

Weight-loss success stories

By Savannah Jahrling

“Everybody needs their own unique approach [to weight loss],” says lifestyle coach **Pat Barone**, whose job is to help others achieve her own feat of keeping 70 pounds off for five years. The good news is that today there are more options than ever.

Barone, who is both a weight-loss expert and a weight-loss success story, favors an interpersonal approach. “Coaching is unique and individual to the client,” she says. “They all lose weight in a different way and at a different rate.” Barone explains the psychological part of

weight loss: “We have a lot of negative self-talk, we have a lot of limiting beliefs [and] that’s what gets in the way and sabotages every single good intention. A lot of people have a belief that they don’t deserve to be thin,” says Barone. So, in her experience, “without some deep changes in attitude and belief, the weight just comes back.”

Dennis Kotnour of the **Healthy Inspirations** weight-loss center emphasizes convenience. He recommends his center because “we’ve eliminated many of the pitfalls that come with self-dieting: no structure, no support, no accountability, no exercise and even incomplete information.” The center features nutrition counseling, exercise and relaxation services all on the premises. “Everything is packaged up together in a nice little package where...you come in three times a week, you exercise, you do your ten-minute lifestyle coaching, and you hop in the chair for a relaxation treatment.”

Lauren Winter, RN, director of **Dean’s Comprehensive Bariatric Care** program, takes the approach of traditional medical

weight loss, which is to make incremental changes on one’s own and to focus on activity. “You can eat the perfect foods, but if you are not active, you are still at risk for gaining

“We have a lot of negative self-talk, we have a lot of limiting beliefs [and] that’s what gets in the way and sabotages every single good intention.”

Pat Barone, Catalyst Coaching LLC

weight,” she says. Winter looks back to a time when nobody “exercised,” but everyone was active, because they had to walk more and perform more physical tasks. Winter recommends trying to bring a little of the 19th century into the 21st: “Park at the back of the lot instead of the front. A change as small as that can make a significant difference over the course of a year.”

These approaches all have the same goal: better nutrition and more movement. Women can choose the path to this goal that suits them best.

For those who are clinically severely obese, another option exists that is generally closed to others: surgery.

“Surgery,” explains **Dr. Jon C. Gould**, “is not the first thing you should do. It’s a last-stage treatment for obesity, kind of a last resort, but it is very successful [once it’s tried].” Gould, a surgeon with the **UW bariatric program**, reports that surgery is in fact the best option for those with severe obesity because it has a noticeably higher rate of long-term success than other methods.

No matter what path a woman and her doctor may choose, success takes determination. **Dawn Baumann**, a **Dean** employee,





Sharisse after



Before

enrolled in Dean's medical weight loss program "because I knew my family history was poor and I knew that if I didn't amend my ways, I'd be going down the triple-bypass route like the rest of them."

Rose Flitz, who owns **Rose's Design Studio** on Odana Road and who lost 47 pounds at Healthy Inspirations, says, "Once I committed to it, nothing was going to stop me."

Sharisse, who lost 270 pounds at Healthy Inspirations (and now works there), depended on her faith to help her complete the program. "Without me having that relationship with God, and him pushing me up that hill every time I wanted to fall down, it would never have happened."

Surgery patients **Christine Guillotte** and **DeAnne Day** were also motivated to have better lives. Guillotte was a "brittle diabetic" who wanted a cure. Day wanted to be able to run and play with her two active young sons.

Guillotte and Day caution that surgery is a big step. "Part of my experience," says Day, "is that it's another job. I have to be careful what I eat [and make sure] that I always have something to eat [with me wherever I go]. It's another job along with my kids."

But the hard work pays off—for everyone. Flitz enjoys "how much fun it is now to shop." Guillotte lost 135 pounds, her diabetes is completely gone, and these days she's in such good shape that when exercising, "I outdo my pooch! I have to bring her back in my arms because she gets tired." As for Day, "I've lost 95 pounds to date, and physically I'm able to do just about anything I want." Day also reports gaining a whole new social life as a result of her increased confidence.

Asked if she celebrated reaching her goal, Sharisse replies, "The celebration is every day being able to breathe and walk and do the little things that I couldn't do before."



Savannah Jahrling is a Madison-based freelance writer.

Book | Review

Tales from the scale

Reviewed by Meg Rothstein
Madison Public Library

"One day, I shut the refrigerator door. Instead, I turned on the computer and began to write."

Chicago editor Erin Shea was an online "blogger"—not of political rants or celebrity gossip, but of the intricate, wryly humorous take on her own weight-loss struggle and success (188 to 140 pounds). When Shea first began her blog, "Lose the Buddha" (www.ejshea.com/buddha.htm), she did so quietly. Little did she know that her blog would be picked up by the *New York Times*. Overnight, Shea's blog was bookmarked by thousands of readers across the country and beyond.



Shea found herself befriending many in the virtual weight loss blogging community—mostly women—who shared a common goal, but whose beliefs, methods and versions of failure and success were as diverse as their backgrounds. "Tales from the Scale: Women Weigh in on Thunder Thighs, Cheese Fries, and Feeling Good... at Any Size," a book edited by Shea, features the success stories of a few of these friends: A San Francisco-based poet; a professional web designer living in Minnesota; an Australian journalist living in Scotland; a self-described "Very Important Accounting-Type Person" from North Carolina; an Alabama homemaker; and a syndicated columnist.

These writers are funny, smart, brave and straightforward. As each takes off pounds, she takes on the real heavyweights: society, sex, the plus-size fashion industry, self-esteem and myths of size. With humor and truth, each writer sheds her own skin, revealing the bittersweet complexities of reaching or missing a goal weight, the work of everyday weight maintenance and the often-dimorphic self-image of a newly thin woman who's "been there."

"Tales from the Scale" is highly recommended for anyone who needs a friendly, supportive and inspiring lift in order to kick off or continue her own weight-loss journey.