

Case Study: Revenge Body Dreams to Health-Focused Mom

“If I bring a child into this world I want to be the best version of myself that I can.”

The Client’s Challenge

Recovering from a break-up that had put her dreams of marriage and family on hold, Krista T., a software training consultant, started her health and fitness journey with the idea of achieving the body her ex would regret leaving. She had tried home fitness DVDs with resistance bands and weights, and purchased several healthy recipe cookbooks. Nothing seemed to stick as a long-term interest, and Krista never knew the right balance of pushing herself or pacing the lifestyle changes. Adding to the pressure of unsuccessful previous attempts at workout routines and calorie-cutting was the knowledge that she needed to do something to address her high blood pressure, extra weight, and mounting health concerns that she might not be able to have a healthy pregnancy in the future if she didn’t make effective, lasting changes that supported her dreams.

Ready, Set, Go Deeper

“It started out with me wanting to get this body I saw in my mind.”

Krista took a chance on a work benefit that offered gym memberships and met a personal trainer at her new gym who went above and beyond. In fact, she was more than a personal trainer. Channell Holmgren had worked as a registered dietician and was building her own fitness programs based around practices of accessible workout routines, nutrition education, and coaching sessions that used questionnaires, journaling, and topical discussions as a way to access the past experiences and current mindset of her clients around their fitness goals.

The impact of a more personalized dialogue built trust and an ability to reflect and respond in new ways. Krista recalls, “Before, I was afraid of saying the right or wrong thing. With Channell, I felt judgement-free.” Able to express her doubts, fears, and hopes in a more liberated way, Krista heard herself judge herself out loud, using the same societal and family standards she’d been raised with as “the truth”. She also confronted her own limitations on being able to accept a non-linear path for certain life milestones that she treasured, realizing the achievement spreadsheet and life calendar she was holding herself to would need flexibility to implement the changes that truly mattered to her. “That was my dream; expectations placed in order, by the book, there’s always this linear piece and order to things and all the different journeys I’ve had have been helping me realize there’s no one path.”

Questions to Knowledge, Knowledge to Impact

“It seems more attainable and something I can do and do by myself, sometimes I don’t even need another person there. I know there are steps I can take.”

When translated through the lens of observation, interaction, and personalized information, knowledge indeed became power-- as in empowerment-- for Krista. Coming from a family that didn't emphasize exercise or nutrition, there were multiple practical skills Krista needed to learn. A 30-day nutrition challenge brought on confusion about how to pair up foods for both taste and nutrition, which types of food belonged on a healthy plate, and what an appropriate serving size really looked like. Assessing the calories, sugar content, and health consequences of daily sodas was another eye-opener. The file folder of handouts on holistic health, nutrition, and resource references is still something Krista uses today. Krista recalls, "It was the first time I focused on how I thought about my body and nutrition, and doing that, my focus switched from being thin to being fit."

The exercise programs provided similar transformation. Prior to Channell's programs, Krista didn't understand when to push through the initial fatigue and sore muscles of starting a fitness routine, or whether she should stop because she might be overdoing it and putting herself at risk of an injury or adverse health event. Krista felt a major confidence boost getting a sense of the right way to ease into a routine, how to carefully and sensibly step up the level, and what body signals needed attention.

Better able to gauge her own responses, Krista used her newfound knowledge to create fitness goals that incorporated activities and milestones outside of a gym environment. Hiking and camping with her family became a realistic option, enjoying the social group and outdoor environment. Identifying her preferences about the types of exercise and social settings that created joy proved critical in keeping Krista's motivation level high. Seeing beyond the gym, Krista could feel how the long hours on her feet teaching software programs were no longer physically draining her like they had before. The fitness work connected to a more expansive and improved life picture.

Results and Renewal

"My desire to be healthy became about my future and the possibility of being a mom."

When Krista connected with a new man in her life, who was equally family-focused and also on his own fitness path, she added Channell's small group coaching and workout sessions that were specifically designed for new moms and women wanting to become moms. Opening up about health and pregnancy concerns, Krista received advice and support from other group members. Channell's leadership and the shared life experiences of the group helped Krista formulate more targeted questions for her doctors and understand specific areas of focus for her medical life in order to prepare her body for pregnancy. But the idea of pregnancy, as much as she wanted to be a mom, was intimidating.

Krista had already achieved weight loss, lowered blood pressure, better sleep, increased stamina, and a regular practice of tracking both her food budget and her food choices. It seemed like a pregnancy might get her off-track. Could she deal with the inevitable weight gain and then return to a pre-pregnancy weight? Was her body even ready for this or capable of it? How was she going to approach raising a health-conscious child? The shared "safe space" atmosphere with other women gave Krista access to how new moms were keeping on track with their fitness and nutritional goals post-pregnancy. They also explored the challenges of body image, stamina concerns, and raising healthy kids. "It taught me that it's

okay to feel insecure...you don't have to hide it...It's normal to feel insecure about voicing your insecurities."

Today, Krista is running around after a toddler. She learned how to make her own baby food, grocery shop for different stages of childhood, and is planning her path of regular exercise and eating habits to teach her daughter as she grows. While she still has areas of health, fitness, and food choices she wants to address, the overall experience with Channell has transformed her knowledge, perspective, and practices in a manner that is part and parcel of her thinking and behavior every day. When asked what made the biggest difference for her, Krista cites the regular, long-term coaching sessions. "The biggest learn I have from the whole journey is that it doesn't really come down to body image and nutrition, it's about mental things going on."

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