



Wellness Spotlight

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Building / Department: Student Support Services

Years Employed with CCSD: 4

Describe the Vital Behavior Change: A vital behavior is a high leverage action that, if routinely enacted, will lead to the results you want.

From August 2011 to mid-January 2012, I lost 50 pounds. For years, I'd tried this diet and that diet, made resolutions and promises to lose weight ... only to keep right on eating. I can't tell you exactly *why* it worked this time. I can't even tell you the exact date that I began (before I would pick a Monday to start dieting, then binge all weekend before). I know I started sometime in the first week of August. I didn't follow a formal diet. I just ate less. I would eat yogurt & fruit for breakfast, a rice cake, veggies, string cheese, and a small handful of nuts for lunch (sometimes a slice of turkey just to shake it up a bit). Then, for dinner, I would eat half of what I normally ate. As a family, we eat fairly healthy (whole wheat, veggies, fruits, low fat, and low sugar); we just eat A LOT of healthy. Portions were killing me.

Fairly quickly the pounds started falling off. I couldn't believe it. I set the goal of losing 50 pounds, and started saving money for my reward – a tattoo of a phoenix on my leg. I got that tattoo on January 21, two days after reaching my goal and 2 days before my 42nd birthday. The phoenix has much meaning to me. It symbolizes new life, rebirth, and the resurrection. For me, it also was a commitment to continue this new life of health and wellbeing.

During the Spring of 2012, I was in the middle of grant writing and was experiencing stress. I found myself binging on snack foods. I gained 3 pounds. I worried that I was returning to my "old ways." Fortunately, I nipped it in the bud. I quit buying snack foods – even for my kids. I only buy fruit and vegetables for snacks. I've lost the 3 pounds, and am back to my target weight.

This summer, my 10 year-old daughter and I are training for the Susan G. Komen 5K race. I've walked it for the past 3 years. This year, we'll be running. It's great to be taking another step toward health and to be spending quality time with my daughter. Last summer, I went on a hike with her, and huffed and puffed my way around the trail. I had to stop frequently, because I was so out of shape. Not this year!

I still have weight to lose. I will see how things go this summer. I don't have plans at this point to start dieting again, I'm still enjoying where I am.

It was great fun to buy new clothes. For years, I've worn baggy and frumpy clothes – they were all I could find for my size, and I was trying to hide how big I was. Now I'm into form-fitting and glam. I've bought new shoes, new makeup, and new jewelry. One of my absolute favorite things to do is shop at Seconds on Third – the thrift store downtown. I love to find good deals, plus my money goes to a good cause, the Council of Community Services. Most of my new wardrobe has come from there. When I was so overweight, I could never find anything there that would fit.

Personal Influence:

How did you make the undesirable desirable? I just started. I just started. I didn't make any BIG plans or BIG promises or BIG kick-off dates. I just started. It was quiet. It was personal. In fact, I didn't tell anyone at first. I just waited. It was a kick when people started asking, "Have you lost weight?"

Were you able to overcome barriers? I think, in part, it worked this time because I did my own thing. I liked what I was eating. I didn't deny myself food – at dinner, I ate our normal menu, just ate less. Occasionally, I'd go for an ice cream (the new mini-sized Blizzard at Dairy Queen was an awesome development for me – LOVE the Reese's Peanut Butter Blizzard). Again, it came down to portion size. When I was "living to eat," it was nothing for me to get a large Blizzard.

Ultimately, I wanted to be healthy. I have a family history of diabetes, stroke, breast cancer, and high cholesterol. My father is 65 years-old and is confined to a wheel-chair. I have 2 kids, ages 10 and 6. When I'm 65, I want to be blazing the trails, and kicking up my heels with my kids and any other family members that might come along.

Social Influence:

How did you harness peer pressure? I really didn't feel much peer pressure. Everyone was extremely supportive. In the office, my co-workers were always talking about how healthy I was eating and complementing me on how much weight I was losing. It was a great motivator. And I kept my "reward" in mind. I looked and looked for the perfect phoenix tattoo. I had friends who would email me phoenix designs. It became a community event to find the perfect tattoo!

Do you find strength in numbers? Are there other's like you! I will say that it probably helped that my boss, Kip Farnum, is very much into wellness and good health. He was a good role model for me. Although, much to his dismay, I haven't given up my diet pop (I call it my poison) ... also he wasn't too excited about the tattoo!

Structural Influence:

Did something motivate or enable you to change?

Did you modify or change your environment? I made a point of eating in, instead of going out. I rarely went out for lunch. I didn't even eat in the school cafeteria. Instead I stuck to my "plan." As a family, we eat at a Chinese restaurant after church on Sundays. Again, I just ate less. We travelled for Thanksgiving. I find it difficult to diet while travelling. So, I just set the goal of maintaining over the holiday (same plan for the Christmas holiday). Then I made sure to take healthy sides to the family get-together. Fortunately, turkey is a winner for healthy eating.

Future Plans(s):

Again, I have about 15 additional pounds to lose before I'm at what the pros call "healthy." I plan to go for it, and lose the additional weight at some point. But, I've learned to wait until I'm ready and to do it "my way."

Then, there's the 5K in August. I'm excited! My daughter is excited, too.