

I have always been an active, athletic person. I grew up playing basketball, volleyball and running track. After I stopped playing college sports, I continued to go to the gym on my own, but I always focused on just cardio and counting calories, Weight Watchers style. Since I had youth on my side, this combination worked decently for me, although I always felt "fat" and greatly disliked my body, especially my arms. Despite that, I was always afraid to enter... Da Da Da Dum... THE WEIGHT ROOM!! And we all know why, right? For fear of looking like a man and getting those man-muscles.

I continued this trend, even when I trained and completed the Portland Marathon, 5 years ago. But when I crossed that Finish line, I felt weak and burned out. Not exactly a smart plan, I learned. And yet, again, I continued the calorie restricted diet and cardio only sessions... UGH!

2 years ago, I finally had my Oprah light bulb moment. I had completely thrown myself into "mommy" and "wife" mode, forgetting all about, and losing, "me". So guess what I decided to do??? Train for a 1/2 Ironman Triathlon. And this time, I wanted to train smart and cross that Finish Line strong, and wanting more. I knew that for me to complete 1.2 miles of swim, 56 miles of bike and 13.1 miles of running, I would HAVE to do something differently. And in order for me to do that, I knew I needed knowledge that I didn't have, but desperately wanted.

I started watching the personal trainers at the gym, and found that Janice had what I wanted; knowledge, personality and experience. But what I didn't know, was that she would also become such a dear friend along the way. And while she had knowledge of training, she also researched exercises and diet that would maximize my sport and conditioning. She customized my trainings to me! I lost fat I knew I had and gained muscle that I never knew I had, but always wanted. I took one minute off my mile run time. I could balance on a ball!!

A year later when I crossed that Finish Line, I felt strong. Ok, rather exhausted and my everything hurt, but I still felt strong, and definitely wanting more! And while I'm proud to say that I'm a 1/2 Ironman, I'm even prouder to say that i found "me" along the way. Today, I continue to train using the exercises and tools that Janice taught me. And we're working together in a new business venture, aimed at empowering women and helping them to realize their true beauty, no matter what package they come in.



--Sonja Purtteman