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inspiration | MEMBERS' LETTERS

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In this month's inspiring members' letters:

- Anne shares her moving memories with us
- Laura's lighter and brighter!
- Singer Sheryl's making great progress
- Susan's broken the yo-yo pattern

And Ian's dropped two trouser sizes!

Moving memories for Anne

I joined Slimming World in September 2006 after the birth of my first child. I'd tried loads of diets before but had never stuck to anything for long and was desperate to lose my baby weight before I went back to work.

I was nervous when I went along to my first group but was made so welcome. I loved the Food Optimising plan and it fitted in easily with my family as we all ate the same meals. I lost 2st 3lbs and my confidence grew so much that in January 2007 I became a Slimming World Consultant and started my very own group. My own Consultant and group had given me a new lease of life - before Slimming World I'd never have dared stand up in front of a room full of people.

Everything changed in July as my baby son became very poorly and I had to give up my group to look after him. He had a very rare blood disorder and was admitted to Birmingham Children's hospital for chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant. Hospital food and lack of exercise began to take its toll and within 4 months I'd gained over 3st. I felt dreadful and found it really difficult to move around. Sleeping on the camp bed next to my son was not easy either as it creaked every time I moved. When I did go home for a break I used to struggle to the top floor of the car park and be nearly in tears because my legs hurt so much. In April 2008 my beautiful son tragically died and I turned to food yet again. I'm not sure exactly how much I weighed at

Before Christmas I decided that enough was enough and it was time to make a change. I was finding it harder to find something suitable to wear on stage, but worst of all it was now affecting my health - my blood pressure was high and I had to take tablets. This really made me wake up and smell the coffee. So the week after Christmas I decided to join Slimming World.

I'd been a member 7 years previously but the time wasn't right then and I gave up going to group, although I did like the Food Optimising plan. This time it was different. This time my head was in the right place and my attitude was different.

In my first week I found out that things had changed slightly and there was more choice than ever. I liked the sound of the Extra Easy plan and decided to go for that.

So far I've lost over 1½st as well as dropped two dress sizes. My confidence is growing because I can see the results. I'm eating loads and don't feel hungry.

I really enjoy going to group - the support is great. I also love logging my progress on LifelineOnline.

Thank you to all who are supporting me - friends, family, my group and Consultant (Jan). I have my goal firmly in sight and things are looking good.

From Sheryl Bradbury**No more yo-yoing for Susan!**

I'm 57 years old but I can't remember ever being slim for more than a few weeks at a time. My mum tells me she took me to the doctor when I was two because I wasn't putting on any weight. The doctor told her to entice me to eat by eating sandwiches and cakes in front of me until I was tempted - and joined in. That doctor has a lot to answer for! We moved house when I was seven and the new school offered a choice of big or small dinners. Guess which I chose! I was a plump child and teenager, yo-yoing up and down the scales as I discovered crash dieting and

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Let us tuck into your Food Optimising invention!

this point but it must have been over 16st.

In May 2008 I joined Slimming World again and within 4 months I'd lost 2st. I was so pleased and felt much better. I can honestly say that through Food Optimising and exercise I found my grief easier to deal with. After a few weeks of struggling the new Extra Easy plan launched. It was just the boost I needed to get me back on track. I love the plan so much as it gives me even more flexibility. My children and husband love it too.

I have now started working for the charity that research my son's illness and I recently had the confidence to attend the House of Commons to fight for awareness.

To date I've lost over 3st with Slimming World. I've even got a place in the Great North Run, the Great Midlands Fun Run and have signed up for a parachute jump in memory of my little man. All this is possible because of the feeling the plan gives me and the confidence group has given me - I believe this will be with me for life. I have still a stone or so to go but I know I can do it.

Thanks to Julie and Slimming World.

From Anne Devenney

Laura's lighter and feeling brighter!

I joined Slimming World as a last resort in January 2009, following advice from my doctor who had been successful on the plan. She made me realise that I was suffering post-natal depression, and a number of seemingly small things had got on top of me which brought me to crying hysterically in her office... something which I would never normally do. She asked me if I could pick out one thing which was really getting me down the most, and being put on the spot like that was like a lightbulb going on in my head - I responded with 'my weight'! I had never said or really thought about it before, but that was the turning point for me, that and the threat of being prescribed anti-depressants, something I didn't want to do at 28 years old.

When I walked into my local Slimming World group the first person that greeted me was Ann, such a friendly and bubbly lady who was so enthusiastic. She showed me a photo of how she used to look before she joined. She explained the Food Optimising plan to me, and I had my doubts at first - I couldn't believe that the more you eat, the more weight you lose! But, on my first weigh-in I'd lost 7½ lbs and there was no going back!

I still have a long way to go; I've lost over 1½ stones and I'm determined to get to my initial target weight loss of 2 stones soon. I'm so thankful to Ann for getting me this far, and I feel like a completely different person now.

I got a shock about a month ago when I took my 7 month daughter to be weighed - she weighed exactly the same as the amount I'd lost on Slimming World. I decided to go for a walk with her in the sling that day, and it was hard work - and to think I was lugging that round constantly for so long before that!

then put it all back on when I secretly stuffed myself with bags of fudge or slabs of marzipan. I crash-dieted before my wedding but put 5st back on over the following year.

I lost four stone in my twenties then put it all back on - and more - with my first baby. It continued to go up and down over the following years. When things were going well, I lost weight or maintained briefly but stress and overwork would send me to comfort food. I had the typical yo-yo dieter's wardrobe: from size 26 to 14. On a bad day, I would lie in bed dreading getting up because I couldn't think of anything to wear that would fit and look decent. I used to dream about going into a shop and actually finding something I could fit into!

I joined Slimming World in my forties and lost weight - several times. I believe that it's the only slimming plan that works long term. You might think it's strange that I should say that as I'm two stone over my current target, but, since learning to Food Optimise, I've managed to reduce those massive weight swings and have thrown out all the big sizes. My wardrobe now only ranges between size 16 and 12.

The Extra Easy plan has come as a revelation to me. It feels right to be eating meals that contain both meat and pasta, for example, without having to weigh either. I used to be a bit doubtful about the concept of synergy but, after four weeks on Extra Easy, doing Body Magic in the form of lots of early morning swimming and walking, my body is telling me that I'm treating it properly at last. I find myself running up the stairs and attacking housework and the garden with extra energy and enjoying meals that really feel healthy and filling. I'm starting to control the size of my portions by asking myself whether I want to feel so stuffed that I can't move off the sofa.

I'm looking forward to going to group and sharing in other people's and my own success. I'm looking forward to getting to target - and to staying there. Thank you Slimming World.

From Susan Christine Smith

Twenty weeks of success for Ian

It's been 4 months since I rejoined Slimming World and what a difference it's made to me.

I'm an amazing 5 stone lighter and though I may still have a long way to go before I'm at my target, I know it's achievable.

So far I've dropped two trouser sizes, and I don't know how many shirt sizes. The day I looked down and noticed a sight I haven't seen in a fair few years was an awakening - I looked down and I saw my feet - just my toes - but it was something I hadn't seen in years.

There's so much choice and variety with Free Foods - it's just wonderful. I've gone from eating take-away 3 or 4 times a week to eating home-cooked food practically every night. The taste of all that fresh food is still as exciting to my taste buds as it was 4 months ago. The support from both my Consultant and the group over the last 20 weeks has been wonderful. It couldn't have

Thank you once again for all the inspirational tips and recipes on the website.

From Laura Wilson

Sheryl's singing the praises of Slimming World

I used to be slim! Two children later and my weight had crept up until I didn't recognise the person in the mirror. I hated having my photo taken and avoided it at all costs.

I always tried to make sure my weight didn't stop me doing things with my children or taking them somewhere, even swimming! I took them even though I dreaded looking like a beached whale. Sometimes I didn't really want to go out at all, but in my job that was impossible. I'm a singer! I have to go on stage and act confident even when I don't always feel confident.

been done without them. I'm now going from viewing Food Optimising as a "diet" to being a "lifestyle" choice.

It's been a wonderful first 20 weeks. I have nothing but praise for Slimming World - how can anyone not have praise - a food plan where you can eat what you want, and have such a wide choice of Free Food to snack on. There's no need to ever go hungry - I keep Free Foods in the fridge at work as well as at home and I keep low Syn cereal bars in the car. A bit of planning and organisation is all it needs!

From Ian Hutcherson

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