

Never Say Diet

Make
five decisions
and break the fat habit
for good

*"Learn the secret
that helped me lose
200 pounds."*

Chantel Hobbs



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and **break** the fat habit
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Chantel Hobbs
with Rowan Jacobsen



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P R E S S

NEVER SAY DIET

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*To the love of my life, Keith,
and our children, Ashley, Kayla, Jake, and Luke.
Your constant encouragement gives me the motivation
to want to be better each day.
I am a blessed woman.*

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Foreword

Right now in the United States, 60 percent of adults are overweight, and a full 30 percent are obese. Several studies have identified a link between obesity and a shortened life span. As a gastroenterologist, I am deeply concerned.

I regularly discuss the importance of exercise and proper nutrition with my patients. Yet it simply does not seem to sink in. Why? Perhaps it's because fad diets and weight-loss centers compete for our attention, and we think going on a diet is the answer. However, it cannot be the best answer, since we still have an extremely difficult time losing weight.

I am sure you know all about the yo-yo experience of dieting. That was me for eighteen years. Finally, through education, personal experience, and outside help, I learned how to keep the unwanted pounds off. About three years ago, as part of my exercise routine, I took a Spinning class taught by an extremely motivated instructor. My ears perked up as I heard phrases such as “Be the best you can be!” I learned about endurance training, peak heart rate, anaerobic threshold, and interval training. I'd certainly never taken a class like this one; it was as if we were being taught by a physiologist! The instructor, of course, was Chantel Hobbs, the author of this book.

I had never met anyone as knowledgeable about nutrition and exercise physiology as Chantel. Now, as I finish reading her marvelous work, *Never Say Diet*, I know this is what America needs. It is what I need in my own armamentarium against obesity. This book is truly inspirational.

This is *not* a new diet or a fitness fad but a real lifestyle and psychological change. The Brain Change is the integral part of the plan, and I am a true believer in it. After reading Chantel's success story, I realized that part of my own continued success has been founded on her principles.

Motivation and unconditional commitment are the cornerstones of any

exercise and nutrition program. However, much more is involved. Chantel will show you how to make the right choices. She also explains why you should not be afraid of self-sacrifice. Many diet plans offer temporary success, yet they are missing the psychology and physiology behind permanent life change. It is Chantel's concept of changing the way you think and feel emotionally about food that I find so enlightening.

As you read this book, you will notice that Chantel is convinced we are being scammed by the diet industry. But are we really? I would let statistics from my own medical practice speak for themselves. More than 90 percent of my patients gain back most of the weight they lose on any diet program. Why so little success? The simple answer is that the average person can't stay on a diet permanently. After reading *Never Say Diet*, you will understand why *this* program is different. It is not a diet but a complete lifestyle, thought-process, and physiological transformation. The change comes from within, helping to make you a better person...not just a thinner person.

I wholeheartedly support Chantel's five-phase plan. The cardio and strength training are ideal for all comers, including those who have been involved in other exercise programs and those who have never set foot in a gym. *Never Say Diet* will educate you about body metabolism, calories, fitness for the heart, and how strength training increases metabolic rate. Once you have educated yourself and committed to Chantel's five Brain Change decisions, *Never Say Diet* offers a fantastic exercise program. I do recommend that everyone see their health-care professional for a complete physical exam, including blood work, prior to starting any new program.

We all are striving to be fit and look our best. *Never Say Diet* will help you do just that. In addition, it offers you the chance to achieve a sense of well-being, satisfaction, and long-term health. Read and enjoy.

Barry S. Ross, MD

Tamarac, Florida

Board certified in gastroenterology and internal medicine

Acknowledgments

There are many people who have had a meaningful part in making this book more than just a dream. My parents, Jerry and Sherry, have continued to show me that God is my refuge and that having a fun and passion-filled life is a choice. My in-laws, Ken and Linda, have always made me feel more like a daughter than their son's wife. To my loving and incredibly supportive extended family—there are so many to mention: you are always appreciated. You are proof of God's great sense of humor; He placed each of you in my life.

To my closest friends, Judi Califano and LeeAnn Hansen: I don't know how you could have kept listening during all the hours of my rambling on and on about what I ate and how much I worked out and how Spinning is the greatest invention on the planet. But you always did. Thanks, Jenna Ingraham, for hearing me out when I needed it most. I am so thankful for all my amazing friends. You make me laugh on a regular basis and offer constant encouragement.

I am thankful that my pastor, Bob Coy, has a mission “until the whole world hears.” Also that he introduced me to Lou Taylor. Thanks, Lou, for sending me to Chip MacGregor. To my literary agent, Chip: thanks for believing that my story needed to be shared. Thank you also, Rowan Jacobsen, for giving this book your guidance and insight and for listening to my riffs for hours without complaint. To Ron Lee, my editor at WaterBrook Press: your great enthusiasm for this project is more than I could have ever asked for. To the entire WaterBrook team: thanks for your genuine interest in making *Never Say Diet* a reality and for “getting” my excitement and supporting my mission in every way! You are all awesome to work with.

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strength-training program for the book. Your motivation to get people moving is contagious. Rock on!

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I want to also thank Lisa Krause for being a part of our family and for loving my kids throughout the years.

I thank God for loving me despite all my flaws and for showing me throughout my life that I can't do anything well without Him.

Finally, along the way I have met countless people who know they can be living a better life and are struggling each day to make that happen. To my clients and my readers, I say, "Listen to my story and believe that you can stay the course. This is possible. Dare to be remarkable. *You* are my constant inspiration!"

Say Good-Bye to Your Excuses

Believe it or not, it is still difficult for me to say the words “I once weighed nearly 350 pounds.” Not because I’m ashamed of the person I was, but because I no longer define myself—or others—by weight.

For most of my life, I focused on the number that appeared on the scale and how I appeared in the mirror. Winning my weight war was not quick or easy. Being overweight is a personal battle that makes you feel insecure and weak. Trust me, I tried diets and fads and trendy weight-loss programs, but I kept repeating the same cycle of losing and regaining. Simply put, diets don’t work. And it’s not always the program that’s at fault. If you have tried—and failed—to lose weight and keep it off, the reason you continue to struggle lies in your approach.

I’ll bet I’ve used every excuse you’ve ever thought of, maybe even several that you haven’t. There are plenty of excuses to go around. In fact, at the end of this introduction, I’ll list the top twenty excuses I have either used or heard.

You must get beyond all of them. Your only hope for success is to decide not to allow *anything* to stand in your way.

Why do we allow our excuses to control our lives and damage our health and ultimate happiness? I could write a book about self-doubt, denial, and self-hatred. That's where I lived for many years. But I finally reached the point where I was done with living that way. Success began after I made some hard decisions, and I will show you how to make the same decisions so you can tell your own success story.

NEVER SAY DIET AGAIN!

If you are ready to get serious about claiming optimal health and fitness, you are about to begin a life-altering journey. You can achieve much more than you ever dreamed. I know this because it happened to me. I was the woman who could barely squeeze into a seat at the movies and had to stop and rest while walking around Disney World with my kids. Today I'm a marathon runner. I don't have anything special inside me that you don't have. I just got tired of disappointment.

If my story doesn't make you believe in yourself again, then perhaps nothing will. This is your time to start becoming the best you can be, to accept the challenge, and to make a personal commitment to *never say diet* again. It will require discipline and hard work, but the return is greater than you can imagine: a permanent life change. This time you will break the fat habit for good!

Over a period of nearly two years, I lost 200 pounds and got a job as a Spinning instructor. I later started running marathons, and I now work as a personal trainer and life coach. I've seen a great variety of people change their lives by doing the same things I did. In this book I'll show you how to lose weight and keep it off—whether it's 15 pounds or 50 or 150. But much more important than that, I'll show you how to change your life for good. You can reclaim your health and achieve fitness and do it all while juggling the respon-

sibilities of everyday life. Having a demanding job, being a wife and mother, or facing special challenges is no reason to sacrifice your well-being. *Never Say Diet* works in the midst of real life. We will walk through the program together, and you will begin a new life course.

We've all heard that to lose weight long term, you must have a lifestyle change. But that advice is incomplete. To achieve any life change, you must first experience a Brain Change. The good news is that it can happen in a moment, immediately, even though getting weight off takes time. Truthfully, if you don't first change your brain, you will almost certainly fail to permanently change anything in your life. Before you can retrain your body, you must first retrain the way you think about the solutions.

This is not an ordinary fitness book, because it's not simply a recipe for losing weight. Neither is it about physical beauty. The goal is health, fitness, and choosing to live a life of passion and achievement, with no more regret. Therefore, being the best you can be each day is your primary focus. Once you make the Five Decisions and accomplish your Brain Change, you will discover that you automatically choose every day to do what it takes to live this new, exciting, and fulfilling life.

Along with the mental techniques that will get you started and keep you focused, you will learn how to make the best food choices and how to put a realistic system in place for regular exercise. Though I designed my own program when I lost 200 pounds, in this book I have worked closely with experts to make sure the program is as effective as possible for everyone. The nutrition portion is endorsed by Lon Ben-Asher, MS, RD, a clinical dietitian. The cardio and strength-training portion is one I designed with Dr. Joe Tedesco, a certified athletic trainer and physical therapist with a doctorate from Duke University. A medical doctor, Barry Ross, lent his expertise as well, to assure the soundness of the *Never Say Diet* approach. Still, you should consult your personal physician before beginning this or any other nutrition, exercise, and fitness program.

I am blessed to be able to share my story with you. As you begin to make

a permanent life change, you can look forward to a lot of fun and the excitement of finding out what it feels like to believe in yourself and your abilities. You will break the barriers that have held you back for too long. Be done with disappointment, and dare to be remarkable!



The Top Twenty Excuses Why You “Can’t” Get Fit

It’s important to look at the excuses that have prevented you from succeeding in the past. Having been there for most of my life, I’m more than familiar with the leading reasons why people fail to change. These are the twenty excuses I hear most often, either from new clients or from women I meet who say they admire what I’ve done but know it could never work for them. I used plenty of these myself before I decided to make a permanent change in my life.

See if you recognize some of these excuses—and if you agree with my reasons why they are lame!

1. I don’t have enough hours in the day.

The longer you put off addressing your weight and health issues, the more years of life you lose. The time you invest in exercise is returned with interest in extra years of healthy living.

2. I can’t afford a gym membership.

Great news: exercise is still free! This book includes workout options that don’t cost a cent.

3. I don’t want to be judged on my outer appearance.

Too late. We all are.

4. I’m addicted to sugar.

Good, because with this program you get to eat a lot of fruit—nature’s candy.

5. *I don't like to work out.*

Do you love heart doctors and medication? Do you love looking in the mirror and hating yourself?

6. *I don't think this is the right timing.*

Would it be better to wait until after your next nervous breakdown?

7. *I'm too old to do this.*

You're still breathing on your own. The older you are, the more you *need* to do this.

8. *I just want to use diet pills.*

If there were any that worked, don't you think Oprah would have done a show about them already?

9. *I'll get started as soon as I find a partner to do this with.*

Right, so that when your partner lets you down, it won't be your fault.

10. *I have too much weight to lose.*

That excuse kept me from getting started for years. Don't think about what you have to lose. You have too much to *gain* not to start today.

11. *I can't stand being hungry when I try to diet.*

Your body has not been truly hungry in years. You need to retrain your body to know what it needs.

12. *Can't I just get lipo instead?*

Why use a short-term patch job when you haven't fixed the problem—unless you can afford to keep a plastic surgeon on retainer?

13. *I have the fat gene.*

Yeah, so do I.

14. *I always fail.*

Nobody can maintain that perfect record forever. Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right!

15. *Isn't healthy food expensive?*

Doctor visits are expensive. Lipitor prescriptions are expensive. Natural foods like eggs, apples, greens, and oatmeal are cheap.

16. *I need to lose this weight as fast as possible.*

Studies show that rapid weight loss leads to subsequent rapid weight gain. Put the time in to learn how to make weight loss last forever.

17. *I hate paying attention to calories.*

Bad news! Losing weight requires math. But we'll keep it like kindergarten, not calculus.

18. *I don't want to look like a bodybuilder.*

The workouts in this program are designed to make you lean and fit, not bulky.

19. *I might give this a shot. I have nothing to lose.*

Wrong attitude. You've already got one foot out the door. When you're ready to commit 100 percent to success, come back.

20. *I have negative people around me.*

Good. Let me bring them to my family reunion! They'll feel right at home.



PART ONE



Decide



The Night That Changed My Life

How to Choose to Do the Best Job of Living

It should have been a scene of American family bliss. A Sunday afternoon in our home on a beautiful fall day in South Florida. My husband, Keith, was watching the Dolphins game in the living room with some friends. He'd waited all week for this. Our girls, six-year-old Ashley and four-year-old Kayla, were helping me in the kitchen. Well, kind of. Our six-month-old, Jake, was jumping and laughing in his Jolly Jumper. I was baking Vanishing Oatmeal Raisin Cookies, our favorite, and everybody could smell the cinnamon and butter and couldn't wait for the cookies to come out of the oven. Especially me.

As I worked in the kitchen, I could hear the football game coming from the living room. The announcers were talking about a player who had arrived at training camp completely out of shape. He was six foot four and weighed 320 pounds. “That is a big boy,” they said. “Wow! He is *huge*.”

“Would you look at that guy,” I heard my husband say with disgust. “I can’t believe he got so fat! What a lazy bum.”

Those words cut me to the heart. I had created a happy home, with a happy husband and happy kids. But at that moment I wanted to die, because I outweighed that player by at least 10 pounds. I was bigger than anyone playing for the Miami Dolphins. And I knew I was anything but lazy.

I pulled the cookies out of the oven and felt nauseous. I was pathetic. I’d been overweight my entire adult life, but I was bigger than I had ever been. I was miserable but doing an excellent job of faking out everyone who knew me. I was five foot nine and weighed 330 pounds, maybe more. I didn’t know for sure because it had been months since I’d dared to step on a scale. Besides, the only one in the house was a conveniently inaccurate discount-store model with a wheel underneath that calibrated the scale. I had adjusted it to register the lowest weight possible. I was in denial, but I was also without hope. It was the autumn of 2000. I was twenty-eight years old and was starting to believe I would never live a long and fulfilled life. Not this way.

If an angel had landed on my shoulder and whispered in my ear that, in less than two years, Oprah Winfrey would have me on her show to tell a feel-good weight-loss story, I’d have sent that angel packing and gone back to my cookies. I wasn’t Oprah material. And there was absolutely nothing feel-good about my life. Call me when you want a feel-bad story. That was me.

If that angel had whispered that I would one day run a marathon, I’d have checked him in to an insane asylum. I couldn’t run around the block. Even in high school I hadn’t been able to run the required twenty-minute mile. My knees hurt all the time. I was morbidly obese—a term that I knew meant an

early death. If one thing was clear about my life in the fall of 2000, it was that I could never, ever run a marathon.

But I did. I finished my first one in 2005 and after that ran four more—in less than a year. I went from weighing nearly 350 pounds to less than 150 pounds. And I have appeared on *Oprah* and *Good Morning America* and the cover of *People* magazine as one of America's great weight-loss successes. Getting fit wasn't easy—there was plenty of pain, deprivation, tears, and hunger along the way. It was the hardest thing I've ever done, and I won't try to sugar-coat any of that. But, honestly, I didn't give myself a choice. Once I made the unconditional decision that I was going to lose weight and get healthy, nothing could stop me. And nothing will stop you if you make the Five Decisions to break the fat habit for good. That's a guarantee.

Here is the secret I learned—the same secret I want to share with you. I realized I had to change my mind before I could change my body, my health, and my life. I discovered the Five Decisions, which brought about an unconditional commitment to getting healthy and fit. Once I started, I treated it like a job so that no matter what else was going on in my life, I did what I had to do to achieve daily goals, weekly goals, monthly goals, and eventually the target weight and fitness that I desired. After making the Five Decisions, getting fit was a matter of showing up for work each day. The process developed from the inside out, which was a new concept for me.

FIRST, YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND

People constantly ask me how I lost 200 pounds and started running marathons. When I explain that it took several years to achieve those goals, they wonder how I was able to stick to the plan when so many others can't. I ask myself the same question. I had failed plenty of times before. I'd tried a few diets and failed, including a bit of foolishness called the chocolate-wafer diet,

which I'll tell you about later. I'd resolved so many times not to eat the entire package of Oreos, without success. So how did I lose all that weight and keep it off—reclaiming my health and gaining a new life in the process?

Here's the simple answer: my brain changed. I decided to first become a different person in my mind and then learned patience as my body followed. My success wasn't measured only by a declining number on a scale; it was much deeper. I had to change on the inside. I needed to change my mind before I could change my body.

It will work the same way for you. First you must get to the right place in your head, and then you can create the lifestyle to go along with that. Your body reflects your daily choices, so stop confusing it by the way you think.

The mistake so many people make is to focus on weight loss and how long it will take. In fact, the multibillion-dollar diet industry banks on people thinking this way. Don't get stuck in the weight loss–weight gain cycle. What you should focus on is the person you want to be. Set your sights *very* high, and keep your commitment level *even higher*.

In this book I'll explain how I did that. I went from being someone who weighed more than a Miami Dolphins lineman to someone who is strong and trim and can run twenty-six miles. I went from a state of hopelessness to a life of incredible confidence. And I want to help you achieve something great in your life. If you change your mind before attempting to change your body, you can do this.

HITTING ROCK BOTTOM

While I was learning how to lose weight and regain my health, I faced setback after setback. My husband lost his job, and my mother was diagnosed with cancer—and those were only two of the crises that came along. Changing

your life will never be easy, and that's why in order to succeed, you first need to be ready to succeed. It's a choice you make.

In the fall of 2000, when I was baking cookies and overhearing my husband's criticism of an overweight NFL lineman, I fell into despair. I realized my life was out of control and I was headed for an early grave if I didn't change. But even then, I wasn't yet ready to make the commitment that was necessary to change my life. The truth is, on that dark day I still wasn't miserable enough to change.

I hit rock bottom about six months later. I was at my heaviest ever—349 pounds, I think. Though I was still mostly in denial, I was starting to see myself clearly, and I hated what I saw. I'd look in the mirror and say, "You are pitiful! How could you have let this happen?"

My appearance started to affect my family life. We live in South Florida, where every weekend is a pool party. My daughters were young, but they were being invited to a few parties, and I was horribly uncomfortable in a bathing suit. I knew it wouldn't be long before my girls would be embarrassed by their mother, and that made me want to cry. It *did* make me cry. But that was the least of it. I was more worried that their mom would die young. I'd seen fat people, and I'd seen old people, but rarely had I seen fat, old people. If I couldn't change for myself, maybe I could do it for my kids.

One night I was driving home alone from an event at church. I felt trapped in despair. At age twenty-nine, my body felt old. I had recently had an emergency gallbladder operation, and the doctor had told me he was afraid to cut through all my layers of fat because of the risk of infection. Imagine being worried about your diseased gallbladder and experiencing anxiety about surgery. And then you learn that your weight problem makes you more prone to infection.

That night in the car I felt like the most pathetic person who had ever lived. I believed that God had made me and put me on earth for a purpose, and I was not living the life He intended for me. I knew I had to change.

As I drove, drowning in self-pity, I began to envision what my life would be if I weren't fat. I thought of all the things I could do—even simple things, such as walking down an airplane aisle without having to turn sideways. I'd be able to board a flight without getting fearful stares from people hoping I wouldn't sit next to them. And there were deeper things, such as being able to go down a slide at a playground with my kids. And I wanted never again to feel as if I was embarrassing my husband when he introduced me to business associates. I was tired of feeling prejudged by every server in every restaurant for what I ordered. I wanted to be able to shop in the same clothing stores as all my friends.

I wanted a normal life.

As I drove home from church, I came to the realization that I absolutely could not go on with my life as it was. I pulled over, sobbing. In total despair I cried out to God. I remember every word. "This is it!" I said. "I can't live like this anymore. I'm done. I give all this pain to You. I surrender this battle. I need You to take over and give me a plan. Otherwise, I don't want to live anymore."

Almost immediately a sense of inner peace filled me, and I calmed down. I had gone to church all my life and had a relationship with God, but I had certainly never felt anything like that before. The peace was real, and in my mind I heard from God. I clearly heard these words: *You are not being the best you can be*. It wasn't a booming voice like in a movie, but it also wasn't a voice coming from me. The words were a jolt to my soul. And that moment would change my life forever.

Again, with crystal clarity, I "heard" a whisper: *You are not being the best you can be*. And for the first time in my life, I understood that this was a choice. I could choose to be the best I could be or not. We all have the same choice. We can't choose our natural talents or what opportunities life is going to throw our way, but we can choose to do this one thing: we can do the best job of living that we are capable of. After praying alone in my car, I knew I could do better.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

No matter how overweight and out of shape we are, our bodies and minds are capable of much more than we think. No matter what battles we face in life, we can have victory. The amazing thing is that so many of us choose not to. I know this is true because I was as guilty as anyone. For years I'd made poor choices and come up with excuses for why I really didn't have a choice at all. I was big boned. I let myself overeat because I was pregnant. I skipped exercise because I didn't have the time. I was too far gone to ever recover. I told myself whatever it took to hide the truth that I was not doing the best job of living.

I was also being scammed by the diet industry. We all have been taken in by the hype. "We'll give you your eating points," the industry tells us, "and let you spend them on any food you want. And we'll love you when you get on that scale, whether you've lost weight or not. We'll keep hugging you for the next twenty-three years if need be." Counting my points was not going to save me. Choosing the right frozen entrée and having it delivered to my home for the next two years was not going to save me. I didn't need the unconditional love of strangers; I needed unconditional commitment from myself.

I was also scammed by the "fat gene" scientists who insisted that my weight problem was out of my hands. They were wrong; it *was* in my hands. *Chantel*, I told myself, *this is not cancer*. I knew, because my mother had leukemia, and I had spent more tearful nights than I could count praying for her recovery—something I couldn't do anything about. I prayed that chemotherapy would work and that God would heal her. But I realized that I'd been thinking of my obesity in the same way, as an illness. I'd even been told by experts that drastic surgery might be my only option. But that was another lie. The way I lived my life and how I contributed to my health were completely in my hands.

Every one of us knows what we should do, but we don't always do it.

Instead, we pretend it's out of our control. We take the easy way out and let ourselves down. Gaining weight doesn't come about by accident, and it's not forced on us. We gain weight through a series of poor choices made on a regular basis over a long period of time.

*We gain weight
through a series of poor choices
made on a regular basis
over a long period of time.*

The same process holds true for achieving a goal related to your health and fitness. Whether it's weight loss, athletic accomplishment, or any other personal or business goal, you achieve what you seek by learning to make the right choices and not being scared of self-sacrifice. I began wondering what my life would be like and what I would be capable of if I simply started being the best me I could.

It was time to find out.

After hearing God tell me, *You are not being the best you can be*, I made my decision, and I said it out loud: "I can do this. I *will* do this." I repeated it, and I meant it. At that moment by the side of Cypress Creek Road, my life turned around.

DO IT, THEN TALK

Having made the commitment, I knew I was going to change my life, but I didn't have a specific plan. I knew I'd have to start exercising, no matter how much I dreaded it. I knew I would have to change the way I ate, and I would need to learn more about nutrition. And to become a different person, I knew I would have to start thinking like the person I wanted to be and not the per-

son I had allowed myself to become. I didn't know how I was going to do all this, but I knew I would have God by my side. He might not make it easy, but He'd give me the strength to do everything that was needed.

When I got home that night, Keith was already in bed. He had never criticized my weight, for which I was incredibly grateful, but I knew how he must have felt. I looked into my husband's eyes, told him that God had spoken to me in the car, and announced that the next morning I would begin losing weight and getting healthy. (I even mentioned that one day I would write a book to reach others in my situation.) I made it clear that I was totally committed to being the best I could be.

Keith smiled at me and quoted one of his favorite sources of inspiration, the self-made billionaire Art Williams: "Do it, then talk."

He was right. I shut up. Keith fell asleep, but I had a burning passion that kept me awake that night and has kept me up many nights since. Making the unconditional decision to change—the complete commitment with no turning back—had to be followed by *action*. First you change your mind. But to change your body and your life, you have to get moving. You have to do things and do them differently from the past. *Do it*. How incredibly simple—yet how long it had taken me to get to a place where I could see that clearly. Getting fit and accomplishing my dreams was simply a matter of choosing to do it, following through every single day, and understanding that failure was not an option. I could do it. I *would* do it.

And I did.



Keep reading, and you'll find out how to change your life through five crucial decisions. The Five Decisions change your brain, giving you a new way of thinking about yourself, your life, your health, and your future. As long as you

keep thinking the same way you always have, you will keep doing the things you have always done—including the unhealthy habits you have developed.

Join me in the next chapter as we explore the past—including all the influences that worked together to bring us to where we are today. Understanding the messages that influence our self-perception and the way we respond to obstacles enables us to make the new decisions that are necessary for permanent change.



What Do You Want to Change, and Why?

As you prepare to make the mental changes that will lead to permanent life change, think through the reasons you want to change. What is motivating your desire to lose weight and reclaim your health? Use the questions that follow to think in detail about your life, your goals for the future, and what you're willing to do to make this happen finally and forever.

1. Beyond losing weight, what do you most want to change about your life?
2. Are you willing to do whatever it takes to see certain areas of your life undergo radical change? If you're not yet willing, what is holding you back?
3. When in your life have you felt the most hopeless? Are you now ready to move past those scars and never look back?
4. When you gained weight in the past, what factors caused you to lose your focus on health?
5. Identify three reasons or influences from the past that convinced you that you couldn't achieve permanent life change. After considering these reasons, can you now admit they were merely excuses?

6. Think about the necessity of changing your mind before you attempt to change your body. Do you agree that lasting change begins on the inside? As you consider being the best you can be, are you ready to work from the inside out?
7. A total life change involves your mind, body, and spirit. Think about the spiritual aspect for a moment. Do you accept the role that faith plays in the process of changing your life for good?
8. When have you been held back by a fear of failure? Write down your biggest fears in this regard. As you face your fears, can you decide to let them go and give your all to permanent life change?





Fourteen and already fighting fat



Me with my big hair and my grandfather, Pepa



With my daughter Kayla as a toddler. When posing for photos, I had mastered the art of having a child in front of me.