

From Cheryl Mauermann, Female Winner Biggest Loser Winter 2012/13

I started this adventure with my friend, Laura. I wasn't even a member of the Princeton Club. She told me about the Biggest Loser contest and the success she had in the past with it. I was skeptical because I have been there done that before. I had issues with weight all my life. I love when my friends and family tell me that I'm not fat I'm just big boned. OMG---that's the nice way of saying you're fat! Laura asked me for a week straight if I signed up yet and I keep telling her I was getting around to it. Finally I went in and signed up (to be perfectly honest, I wasn't sure I wanted to spend the money, but I figured at least she would stop asking---I thank God I did---thank you Laura!) From the time I walked in the club to the first class I trained with Stephanie, who by the way is the GREATEST trainer ever, I was treated like a individual and not just "another fat girl who says she wants to lose weight, but we all know in a month she will be just another number." Brian welcomed me and my family going above and beyond any other club I have been to. (I have been to many) Unfortunately, my procrastination made it impossible to be in the same class as my friend, but fortunately, it led me to a greater journey! So I told him why I was there and how I needed a trainer who would push me to my limits---I have a serious knee injury that requires it to be replaced. My doctors say I'm too young and that I should lose some of the weight to help relieve the everyday pressure on my knee. So I decided I needed a Jillian Michaels! So he gave me bigger and better---Stephanie! At the weigh-in someone told Renee how they were going to win this and I immediately accepted the challenge. I have always been a competitive person and now I figured it was mine to lose! The first week of class with Stephanie was brutal. I couldn't do one push-up, I couldn't run a lap around the track, and 20 minutes into the workout I thought for sure I was going to puke! I prayed I'd live to see 6:30. I keep thinking what did I get myself into (with a few more choice words). This class is the professional worker outers! Kathy, one of my wonderful teammates (who has lost 60 pounds in her run at the biggest loser) looked at me as I left class and said, "this isn't about what others can do, it is about what you can do". Don't compare yourself to others, just be you. I left the gym that night realizing how COMPLETELY out of shape I was and decided I would work to run with the fast girls and I would do push-ups if it was the last thing I ever did. I called my boyfriend and Laura and told them I didn't know whether I was going to cry or puke or both. Every muscle and bone in my body hurt. I remember thinking I would never survive 11 more weeks of this. Stephanie made sure to tell us how we needed to get back into that gym the next day no matter how bad we hurt. She said it would help. The next day I woke up barely able to move. I went to the gym after work, to be honest.....out of fear of Stephanie--I didn't want to disappoint her, so I did cardio just like she said and she was right I did feel 100% better. From that moment on I realized that if I was going to win this thing and lose the weight that has been a thorn in my side all my life that I had to listen to Stephanie.

I had to make this a life change! So the adventure began. I worked out 6 days a week---trying everything from spin classes to kickboxing to yoga. I loved them all! I listened to Stephanie when she told me healthy ways to eat. I am no longer a Taco Bell and Culver's girl. I am now a chicken and vegs girl. Each week Stephanie pushed me do things I NEVER dreamed I could do. She invited me to her home to give me advice on diet and nutrition, she hugged me when I hit milestones, and she yelled at me when I wanted to give up. She taught me that working out and eating right is a lifestyle change. Life is not about a continuous diet--it's about being healthily for me so that I can live to see my daughter grow up, go to college, and get married and have a family of her own one day. She has high expectations for everyone on her team. In the end the rewards far outweighed the sacrifices. I remember her saying to me it really doesn't matter if you make the leader board the first couple weeks, it matters if you can still lose the weight and make the top ten in weeks 5 and 6, once the easy weight is gone and now your working to get rid of the hard weight...the real fat not the water weight.

The support I got from family, friends, and teammates (Stephanie's team ROCKS) has been INCREDIBLE. I can't have done it without the continuous support I got from the time I went to work to the time I walked in the club to workout to the time I got home. The people at the Princeton Club are simply amazing. They have been there every step of the way with me. Renee sincerely means it when she tells you that she cares about each and every one of us and for that I am truly grateful! Words cannot express how she made me feel every time I walked in the club, went to a class, or read an email. The importance of knowing that I was never in this alone is priceless and for that I thank you Renee!

People ask me why I think I did so well during this challenge. My response is always the same: my trainer.....Stephanie.....she may be the first person to scream at you, but she is the first person to be there to support you however you need it. I remember telling her that her and I would have a love/hate relationship when my journey began. I hated her during the workout when I believed I couldn't do it and she knew I could, but loved her each week when the weight fell off. The last class with Stephanie will forever stand out in my mind. It felt like the first one.....brutal! She had us run/workout with the weight we lost and reminded us that this was what life was 12 weeks ago. That moment forever changed me! I will NEVER put that weight on again! I can NEVER tell Stephanie enough how much she has changed my life! I want to thank you for all the time, effort, and hard work you put into helping me become a better me. THANK YOU STEPHANIE for being you...absolutely amazing! :)

My advice to anyone who is accepts the challenge of losing weight is to understand that losing weight is hard, some days are harder than others but accept the challenge, participate in classes and challenges, listen to your trainer, surround yourself with people who will support you, push yourself, want better, and have fun.

If I had to do it all over again.....I wouldn't change one thing! I am back in class with Stephanie.....pushing harder, working to lose more weight and understanding that with hard work and determination anything is possible. I have made wonderful friends, my teammates and other biggest loser members, talk constantly about the highs and lows of losing weight. I now attend spin classes and kickboxing regularly with my friend Liz from work and Laura. I eat better (not to say I haven't bounced back to some of my bad habits once the challenge ended), which by the way made me realize how much I truly didn't miss eating badly. I felt sick and missed the good stuff (eating healthy and working out). My knee is doing 100% better... I still have painful days but now I can walk without being in constant pain. I can do push-ups now, I can run laps around the track with the fast girls now, and I can walk up and down stairs without being out of breath. For me my adventure has not ended because the biggest loser contest has.....my journey has just begun!