

I'm Tonia Micale, and I recently completed the Biggest Loser Contest. It's one of the best programs that I had ever been in. I never got bored of what this program had to offer.

First, the challenges (and there were plenty of them,) were great! What I liked is that there was such a variety, and each one served a purpose. The Autism Run/Walk allowed me to include my daughters on my weight loss journey and raise money for an important cause. The endurance challenges made me challenge myself. The most important challenges, in my eyes, were the nutrition challenges. From trying new foods, learning how to eat smaller meals and going to the nutrition classes really helped me out! At the nutrition classes, I learned to recognize the correct portion sizes, substitutions and what level my cardio/strength training should be. Understanding nutrition is the key to healthy living. So, kudos to you, Renee, for putting together all of these challenges!!

Journal, journal, journal your food! This is so important, and I can't stress this enough!!! As much as I grunted about it at the beginning, I needed and depended on it for my weight loss. Journaling provided a visual of my yucky eating habits. Trust me, it doesn't look good on paper how much sodium, carbohydrates and fat were in my late night snacks. Writing it down taught me to make better choices and I could account for everything. Plus, it made my trainer happy to see veggies as a snack in my journal instead of JellyBellys.

Speaking of trainers, I want to extend a special THANK YOU to my trainer, Matt Fenske! You probably don't realize this Matt, but you played one of the BIGGEST roles in my weight loss journey. When I first started coming to the actual Biggest Loser classes, I was eager to learn but old habits were hard to break. No carbs past 4 p.m?? I must say that this was a challenge in itself! Also, consistently hearing a little voice in my head that said, " Will eating this help achieve my goal?" drove me crazy when I wanted to chow down. This advice, along with more given, really pushed me through.

When I hurt my knee, I didn't think I was going to last long in this program, but continued to show up to class to see what you had to offer. Amazingly, you pulled me through when I thought it was almost time to call it quits. I was in pain. You (and Trainer Karen) took the time to help me out with modifications of an exercise so I could continue, and that meant so much to me. You instilled in me not to give up, and I respect you for that. Not only did you take the time with me in class, you took the time to help others in class. That humbled me, and I was glad to be a part of our team.

I know that I played a big role in this program, but without you, I wouldn't be The Biggest Loser. You have a loyal follower, and I believe that you'll go so many places in life, no matter what you do. God Bless. You're the best--Thanks for kicking my butt!!