

Names: Karen & John

OUR STATS:

Ages:	47	59
Heights:	5'3"	5'4"
Started WW:	1/20/07	
Reached Goal Weight:	10/27/07	6/30/07
Lbs Lost to Reach Goal:	108.6 lbs	49.8 lbs
Time to Reach Goal:	41 wks	24 wks
Average Loss/Wk:	2.65 lbs	2.08 lbs
Max Lbs Lost to Date**:	112.4 lbs	54.4 lbs

**We both "overshot" our goal a bit during maintenance. (Hey, it's hard to learn to trust yourself to put food back in after all the hard work getting the weight off. It's an on-going learning experience!)

OUR STORY: We were both overweight all their lives, well, at least as long as we can remember. We both come from families of overweight relatives, so we both had heredity and poor eating/exercise habits working against us (not an excuse, just a fact). Of course, as we got older and settled into our own adult family life, a sedentary lifestyle (we both usually went from sitting behind a desk all day to sitting in front of a TV all night) and eastern European/Midwestern US comfort food meals (think, for example, 12 deep fried chicken wings smothered in BBQ hot sauce with a double order of mac & cheese on the side with a cup or more of nice creamy coleslaw dripping with mayonnaise...don't forget the draft beer!) caught up with us. We were both very overweight (Karen especially) and John, in particular, had some serious health concerns (including asthma, high cholesterol and blood pressure, diabetes, mild artery blockage, etc.) which meant he was taking all the attendant medications. Karen found herself getting winded with the very least exertion, experienced intermittent racing heart rate, sore feet in the morning, etc. We were basically a health mess!! And, to make matters worse, we had regrettably dragged our son, Jay, with us into this morass of "overweightness" (a kind of parental negligence for which we will probably never forgive ourselves). Then, in January of 2007, we decided we really wanted a change. We just knew it was something we had to do, for ourselves, but also for people who loved us. We weren't enjoying life like we should, and it also just wasn't fair to our son, our family, or our friends to willingly risk leaving them early due to our lack of self-discipline! We knew better, but nevertheless, we just didn't live a very healthy lifestyle.

Very much (though somewhat secretly) empowered by the recent phenomenal success of Karen's younger sister (WW lifetime member, lost 60 lbs) and brother-in-law (WW lifetime member, lost 64 lbs), we started WW on January 20, 2007.

They were really our role models, showing us that we could do it. Now just 10 months later, we have both reached our goals. John is successfully living as a lifetime member, maintaining quite well, and Karen also will become a lifetimer in the next few weeks (I'm holding my own so far!). John's physicians have taken him off of several medications, his blood glucose and cholesterol levels are normal, and he feels great – he hasn't had to use his inhaler in months. Karen also feels like a million bucks, normal heart rate and blood pressure, and so on.

HOW WE DID IT: Weekly WW meetings in Waterbury CT with the best leader (Steve Parzuchowski) and group of folks ever, sticking pretty religiously to the flex plan, and very regular visits (4-6 times per week) to the Naugatuck CT YMCA. Steve is really the best leader we could imagine for us. We happened to choose his Saturday morning (7AM) meeting our first week because it was convenient with Karen's work schedule. But, from the very first meeting, we really liked Steve and his style of leading meetings, giving advice, etc. The group is just unbelievably warm and supportive – we feel like we've made some real friends. The whole WW program just clicked for us. In particular, John likes that there are several other guys and couples in our group, and he feels that, as a man, he is being well-supported – that is, it's not just a "women's thing". Karen especially likes the science-based, common sense, balanced approach WW takes. We both completely bought into the entire "lifestyle" change concept and find now that we really do enjoy our lives much more. Partly due to improved health, but also because of the more upbeat outlook we've both taken as part of this positive all-around lifestyle change (e.g., purposeful attempts to reduce stress, etc.), we can honestly say we are happier, and not just healthier, people! We haven't just lost weight, we've gained perspective on what's important in life. We genuinely feel that we got our old selves back. We owe a lot to Steve, to the group, to WW and also to the Y, as well as to each other and ourselves. Lifelong weight control and lifestyle change seems to be a "team sport" and we happened onto the best team!

TIPS: (1) Find a group that works for you and your style. Keep trying meetings and/or online things until it "clicks" for you. Don't give up, and don't beat yourself up. The important thing is to keep trying. (2) Make it a lifestyle change. It's the only way it will work. (3) Track everything, everyday, even if you do Core and/or if you go "off plan". If you trip, even if you fall, just pick yourself back up and start again. (4) Do it with a friend. We can all use all the support we can get in this world! (5) Get some "extra" exercise everyday, no matter what. (6) Shake things up: Try new foods, different exercises. Neither John nor Karen ever hit a plateau. Maybe we were just lucky. But, we think it's because we didn't wait for one, we avoided them by keeping things "new".

A FAVORITE "SECRET" TIP FOR SUCCESS: Karen found that just as sneaking one bite, taste, lick or sip here and there can thwart weight loss, so too can it aide it. Some weeks, when my weight wasn't going down as quickly as I would have liked, I would work really hard to remember to remove one bite, one taste, lick or sip from each measured item at each meal. You won't even notice it, and it might make a difference on the scale! (And, little did John know I did it for him sometimes too!).

SINGLE BEST OUTCOME: Hard to say, it's been an all-around very positive experience; but, we are both very delighted that our son just called from Rome where he is studying abroad this year to say he needs new shirts because he has lost enough weight to have to come down a size! We hope we can be more positive role models for him now.