

2018 Courage Award Finalist

JESSICA ZEIGLER

BEFORE



AFTER



On September 30, 2014, I was diagnosed with Ovarian Cancer. After my third surgery (March 2015), I started eating and drinking—feeling sorry for myself. I would drink and eat at least 5000+ calories a day. By September 2015, I no longer could fit into any of my clothes. The only thing I would wear were black stretchy yoga pants and baggy shirts. I had lost control of my life and everything was falling apart. I had gained 40lbs. I officially hit an all time low in my life.

It took me seeing a pic of myself at my heaviest, to realize I had to do something about my weight. Having two daughters, I knew I had to do something, especially because I wanted my two girls look up to their mommy. I started walking around my neighborhood, and doing some exercise classes On Demand. I even ordered a FitBit, woot woot! I lost a few pounds, but couldn't get out of the 200's.

In April 2016, I joined a gym and Weight Watchers. The best two decisions I had ever made. Once I started noticing results with my body, going to the gym was becoming an addiction (a good addiction). Food and alcohol were no longer my addiction. I went from drinking everyday to drinking a few times a week

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to drinking on the weekends to drinking on special occasions. It was NOT easy, far from it. When I look back at how far I have come, I am thankful to have gone through all of the challenging times. It made me a much stronger individual.

In March 2017, I thought, 'Why not do a bikini competition?' So, I went and spoke to a local gym owner. It was going to cost so much money and time (I just didn't have at the time) to train so I decided competing just isn't for me. In April 2017, I earned a Personal Training certification. Things were starting to look up for me. I was extremely happy! I continued going to the gym and kept losing the weight.

Then December 15, 2017, I mentioned to my cousin about my interest in bikini competitions. He suggested I should do one and put me in contact with Kevin, another cousin. Kevin started training me that day. It has been one of the best experiences I've ever had in my life. I competed in my first competition on March 2018, placing 4th.

Something that originally started as me just wanting to lose the extra weight (I had gained over two years) turned into me competing in bikini competitions. I will be competing in my second competition in October. The only person I need to be better than, is the girl I was back in March. Not only did I lose 68lbs, but I am the healthiest I've ever been in my entire life. Along this journey, I established some lifelong relationships and fought two addictions I will never pick back up!

I believe 100% Everything Happens For A Reason.