

I am a Master Yo-Yo'er, as a child this was great, but as an adult not so much. I have perfected the art of gaining and losing weight, up and down over the years. I have mastered the art of losing weight, but the weight that I lost, I always found again. I would be right back where I started, plus 20 pounds. It was always very easy for me to fall back into my old bad habits and make an excuse. Johnny Cash has a song "I've been everywhere man", well my song was "I've been on every plan man".

I have been on Weight Watchers, South Beach Diet, Weight Watchers, Palo, Vegan, Weight Watchers, Vegetarian, Weight Watchers again and finally 100 Days of Real Food. After losing weight for the umpteenth time, I discovered running and found I loved it. I never considered myself a runner, but found I really enjoyed running 5Ks. Unfortunately, I was still gaining the weight I had lost since I was eating too large of portions. As I gained weight back, running became less enjoyable and I quit my new found hobby.

One day I sat in my closet crying since I could not find any clothes that fit, I knew I needed to get back on track. I was tired of the same old excuses, and exhausted from the dieting roller coaster I have put myself on over the years. I needed a lifestyle change, not just another diet. Since I had found running, I had a goal to get back into running shape and not just a number of pounds to lose.

I had numerous friends recommend Farrell's, but I was not sure I could physically do it. My husband thought I should wait a couple of months to join in order to get into shape first. Although it was a nice thought, I knew that if I did not do it now, I would most likely gain even more weight before it started. I did not want to do it by myself, so I asked my husband who said he could never do that. Luckily, my daughter was excited about joining with me and she signed up first, so there was no backing out! I was so nervous when I signed up; there were so many what ifs: would I be able to keep up, could I even get up and down, and could I work out barefoot.

On testing day, I thought that I was going to die as it must have shown on my face. Barron reassured me, "You're not going to die, you might pass out, but you won't die!" When I ran the mile, I was able to run without walking, and thought maybe I could do this. I was the oldest person in my class, and my doubts came flooding back, would I be able to keep up with the younger members? After a few weeks, I realized that I did not need to keep up with them, I just had to do my best. I was slow getting up and down, sit ups were very difficult, and burpees were out of the question, BUT I was there and I was doing it.

Everyone at Farrell's was so supportive and always made me feel like I could do it. If I was going to commit to myself, I knew I had to be all in. I had perfect attendance and followed the nutrition plan to a tee. I worked at my level 10 every week for 10 weeks, and every week my level 10 was reaching new heights. My biggest surprise was that I actually looked forward to working out, and I was satisfied with the food I was eating. My hard work and dedication paid off. At the end of my 10 weeks, I was announced as the Iowa City Winner! I could not believe they called my name, but even if I did not win I felt great.

There was no hesitation or doubt when I signed up to be a fit member. I have four children and always put them first, but this was the first time that I was doing something for me. I could not imagine not going every morning, it is the best part of my day. As a behavioral paraeducator, my job can be very stressful and instead of coping with a bag of candy, I take my frustration out on the bag and hit it harder! Farrell's has not only become my outlet, but the people have become a part of my extended family!

I used to look at people and think, "I want to be like them," but now people are looking up to me! Not only am I able to help new members, but my husband decided to join after watching me. I love that we are able to do this together so we can live a long and healthy life together. We both have more energy and feel great. When we visit our children on the West Coast, we are able to go hiking with them, before we would just look at pictures, never thinking it was possible for us to actually hike.

I turned 60 years young this year and I was able to do all of my birthday pushups! I feel better than when I was 40, 60 is my new 40! My greatest achievement this past year was when I was able to purchase a woman's winter coat. Yes, this may sound like a common occurrence but I have not been able to fit into a women's jacket in over 20 years. When I was able to zip it up, I had tears of joy streaming down my face instead of sad tears crying in the closet.

One of my other goals was to be able to get up off the ground quickly so I would be able to play with my grandchild. Not only can I get off the ground with ease, but I can run after her! She has to try to keep up with me now. I am breaking the stereotype of "grandma", as I am not my grandma. I'm the new better version.

I always thought I wanted to be skinny but Farrell's taught me I want to be STRONG. Strong is the new skinny. I am giving up my "Johnny Cash Diet Plan," because I am committing to this lifestyle change. This is the first time I feel in control of my destination. Thank you Farrell's for your support and showing me that *yes, I can and I will.*