

Sarah Mielke

Unlike any other program, this is not a quick fix. It is not a program that you go on until you lose weight, and then go off once you have achieved a magical number on a scale. This is a lifestyle of health.

It was supposed to be hereditary. I would struggle with weight my whole life. I would always be “big boned,” and would have to be content with having “a pretty face.” I had surrendered to that fact... until I decided to give God first place in every area of my life: Mental, Spiritual, Emotional, and Physical. Although I grew up in a Baptist preacher’s home and trusted the Lord at a very young age for salvation, I just couldn’t seem to get control of my eating. Even as a type-A stereotypical ‘control freak,’ I couldn’t get a hold of the only thing that I could truly control... myself.

My health became a concern to my family, I couldn’t fit into clothes at the department store, and my grandmother even offered me \$500 to lose 20 pounds (which my parents even agreed to match)! Towards the end of my high school years, I was only able to shop in plus-size stores. But, it was hereditary. I was big boned. And, I had a pretty face.

Vocationally, I had already decided to follow in my parents’ path. I was also going to be in full-time ministry in a local church, and went to a private Baptist college for my undergraduate work. I wanted to tell others about my relationship with God and how He could change their lives. But, would they listen to me when it was so obvious that I was not disciplined? How could I convince them to let God change their lives if I didn’t let Him change mine? According to the health professionals, I was considered extremely morbidly obese.

I began to truly recognize that I was designed as a unique

person by the Creator, and He had a wonderful plan for my life. Although it was something I knew in my head for years and years, I began to embrace that concept. My Dad and I began to have conversations about my life and my weight. He was not condescending or pleading with me to change; he just began to show me how I am a four-sided person, and that God wants to work in my mental, emotional and physical life, not just the spiritual.

When I discovered the First Place 4 Health program, it was exactly what I needed. It was not a diet plan. It wasn't only about the weight. Just the way the program is described makes it different from any other diet or weight-loss program. For example, to keep record of what we eat and fitness activity, we use what is called a "LIVE-it" tracker. The title of that alone embraces the notion that we can have new LIFE in Christ. See how that thinking is different than a "DIE-it?"

I began to write down everything I ate. I renewed my commitment to read my Bible everyday. I began to exercise everyday, and took it one step at a time. I set small, attainable goals and began to achieve them. I looked at each decision in this area of my life through the lens of what would be obedience, and bring God glory. Once I got to this point, my weight just began to fall off.

The First Place 4 Health program elements have been crucial in my journey with losing weight, my relationship with the Lord and others, and just learning how to walk daily with God. It's all about balance. It's about honoring the Lord with my heart, soul, mind and strength. Each day, each moment, I have the opportunity for gaining daily victory and experiencing daily joy.

Does it sound like First Place 4 Health is a lot to do? I'm also managing the daily organization of my home, exercising six days a week, working full-time and writing my dissertation for my Doctorate. If I have time, so do you. I lost most of

the weight in about two years, and have kept all of it off for over five years. I've also completed four half-marathons.

Unlike any other program, this is not a quick fix. It's not a program that you go "on" until you lose weight, and then go "off" once you've achieved a magical number on a scale. This is a lifestyle of health. It's a faith journey. It's a new way of life that I will continue, because I will always need the balance in my life regardless of what number appears on the scales.

152 pounds are gone forever!

Sounds like someone owes me \$1,000.

Soli Deo Gloria.

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