

Shrinking violet to hot bod

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Fad diets come and go, but planting the seed for healthy eating habits will bring incredible lifelong benefits.

This is the message Paula Galvão seeks to drive through her weight management programme, which has done wonders for a number of Mzansi's A-listers such as television personalities Tumisho Masha, Sandy Ngema, radio jock Alan Ford, singer PJ Powers and the inimitable Isidingo villain Robert Whitehead.

Her Eden Life Wellness Clinic is becoming the go-to place for the promotion of good nutrition and lifelong wellness habits for those looking not only to lose a significant amount of weight but learn how to keep it off for good.

Sounds too good to be true, right? Well, a look into her own weight-loss journey, complete with before and after photos – documenting her weight loss journey from a whopping 113kg to 55kg – holds the answer to the effectiveness of her programme, which she says works by first addressing the reason why we cannot lose weight.

“It helps you correct your body’s biochemical imbalance caused by insulin resistance,” the married mother of one said.

A true inspiration, especially for those who have been battling with obesity from childhood, Galvão’s inspiring story began when as a young girl she found herself feeling hopeless and alone most of the time. It was this life of constant teasing and rejection by peers all the way to her young adult years that made her more determined to find a solution, which has allowed her to help others over the years.

Today Paula Galvão is an energetic, successful businesswoman. You would never know that as young as five, she was already battling with her weight, eventually becoming an obese teenager obsessed with food.

“Coming from an Italian-headed household, food was the focus of our family life and as you would imagine, temptation was everywhere,” she says.

Galvão experienced first-hand the many social obstacles and insecurities associated with obesity and tried every diet or potion only to find nothing worked. Sharing one of the things she was constantly teased about, she said: “People would say to me, ‘are you pregnant?’ or even ask my mother, ‘how far pregnant is your daughter?’ Growing up being teased and bullied like that, you learn a few survival mechanisms. Like many obese children I overcompensated by achieving academically.”

With one thing in her favour, her intellect, she became the head girl in high school and carefully thought about her degree and decided she wanted to study pharmacology with one thing in mind: finding a solution to her obesity. Fortunately, she was able to gain admission for a BSc at Wits University in 1989 and for the next few years, she immersed herself in her studies. Unfortunately, her weight continued to rocket until she topped a massive 113kg at the age of 25.

During these dark days, there were two major highlights in Galvão’s life, to which she attributes her success. “I was 18 when I met and started dating a handsome young man called Paul, who saw beyond my appearance and we got married two years later.

“He was my constant source of support as he would tell me that one day I would become the beautiful woman I hoped to be.”

But it would seem her fate in weight loss management was sealed when she outshone her fellow students in her final year in 1992, which saw her being awarded the Adcock Ingram national award for excellence in pharmacy practice.

From then on she dedicated her life to researching how food could be used as medicine and “combined with various ingredients, how it can best activate weight loss”.

During her research, Galvão discovered that biochemical imbalances in the body cause weight gain – and not lack of willpower as many are made to believe. This groundbreaking discovery is what led to the creation of her unique weight-loss programme, which consists of a range of health supplements, which control craving and assist in toning muscles and adjusting one’s lifestyle.

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