smile.

I've learned that I need to take time for myself, no matter how crazy my day may be. Do I always do it? Nope! Are there times that I feel like I've let myself down? Of course. But this time around, I know I'm strong enough to get back on track.

I know that many SIDs struggle with similar issues, but now you can be assured that you're really not the only one to go through it. Everybody's journey is different, but the end goal is the same. It's your life, live it, don't waste it.

Please don't hesitate to come find me! I'm here in Pittsburgh all week and am ready to answer any questions you might have. I'm even here at the table topics, just at a different table. Again, I'm ready, willing and able to answer all questions!!



ME AT ECAC-SIDA
IN ROCHESTER - JUNE 2011



ME OUTSIDE MY OFFICE
IN TROY - MAY 2012

TIPS AND TRICKS

Little ways to get yourself going!

AS SIDS, WE ALL KNOW HOW HARD IT IS TO FIND TIME TO DO A NUMBER OF THINGS ... ESPECIALLY THE STUFF THAT IS GOOD FOR OURSELVES AND OUR WELL-BEINGS. HOW MANY OF US GRAB A QUICK FAST-FOOD MEAL BECAUSE IT'S THE EASIER OPTION? WHEN DO WE MAKE TIME TO HIT THE GYM? ABOVE ALL ELSE, WHETHER YOU WANT TO LOSE WEIGHT OR JUST GET IN SHAPE, THESE ARE SOME THINGS THAT WILL HELP YOU GET THINGS GOING AND GET ON YOUR WAY TO A HEALTHIER YOU!

• EATING BETTER!

- Sometimes the quick foods are the easiest choices. You're on your way to a game or to the office and you stop off and grab something to go. In the long run, how fulfilling will that be for you and more importantly, how will it get you through the day? Often, the most critical thing is to make smarter choices!

• SIX MEALS A DAY!

- By eating six smaller meals throughout the day, you will be making certain that your body is staying full. Additionally, you're likely to find that by eating six smaller meals, you're doing wonders to kick-start your metabolism.

• PLAN IT OUT!

- Think about what you want to eat before you eat it. One of the best things you can do for yourself is pack your lunch and bring it with you. Some fruit and protein for snacks, a salad for lunch with some chicken and potato. By planning out your meals, you take away the guess work of "What am I going to eat?" and you can stay on track.

• WRITE IT OUT!

- One tip that has been suggested to me by many is to keep a food journal. It is something that I did on my program and it's a startling realization. Take the time each day to write down what you've eaten. I'm certain when you look back on it ... you'll be surprised to see the number of times that you ate half a bag of M&M's when you weren't even hungry in the first place.

• VEGETABLES AND FRUITS!

- It's important that we all get our intake of veggies and fruits throughout the day. One of the easiest things to do is throw a small salad together in a plastic container and bring it for lunch. Maybe it's a cup of carrots or celery. Your body needs both to function throughout the day and come on, who doesn't like fresh strawberries or pineapple in the summer? :)

• LEANER MEATS AND PROTEIN!

- One of the biggest things I attribute to my weight loss is cutting out big portions of red meat. By integrating chicken, turkey and fish into my diet, I not only opened up my meal planning choices, but I also gave myself a healthier option. Too much red meat is not good for anyone, no matter how tasty it is!

• EXERCISE!

- I know, we are all busy in our day-to-day lives, but it's important for your body and your health to get out there and get activity into your daily routine. At 252 pounds, I felt like I couldn't do anything. Even the simplest of things was difficult, but after doing something as easy as walking for 45 minutes - 4 times a week - I found that my energy levels started to climb.

• DO WHAT WORKS FOR YOU!

- If you like to bike, do it! Treadmill is more your thing? Go for it! Don't limit yourself to what you want to do. Make sure you listen to your body and don't cause it harm, but nearly any activity that you do is going to help get you into better shape. The important step is to stay consistent.

• STRENGTH TRAINING IS IMPORTANT!

- One thing that I can clearly tell you is that lifting weights, using resistance bands and just doing general strength training is a key factor. Not just for losing weight but for shaping yourself to the way you want to be. You can walk everyday for hours, but the weights you lift and the repetitions you do are going to help shape your body.

