

Being the biggest loser
By Mike DeCinti

“To be there for my wife and children.”
“Because so many people say I can’t”
“To inspire my family”
“Because I don’t want to be the fat friend anymore.”
“To walk my daughters down the aisle.”

These are some of the reasons contestants on the NBC reality show *The Biggest Loser* gave for wanting to lose weight, get healthy and change their lives. They wore these sayings on their t-shirts as a daily reminder to why they were on the show. Rarely if ever, does a television program come around that actually helps save people’s lives. Not only the contestants on the show, but those of us watching at home.

The show’s concept is simple. Individuals who are not active, who eat very poorly and are extremely overweight, are invited to a ranch where they are given a personal trainer to show them how to eat and exercise and change their lives for the better. Now, since it’s a reality show, through in a little healthy team competition, a few challenges, a witty host and a \$250,000 grand prize and it gets a bit more exciting. But to be perfectly honest with you, that’s not why people watch. This show is helping people in spite of those things. The reason people are watching this show is because the individuals on the ranch are just like us and they needed *someone* to believe in them, when they didn’t even believe in themselves. They were obese and they had given up and this show taught them that if you make the decision to change, anything is possible.

The proof. Erik Chopin from New York. Last week on *The Biggest Loser* finale, Erik walked away with the money after weighing in at 193 pounds. Still sounds like a lot, right? Well Erik started the competition weighing 407 pounds, losing 214 pounds over an eight-month period. And he was just one of 14 contestants on the show, who in total lost over one thousand pounds. And not only did they lose all of this weight, but if you were to see pictures of them today you would never guess they were all morbidly obese. Why? Because they lost the weight and got in shape the correct way. No crash diets, no risky operations, just simple common sense and a strong desire to make their lives better for themselves and their families.

To see these people’s lives change like this is truly a memorable thing. I couldn’t even do it justice to try and explain how they look and act at the end of this journey. Please, do yourself a favor and go online to www.nbc.com/The_Biggest_Loser and look for yourself. What you’ll find is not only those who were lucky enough to be picked for the show, but the countless number of others who were inspired enough to begin their own transformation at home. There are tons of before and after pictures, testimonials, chat rooms, support groups and nutrition and exercise plans. You’ll find people in every walk of life, all different ages and sizes all having one goal, to *finally* do something about their poor health and begin the steps in saving their own lives.

I heard something the other day that stopped me dead in my tracks. A child born today is expected to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. If you know in your heart that you need to make a change, and you have given up trying because of countless failed attempts in that past, this may actually be the one thing that can motivate you try one more time. Think of who you can be, and who *you* can inspire.