

# Weight—It's Personal

## The one factor that holds you back



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When I got the invite to the March, 2016 Arnold Classic late December, 2015, I decided to invite a group of individuals to participate in my journey of what it really takes to go through the daily grind of an IFBB Pro—the meal prepping, the 3-4 hours of training daily, the fatigue, the good, the bad, and the ugly of every day life for me. I created a private page on Facebook called the Arnold Classic Fitness Challenge. I selected 60 individuals that have either private messaged me for health and fitness advice, I've seen their struggles with weight, they emailed me, or/ and I simply felt they could benefit from the experience. About 95% of them seemed excited at first and were “gun-ho” not realizing they were about to experience something very different than they expected.

With over 25-years of experience in health, wellness, & fitness I have found that there is ONE main factor that holds an individual back from meeting his/her goal when it comes to their ideal body image—emotional baggage.

With that being said, I started by sharing my story—how I came to be the person I am today. From my younger years of overcoming anorexia, almost dying from it, to what I did to overcome it. I went on to teaching them meal prepping, provided my meal plan,

video taped myself prepping my meals and gave them tips on making healthier versions, video taped my workouts, and was available to all of them (for free) to answer any questions they had along the way. Two weeks in, only 1/2 survived. The main reason? By the 2nd week, I required them to take weekly front and back pictures of themselves and post on the private page to show their progress. You would think being on Facebook my request wasn't too out there. I received more private messages and calls from several of those individuals absolutely terrified at the thought of showing their flaws, as they saw it. Two women who called me were practically in tears at the thought of doing it.

By the 3rd week, when those remaining were more comfortable with each other and interacting, I required all of them to tell their story. This made the count go from 30 to 17. Everyone has a story and I knew most of theirs. Some more horrific than others, but all emotional baggage they carried.

One by one, each opened up. From overcoming drug abuse, child abuse, federal prison, loss of a spouse, spousal abuse and more....the stories were raw. This was a turning point in the group. Once the remaining individuals were able to relieve themselves of

emotional baggage, they all admitted how liberating and lighter they felt. I saw the group become a strong unit. Even without my encouragement, I started seeing more interactions between the group encouraging each other, posting more often, showing their daily victories, and being more accountable.

We are now at the 1/2 way point and ALL have made extreme progress not only in their body compositions but their attitude and outlook at how they look at health and fitness.

Weight and self image is a personal thing. It's not something corporations can cookie-cut and expect results without dealing with the individual's set of needs on an emotional level. The desire to be healthier is in all of us, for the most part. It's the emotional obstacles that block many of us from achieving it.