

Mike Conerly

The truth is— we all know how to lose weight and I was no different. I just never had found the real motivation to get it off and keep it off until my experience with FP4H! I have had a strong family history of heart disease, which really concerned me, but not enough to make any real and lasting changes in the past. My father had a massive heart attack at the age of 58, which was a frightening experience and a slight wake-up call for me. The heart attack robbed my dad of any quality of life for the rest of his years; it did not kill his body, but it for sure killed his spirit for living.

In June 2008, I was 56 years old, 5'6" and weighed 218 pounds. I had been following in my dad's footsteps, the pattern that had been set before me of an unhealthy lifestyle. Wake-up call: medical problems, a doctor visit and a diagnosis of high blood pressure and high cholesterol encouraged me to get the weight off. My physician advised me to go on a "diet" and placed me on medicines for my high cholesterol and high blood pressure. This wake-up call relating to my health really began the first steps toward change. I changed the way I cooked and started making wiser food choices, and yes I got the weight off, but it was not until I started attending First Place 4 Health that I found out about proper nutrition, fitness and healthy living for a lifetime. Up until FP4H, I was just getting the weight off to keep from having any other medical problems.

My journey in First Place 4 Health began in the spring session of 2009. I had developed a friendship with a sweet lady who was participating in a First Place 4 Health class. We started dating and she invited me to join the men's group, which was taking place at Crossgates at that time, so I joined thinking we could spend more time together. After that first meeting, I knew that's where I really belonged. Not realizing at the time that God was about to radically change my life, I had simply

found a connection in that group of men that night that gave me a newfound hope and desire to become all the Lord was calling me to be.

During those FP4H meetings, I began to learn more about God's plan for my life and how he wanted me to take care of my body. I also learned how important we are as men and the leaders of our homes to support and encourage our families and friends by setting the example to take care of our "temple." I began to develop a new lifestyle: mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically.

The Lord has used FP4H to bring about real life-change for me in so many ways. In August 2009, I married that sweet lady that had introduced me to FP4H and together we have participated in many 5K's, 3 half-marathons and a full marathon. That is a pretty awesome thing for a man who has an artificial knee. I also have learned to love to cook and help create new recipes that are healthy and good for some of the FP4H classes that I help teach. I love seeing others get hooked on being healthy and fit!

I lost one of my sons in a terrible accident in October 2009, and I can tell you the love that was rallied around me from my FP4H family was unbelievable. At one of the lowest times of my life, the Lord used my FP4H group to minister to me like never before. I have learned so much from FP4H: balanced living, a love for the word of God, Scripture memory, strong friendships and unconditional love. I love Philippians 4:13 that says, *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*. I really can do all things when it is Christ and not me! God is so good.

Today at 157 pounds, I am fit and healthier than ever! I do not take any medicines for my cholesterol or blood pressure. I respect my body as the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells, and I strive to keep it strong and healthy. I look back now and I am so thankful that Donna, who is my best friend and

wife now, invited me to FP4H. Donna and I are a strong team! We exercise, eat right, and we also help lead and teach FP4H classes at several different churches in our area. We have decided that we are “lifetime members” of FP4H! We don’t ever want to go back to unhealthy lifestyles. I thank God every day for my wife, also for FP4H and the knowledge I have gained as I work toward being the man Christ has called me to be. **Mike Conerly, Brandon, Mississippi**

START YOUR OWN SUCCESS STORY