



the
question
that changed
my life...

A query from her boss caused **Renee Black** to re-evaluate her life, follow her passion and lose 25kg.

Renee Black was chatting to her boss when she was asked a question that threw her. “She asked what I did for fun and I rattled off everything I did. She said, ‘What do you do for you? What makes your heart sing?’”

Renee thought about it and realised the answer was Latin dancing, which she had not done for 10 years because of injuries, her weight and life getting in the way. That weekend she resolved to make a change. “I looked up salsa classes and found two in my area. I started the next day.” She also saw an ad for Weight Watchers on TV and signed up then and there.

MAKING A CHANGE

“The weight had been slowly creeping up for about seven years,” says Renee. “I had a knee operation a year and a half ago so that had also made me more sedentary. In the last few weeks before I joined WW I had found it difficult to roll over in bed, I was getting pins and needles in my arms and was having trouble sleeping. I knew I had to do something.”

After her first meeting, Renee thought WW wasn’t for her. “I thought it was too touchy-feely. But luckily I’d signed up for three months. I told myself I’d give it a good

go and after a while I realised a lot of my initial misgivings were to do with fear of being judged by everyone.”

Renee now loves her meetings and says they’re one of the main factors behind her weight-loss success. “Having to be accountable to someone every week is really important. It’s also great having people to share my successes with –



when I lost 20kg I broke down in tears. Everyone’s really supportive.”

Renee says WW has worked for her because of the flexibility. “There are no restrictions. I can have a chocolate brownie and enjoy it. And I’ve learned about portion sizes.”

Renee has lost 25kg in just seven months. “I couldn’t believe how quickly it happened,” she says. “But once the light went on in my head, everything fell into place easily. I found my passion and my drive.”

DANCING QUEEN

Re-igniting her passion for dancing wasn’t always easy; Renee’s first salsa classes were tough. “I was sweating like a pig but I stuck at it,” she says. An ankle injury 10 years ago had stopped her dancing in heels. She started belly dancing three years ago but then tore the meniscus in her knee and had to have surgery. Now, thanks to losing all the weight, she has no problems with her ankle. “And when my knee gets tender, I’ve learned to push through it. The old Renee would have just stopped.”

Renee says she loves the way dancing makes her feel. “You just let go; you’re in the moment. And I love the confidence it gives you.”

Renee’s new-found confidence has spread to other areas of her life, too. “I have a new lease on life now,” she says. “I’m always out and about.”

She has also discovered a love of hiking. “My husband and I do a 14km walk every weekend. We live near a national park and the first time

I climbed the stairs into it I had to stop twice. Now I can go up and down them twice before I’m out of breath. Last time I felt like I could fly up the stairs.”

They’re now planning a five-day trek in Noosa and she’s getting back into cycling. “We live out of town on an acreage and now we cycle into town every week to buy groceries.”

NEW MOVEMENT

Renee’s new lease on life has also inspired those around her. Her husband is also losing weight now that he’s eating better and exercising with her. Many of the people in her WW meetings are now part of her walking groups and one comes to her dance class too. She has also inspired seven other women in her office to sign up with WW and many of them have joined her walking groups and dance classes. “It’s turned into a bit of a movement,” she says.

“One girl said she was so thankful to me. I said, ‘No, it’s your journey.’ She said, ‘But you inspired me.’ It’s a really good feeling.”

“I’m walking taller now; I’m not hunched over anymore. It gives me a spring in my step.” It’s not just her posture that’s changed. Renee says she now has an hourglass figure and can wear dresses that accentuate it instead of the shapeless, baggy clothes she used to wear. And best of all, this summer she has gone swimming at the beach in just her swimmers for the first time since she was a teenager. “It felt so good.” ■

Words Gina Flaxman Photography Joshua Morris Hair and makeup Jasmine Abdallaoui Styling Jess Pecoraro



RENEE’S TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- 1 TRACK EVERYTHING**
 “Be completely honest about what you’re putting into your mouth. Then when you look back, you can see what worked and what didn’t.”
- 2 BE INSPIRED BY OTHERS**
 “When I want to raid the fridge or I feel like giving up I jump on WW Connect. Other people’s stories always inspire me. I think, ‘If they can do it, I can.’”
- 3 TREAT YOURSELF**
 To keep herself motivated, Renee rewarded herself for every 5kg she lost. “When I lost my first 5kg I bought new dance shoes, when I lost 10kg I got my hair coloured. At the 15kg mark I went shopping for new dresses and when I lost 20kg I had my first-ever manicure and pedicure. It felt great!”

RENEE BLACK

AGE 33
HEIGHT 162cm
START WEIGHT 89.9kg
WEIGHT NOW 64.9kg
WEIGHT LOST 25kg
TIME TAKEN 7 months
HOW Group Coaching with Rebecca Burnicle in Coolumb, Qld
RENEE’S TOP TIP
 “Stick with it. When all the voices in your head say, ‘Give up’, don’t give in. You won’t regret it.”

