

# The Story of my Body & Soul Transformation So Far

Roman A. Wasarab, February 24, 2009

In January of 2007, I contacted the Kinsmen Sports Centre to book an appointment with a personal fitness trainer for a fitness appraisal and to set up a program for me to do workouts on my own (I wasn't prepared to hire a trainer to work with me). After I described my situation and what I was looking for, the person on the phone told me they knew just who to book me with. The day I came for my assessment was the day I met Kim Doyle. However, this first attempt at taking the right steps only lasted about six weeks and I retreated to my old ways. By August of 2007, I was ready to try again and this time I started by asking my GP for help in quitting smoking. He provided me with a prescription for Champix and within 3 months, I was smoke free.

After experiencing success quitting smoking, I was ready to take the next step just before Christmas 2007. I still had Kim's card in my desk, so I called her to ask if she'd be interested in working with me. It was my great fortune that she agreed to become my trainer. Realizing that I needed help and motivation to achieve my goals, I asked Kim a question that was key to my hiring her: "If I need to have my a\*\* kicked, are you willing to do that?" With a straight unwavering gaze, she answered calmly – "Yes". It was probably the best question I have ever asked.

In January 2008 we began our sessions but only met only one hour a week because my 376 pound, 43 year-old body needed an entire week to recover from each session. However, by the end of February we were up to three per week and by the end of March I was up to five or six days a week doing either weights or cardio.

Kim was certainly true to her word, when in early February I faced my first challenge. I'd had a particularly stressful week at work and bought and smoked a half-pack of cigarettes on the weekend. When Kim showed up for my session at noon on Monday she cheerfully asked "How was your weekend?" I couldn't lie and confessed my sin. She immediately took me out of the fitness room and to the stairwell of my 14 floor condo building and made me do the stairs, twice! After nearly coughing up a lung (quite literally!), I had my first breakthrough realization confirmation that I had indeed hired the right trainer – that bulldog attitude was just what I needed -- I have not craved a cigarette since!

One of the first tasks Kim put before me was to set my long-term goal and also a short-term goal to give me something "real" work towards. Although at the time it seemed like a huge hurdle, I decided that my first challenge would be to climb the stairs by the Royal Glenora non-stop, on July 1 (i.e. six months in the future). After working with Kim for about 6 weeks, she informed me that I would be doing the stairs on **June 1** at 12 Noon, in the middle of a work day. Although surprised, I relished the challenge she had put before me.

I have the great fortune of having tremendous support for health and wellness initiatives and personal growth at my job with the Government of Alberta (GOA). When I shared with my boss (Mark Prefontaine) what I had begun doing and what my first challenge was, he immediately offered his support by saying "You can have that afternoon off on the condition that you let your colleagues come out to cheer you on". I agreed without hesitation, after all it's only about 8 people and I realized that public declaration would help to keep me accountable. When Kim suggested that I challenge my colleagues to do the stairs with me, I took that back to Mark right away.

He realized that now he had no choice, but this was just the beginning of a wave. Once our HR department got wind of this, they contacted Corporate Human Resources for the GOA. They contacted us and asked if Mark & I would participate in interviews and allow this event to be filmed as part of an employee recognition video that was to be presented to all GOA employees in the fall of 2008. By the time June 1<sup>st</sup> had arrived, two dozen co-workers, including my Assistant Deputy Minister, had stepped up to show their support by agreeing to follow me up the stairs. More than 100 more people were there to cheer us on. Mark agreed to do the stairs carrying a 43 pound weight vest, representing the weight that I had lost up to that point. Here's the link to the "Start a Wave" video that was presented to all Government employees last fall:

<http://www.chr.alberta.ca/proudlyworkingtogether/08-agenda.html#start>

I could not believe how many people contacted me to tell me how inspired they were by our story and that they were planning to begin a fitness program.

I began to realize that my personal journey could have a very positive influence on the lives of other people. I didn't realize it at the time, but I eventually came to the realization that I have a *responsibility* to provide a positive influence where I can.

From September to early December, I fell into what I can best describe as a funk – basically a 3 ½ month plateau that I couldn't seem to get out of. I realized that I needed to change my thinking and find some help to complete my transformation. In December I began taking some personal development seminars (Personal Best) that Kim had attended, after noticing the positive effect they had had on her. At that time Kim also suggested that I set a date to celebrate reaching my Goal Weight and begin planning for it.

I determined that I wanted to be at my goal weight by my 45<sup>th</sup> birthday: October 8, 2009. As I discussed the plans for this event with Kim and others in my circle of support, I determined that this evening needed to be about more than just celebrating my success. By mid-January I had decided that the evening would be much more meaningful if I could use it to accomplish two additional goals:

1. *Use the dinner for my Goal Weight Party as a platform to raise at least \$5,000 for an organization that help families deal with childhood obesity (Pediatric Centre for Weight and Health); and*
2. *That by the end of 2009 (by Oct 8 if possible) that I share my story with at least 5,000 people, to provide them with the opportunity to inspire themselves to begin their own transformational journeys.*

Although this transformation may be “my” journey and something that I am accountable for and that I control, I have realized that the most successful journeys are not travelled alone. All of us need to learn that asking for support is the strength of human nature not a weakness. Opening ourselves to receiving support is something we too often wrongly deny ourselves.

So far I have lost 80 pounds and plan to invite *everyone* I know to the party/fundraiser which falls on the Thursday before the Thanksgiving long weekend. I have much to be thankful for, and I thought that this would be a wonderful opportunity for me to not only celebrate my success, but to thank everyone who has helped me achieve my success.

I am thankful to all my long-time friends who have stuck with me, even when I doubted myself. I am thankful to my family for supporting me, even when I was blind to their love and understanding. I am thankful to all the new friends that I have made and I am thankful for now understanding the true power of asking for what I need.

I am especially thankful to Kim Doyle – for believing in me and supporting me when I needed guidance most; for giving her time and energy because she believed in me; even when I didn't. She has a rare gift of helping others that is inspirational and infectious.

Two years ago, before I understood that I was doing it, I asked the universe for help. Since then, the universe has answered my plea a number of times, bringing the right people into my circle of influence, reminding me of the support I already had but had forgotten about and putting the right challenges in front of me to overcome. It's sometimes is as simple as putting the positive thought out there and trusting the process.

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