

## “The Power of Faith & Visualization”

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Throughout my entire weight loss journey many people have asked me, “what is your secret?” Unfortunately, far too many people have asked this question in total sarcasm and envy. However, many people have genuinely wanted to know my secret. So for those of you who really desire to live a healthier lifestyle and desire to benefit from my painful yet amazing 9 month weight loss journey; I offer you not one, but **TWO** of my weight loss secrets.

### **Secret #1: Faith**

When I began my successful weight loss journey, I unconsciously created a team to ensure my success. My team included:

- God
- Mentor
- Weight Watchers
- Personal Trainer
- Psychologist
- Physician
- Nutritionist
- Family & Friends

I was not even aware at the time that I was actually creating a team, but it was my faith in God that I believed that success was possible. My greatest example of faith is during the first month of joining of weight watchers my mentor, Shannon and I attended a weekly meeting together. I asked Shannon to allow me to see her weekly weigh in books. As I read her weekly weigh in books I discovered:

- She weighed in consistently on the same day and time
- Sometimes she lost weight, maintained her weight, and even gained weight
- She reached her goal

At that moment, I developed a realistic expectation about weight loss and said to myself “this extra weight on my body is coming off” and by **Faith** in God and eventually myself it did.

A weight loss journey presents many challenges and obstacles that one must make the choice to overcome. In a recent meeting with Dr. Lawrence Cheskin, Director of Johns Hopkins Weight Management Center we discussed my weight loss journey and success. When he looked at my before photos at 200lbs he said to me, “most people who are that size will lose 40 lbs and quit.” Although, quitting was never an option for me, however, I immediately understand why he made that statement.

Half way through my journey I hit a plateau in my weight loss and the scale **WOULD NOT** move. I was totally frustrated because I was working out twice a day: one hour of cardio in the morning and strength training in the afternoon. I was also following the weight watchers Flex program precisely. I never went over my daily point/food allowance or cheated. In my frustration I placed a phone call to a body builder and she said to me, “Tonya your body has been carrying around an excess of about 70lbs for a decade and will not release this weight without a fight. So, who will when you or your body?” When I hung up the phone up, I said to myself, “I will win the fight”and immediately implemented my second secret into my weight loss journey.”

### **Secret #2 Visualization**

Visualization is extremely powerful when you are trying to reach a goal or make change. Visualization allowed me to not allow overcome my plateau on the scale, but exceed my initial weight loss goal. I purchased a bikini and hung it on my bedroom door and told myself, “one day you will be able to wear this.” The day I purchased the bikini it was so tight I laughed at myself. Through my laughter, I was motivated and believed that one day I would stroll down the beach wearing my bikini.

On the days when I would wake up and not want to workout the bikini was a reminder of my goal. By placing the bikini on my bedroom door; I was forced to challenge myself every morning to give my weight loss my best and every night to evaluate my daily efforts. One year later, I am able to stroll down the beach in my bikini.

Ten years ago I would have never imagined all of the joy that comes from transforming ones life through health and fitness. Today, I can never imagine living a day that was not focused on healthy living. As we enjoy the remaining days of spring and transition into summer, I encourage you to rely on your faith and enjoy the benefits of visualization. My journey is living proof that both faith and visualization really do work. Go ahead ladies and buy that bikini!!!!

*Disclaimer: Please consult your physician before starting any weight loss or fitness program.*