

everyday Influencer

Meagan Palmer

Through adopting two vital behaviors, Meagan Palmer has lost 45 pounds and is leading a happier, healthier life for herself and her family.



Meagan Palmer has always struggled with her weight. Two children, thyroid medication, a busy schedule, painful knees, and reaching thirty-something all conspired against her. Of course she wasn't the only one in her circle who was gaining weight. It was easy to accept the extra pounds as a toll of our modern lifestyle.

But late in 2006 Meagan decided to take her life—and her weight—back into her own hands. Three events helped to tip the balance. Her physician told her she was developing high blood pressure and asked her to lose weight; she ran into a former coworker who had lost 50 pounds; and she heard author Joseph Grenny talk about the principles contained in the book *Influencer: The Power to Change Anything*.

One of the principles that spoke to Meagan was, "Your world is perfectly organized to create the behavior you've got." Now armed with motivation to lose weight, Meagan set out to educate her eyes and find every influence that was standing between her and her ideal weight. She targeted six sources of influence that would help her adopt two vital behaviors that would inevitably lead to weight loss: regular exercise and a healthy diet.

Personal Motivation: Exercising isn't Meagan's favorite pastime and there isn't a gym near her home; consequently, it was hard to find the motivation to work out. So, Meagan searched for a solution and found a playground close to her home that is encircled by a soft track. She motivates herself to exercise on the soft track so her kids can use the playground. Another solution was to take up tennis—a sport she does enjoy.

Personal Ability: Before getting married, Meagan led an active life and maintained a healthy diet. As part of her influence effort, she returned to these skills. One of those skills was a healthy diet plan called Lean Bodies. She also read the book *30 minute Workout* which showed her how to fit the type of workout she used to do in an hour into her busier schedule.

Social Motivation: Meagan told a few close friends about her weight loss goal and several of them joined her. Together they push each other to stick with their exercise plans and their diets. Additionally, Meagan began making tennis dates with her 78-year-old father so that exercising meant spending time with her Dad.

Social Ability: Meagan enabled her diet by preparing and freezing healthy meals she could quickly and easily make for her family. When her husband cooked, he prepared her healthy salads or steamed vegetables. Her parents and husband also watched the kids so she could exercise and were accepting of her meal variations during family dinners. Meagan also invited her children's friends to the playground so they would want to stay longer—giving her more time to exercise.

Structural Motivation: Meagan enjoyed both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards which included new clothes, increased energy, setting a good example for her kids, and occasionally eating her favorite foods.

However, the best rewards came after doing the hard work. Meagan's favorite reward was recognition from friends and colleagues. She especially loved surprising people who hadn't seen her in years.

Structural Ability: Meagan structured her environment to promote a healthy lifestyle. One of the tactics she used was to stop setting the timer on the coffee pot. By not setting the timer, Meagan found 15 minutes in the morning to do push ups and sit ups. Other tactics included putting on her exercise clothes first thing in the morning or when she got home from work. This behavior alone ensured that Meagan would exercise 80 percent of the time. She also added structure to her exercise regiment by organizing a tennis round robin on Saturday mornings.

Results: Meagan's weight loss influence effort has been a tremendous success. To date, she has lost 45 pounds and is leading a happier, healthier life for herself and her family.