

## KEY to My SUCCESS—WW Support Group!

Losing weight and keeping it off is never easy. Sometimes it's even harmful because the dieter doesn't get the proper nutrition to stay healthy. Thanks to Weight Watchers (WW), I lost 80 pounds four years ago, lowered my cholesterol, and dropped my blood pressure medication in half. I could never have done this without the flexible structure of the Weight Watchers program and the support of members of my group.

In 2003, a [Weight Watchers "At Work"](#) group started in our building. A couple of my coworkers joined and I came along since it was only an elevator ride away. Skeptical and unmotivated described my attitude as I walked into that first meeting. I'd been overweight my whole life with a few weight loss successes, but always followed by weight gains. Our WW leader, Barb, made the weekly meetings fun, informative, and participative, so I kept coming back. **That was 80 pounds and four years ago.**

What's the secret? No secret. *The support of the group every week has been key to my success.* Each member of the group is dealing with the same challenges I am. Yet, every week these members share tips and strategies to face those challenges: dealing with stress eating, finding fun ways to increase physical activity, swapping delicious recipe ideas, controlling overeating on vacation, and staying motivated to keep with it.

Every week was definitely not a success. As a matter of fact, 25% of my weekly weigh-ins were GAINS. But Barb taught us to learn from mistakes, build on the success, and get back on program right away. When I got bored, someone from the group always had a tip to spice things up a bit, either with a new recipe or with a lifestyle change idea.

While losing the weight, the typical measures of success were decreasing pounds on the scales, fewer inches on the tape measure, and smaller clothes sizes. As I continued on the program and neared my goal weight, I also learned to rely on other, more inner directed measures of success. For example, it's a success to avoid overeating when I remember how good I feel after eating a delicious, nutritious meal in the right proportions. I feel successful when I mindfully fit sweets into my food plan rather than deny myself the desserts I enjoy. When I'm stressed and tempted to eat the refrigerator, I can draw on those successes and steer myself toward other activities or healthier food choices.

***How can I keep the weight off? Keep coming back. It's easy to fall into old habits of an unhealthy lifestyle - I'm still the same girl I was 80 pounds ago. But now I have skills to be successful and I have the support of the group each week to continually hone those skills. Our leader, Barb, and my fellow "At Work" group members teach me each week how to maintain a healthy lifestyle for the rest of my life.***

Submitted by J. Shekter, DEQ