

Spring of 2020 was scary and this pandemic has been rough going. I am so thankful for the fact VOA has taken care of myself and my coworkers and that we've been able to work offsite as needed. However, for someone who has an unhealthy relationship with food and an addiction to sugar I've never been able to control, I spent my days working from home, eating my feelings and ignoring my health and how bad it was getting. On May 30<sup>th</sup>, I was facing returning to work in person at my heaviest documented non-pregnant weight. I put it like that because I'm certain several years ago I was much heavier than I was on that day in May, but I refused to step on the scale back then because if you don't see the number you can lie to yourself and avoid the reality, right? I was good at avoiding the things that I didn't want to deal with or acknowledge.

That morning when I woke up from a minuscule amount of sleep, I was so tired, depressed and run down that I could not lift my head from the pillow. I had gotten to the point where just taking a shower drained me and made me crave crawling back into bed for the rest of the day. Life was very bleak at that moment. As I laid in bed scrolling through Facebook, (I know I'm not the only one who does this) I came across a friend's post about gut health and root causes of depression, obesity, fatigue and so many other issues I had been attempting to avoid. That morning I said, "Enough!" and I messaged my girlfriend for more information. Later that day, after doing some intensive research, I decided to put my skepticism aside and ordered some products to address my weight, depression and chronic fatigue.

I have spent the last 5 months consistently using those supplements and addressing my imbalanced blood sugar, inflammation and poor gut health and by doing so, I've discovered a new lease on life. By addressing these issues, I'm finally able to become more active. I'm able to be present in my children's and family's lives. I have the mental clarity and energy to do all the things I've wanted to do. I've kicked my addiction to sugar and I'm learning more about health and wellness. I'm learning how to live an 80/20 life instead of living life on a restricted diet that is doomed to fail. I am exercising daily and let me tell you Yoga and Spin classes are tough, but they are what I turn to now instead of food. I've even started classes to become a Certified Yoga and Group Fitness Instructor so that I can share the love and peace I've found in fitness with others.

As a society, we are so quick to quit when things get rough. There's a saying that goes, "I never said it was going to be easy, I said it would be worth it." It so is. Show up for yourself every day. Persevere. Do not give up! You are the only one that can make the decision to make the change, but the crazy thing is once you make the decision to change and you stick with it you're not the only one that benefits. Everyone around you benefits from a healthier you. Make an investment in you. You won't regret it in the long run because what you'll gain is so much more than what you'll lose.