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50 is the New 40!

I started my journey in 2008 when my life insurance policy required me to have a physical. I weighed about 310 pounds and was not very active. I wasn't exactly the pillar of health. Prior to my weight gain, I was a collegiate athlete. I was required to maintain a heavier weight and my daily caloric intake was enormously high. When my playing days were over, I continued consuming at the same rate without a second thought. It didn't take long for the pounds to start adding on.

During that forced visit to my doctor, he reviewed my medical records and family history. As the doctor studied the information I provided him (which I scaled down out of fear of what he was about to tell me), he said, "Let me put this in terms that you will understand. Steve, you are one.....ONE pork chop away from a heart attack! Odds are you will have a heart attack by the time you are 45 if you keep this up."

That was all I needed to hear. I joined Weight Watchers that very night. The program taught me that portion control, exercise and checking your weight are all keys to maintaining a healthy weight and lifestyle. I lost about 110 pounds during a span of 10 months. There have been some ups and downs; however, today I still weigh about 220 pounds and enjoy a much more active lifestyle.

I never realized just how heavy I was and how much it impacted my life. So many people who have lost weight will tell you, you feel so much better and have so much more energy. The biggest lifestyle change besides learning to eat right and exercise is being able to buy clothes on the "normal rack". I have always had to use the plus size stores and the selections were somewhat limited. Now, I can shop wherever I choose!

I turned 50 years old this year and I'm often asked how it feels. I can honestly tell people that I feel better at 50 than I ever did at 40! Why? Ninety pounds makes a huge difference! Obviously, because I heeded my doctor's warning, that heart attack before the age of 45 never happened!

It all seems so simple to me now - portion control, exercise and watch your weight. The scale doesn't lie. I told myself that for years, choosing to live in denial. Find what works for you and keep at it. It's often easy to lose weight and change the lifestyle, but maintaining it can be difficult. Just like many people who have lost weight, I have fluctuated up and down a little. To keep myself on track, I keep a picture of myself at my highest weight and refer to it often. It is an instant reminder of where I was and where I am now. I never want to be that 310-pound man again!

While I lost most of my weight prior to the **wellnesoptions** program being offered, I believe it is a great thing. I love reading the newsletters and the website, and love looking for new tips and success stories. They inspire me and help me learn more about what works for other people. I believe it is very important that the State of Nebraska has this best-practice program. You only have one life so you'd better take care of it!