

Xoliswa Williams | 40

LOST 24kg | JOHANNESBURG

She was a 'spectator in her own life' who hid behind wit, sarcasm and black clothing. Then this attorney and mother of four (Chumani, 15, Neo, 10, Nqaba, 5, and Zizipho, 2) won a lucky draw that brought colour and cheer back into her life.

• A lucky beginning

In April 2012, after years of yo-yo dieting, Xoliswa had all but given up hope of losing weight. Then she attended the PJ Powers 'Power of Appreciation of Your Body' breakfast and won a lucky draw to enter the Eden Life Wellness Clinic weight-loss programme. It fitted 'seamlessly' into her life - 'no measuring cups, no scales, no counting kilojoules and no charts' - and, though she's not yet at her goal weight, Xoliswa has lost several dress sizes in six months. She still eats meat - a bonus for a 'serious carnivore' - but chooses more carefully and avoids chips, bread and food made from flour, her 'nemesis'.

• It's a family affair

Xoliswa admits that losing weight has been easier with the support of her family. She and her husband, Mfundo, plan meals together and have changed their family's eating habits. They've stopped buying tempting treats and the children have cut down on chips and chocolate, and snack on fruit and biltong. The more weight Xoliswa loses, the more motivated she becomes. 'When Mfundo found my hip bone, which had been hiding under adipose tissue for 20 years, I knew that quitting was not an option!'

• Slowly does it

In the early days of the programme, Xoliswa was discouraged from serious exercise to avoid damaging her joints. Then she started doing light exercises - walking and taking the stairs instead of escalators and lifts. 'I was tired all the time, and was sick and prone to flu and a host of problems, like heartburn and gastric reflux. I didn't sleep well at night, I snored and my husband suffered badly,' says Xoliswa. Now, she enjoys Tae Bo three times a week - and Mfundo gets a peaceful night's rest.

• Time for the kids

Xoliswa's children are also benefiting from her new energy levels. 'I'm happier, healthier, more confident, and less sarcastic and abrupt. My teenage daughter says I'm more fun to hang out with.' And gone too are the long tops that 'hide everything' - in are 'hipster jeans, flimsy tops and colour'.



It works for Xoliswa

1 ENLIST SUPPORT

I have a few friends who help keep me focused.

2 CELEBRATE EVERY SUCCESS

I reward myself each time I achieve a milestone.

3 HAVE A MOTIVATION MANTRA

Mine is: Quitting Is Not An Option. →