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April 2008

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REDEBOOK

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How real couples
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WEIGHT-LOSS
TRIUMPH

"I LOST 18 POUNDS IN 30 DAYS"

De-junk your life

TRADE IN YOUR
CLUTTER FOR CALM

LOOK YOUNGER IN SECONDS

Beauty fixes: real-life
befores & afters

Real-Life
Healthy Life

of cake—as long as I stopped at one slice. During lunch breaks at work, I started walking with a coworker who was also trying to lose weight. Previously, we had eaten fast food together three or four times a week. Now, we walk a mile outdoors nearly every day. If it's too hot, we walk through Wal-Mart. Most times, we're so busy talking that we don't even realize how far we've walked. At home, I bought a stationary bike that I ride four days a week either before or after work while watching recorded episodes of *Judge Judy*. I lost 18 pounds the first month and 13 pounds the next. I think my body was in shock! But since I was seeing the results, it made it easy to keep going.

**"I'd like to be a healthy example
for my daughter."**

I don't want Jaiden, who is now 10, to have to battle with weight like I did. If she sees me eating two sausage-and-cheese sandwiches and a doughnut each morning—and washing it down with a soda—she's going to pick up those habits. But if she sees me eating a banana and a Special K cereal bar, healthy eating will become second nature to her. My dad has diabetes, which also puts her at risk, so it's especially important that I set a good example. In the past year, I've already seen a difference. She chooses fruit over candy and doesn't ask to eat fast food. I never told her that she couldn't eat junk food; she simply doesn't ask for it anymore. These are changes that I hope will stay with her.

**"When I look in the mirror,
I see a new, healthier me."**

Even at my largest, I always felt good about myself and was happy in my life—but since I've lost all those pounds, my self-esteem has really soared. I feel more confident when I meet new people and make decisions at work. I used to think that people looked at me and thought, *Gosh, she's got such a pretty face, but she's so heavy*. Now, I feel pretty without the "but." Being blonde and 6 feet tall, I'm a pretty striking person already. I definitely don't need that extra 100 pounds attached! When I look in the mirror, I can see that I look healthier—and I feel healthier too. I have so much more energy now: Chores that used to require too much effort—like cleaning the house and walking my two dogs—are now fun. I've donated my bigger-size clothes to charity so there's no excuse to ever go back to wearing them. I'm down to a size 16, and my ultimate goal is to be a size 12 or 14. I know I'll get there by maintaining what I've been doing. The food choices I make will stay with me forever because they're not drastic or unrealistic.

I'm not the kind of person who can give up bread or starve myself for the rest of my life. Now, I lose about 3 pounds a month, and I'm fine with that. When the weight stops coming off, I'm going to take that as my body's cue that I'm at my healthy weight, regardless of the number on the scale. I've changed my way of thinking about food and developed healthy habits that I will have forever. **B**

EASY WAYS TO COUNT CALORIES

When fad diets failed her, Shelli turned to the oldest weight-loss secret in the book—she cut calories. Here's how you can do it too.

● **DON'T GUESSTIMATE.** Before Shelli began counting calories, she consumed more than a full day's caloric allowance at breakfast. In fact, 80 percent of women underestimate the amount they eat per day by more than 600 calories, says a study published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. "People don't realize how calorie dense some foods are," says

Allan Borushek, author of *The Calorie King Calorie, Fat, and Carbohydrate Counter*. "A full-fat cappuccino or a muffin can look so innocent, but they're packed with calories."

● **WRITE IT DOWN.** Keeping a food journal helps track calories—and keep the weight off for good, studies show. "When you write it down, you'll see exactly what, where, and when you're eating, which helps to identify—and change—eating patterns," Borushek says. Shelli printed calorie information from calorieking.com, [\[.com\]\(http://.com\), and \[dietdetective.com\]\(http://dietdetective.com\)—all list nutrition data for everyday foods and dishes from chain restaurants.](http://thecaloriecounter</p></div><div data-bbox=)

● **WATCH PORTION SIZES.** Shelli snacked on 100-calorie packs to stay full—a smart move, since people can unknowingly eat a meal's worth of calories in one snack, Borushek says. To view pictures of portion sizes, go to calorieking.com/foods/portionwatch—and be sure to check the number of servings on labels. Stave off between-meals hunger by eating two 100-calorie snacks per day (see examples below).

