

# CRYING AT THE FITNESS STUDIO

by: Nadia Bender, PTS FIS



As a personal trainer, I am regularly accused of being a drill sergeant and hard hearted (some of my clients think I enjoy seeing them in pain). But I believe that I cry more than my clients do. I want to share an experience I had with one of my clients.

Joanna (not her real name) came to me with the desire to lose weight - a fairly common goal. But for this client, as with all clients, there is always more to it than just that. As we talked about what was bothering her and why she wanted to lose weight, I found out that she wanted to be able to bend over to tie her own running shoes. This was something she has not been able to do for herself for the last few years due to her size. She said that she doesn't even kneel down onto the floor because she can't get up by herself. Joanna stated that she has become a 'hermit,' stuck in the house with no desire to move around or do anything or see anyone because of how she feels.

Let me explain how she overcame one of her obstacles:

Joanna has been coming to our Fitness studio three times a week and meeting with a personal trainer (myself and Kathy), and each time she is challenged by everyday style movement. She practiced with us over and over again to gradually bend over to reach down, not to her toes but to a pile of mats (eight high) because she has never been able to actually get down to floor level and back up by herself. Her fear of not being able to get back up was impeding her progress.

This is what happened to her at one of our sessions:

She was stuck on all fours on a pile of mats five high, saying to me, "I can't do it!" Her weight made it very difficult to be able to bend one knee and she struggled with trying to drag her foot under her knee in order to lean on her knee to get up. Panic struck her voice as she felt stuck in this uncomfortable posture. Now getting anxious, her heart rate started rising as she worked herself up into a panic. I told her, "You can do it, I

know you can, but YOU need to believe that you can do it! I can wait all day for you! Don't give up!!" In my head I was thinking you must do it because I can't lift you. I calmly told her, "Take a deep breath and put your weight into your legs, not your arms." I reminded her that she had practiced this many times during our sessions: "Remember, you did the sit and stand squats so I know you have the muscle in your legs to make it work. You have to visualize yourself getting up - the more you think you can do it the more you will do it. So let's do it together. Now push like you mean it and make your body do the work!" She said "OK" and tried pushing hard to get up but fell back down onto her knees and hands. Then she tried it again, but this time she said, "You are right, I am going to do this!" and THAT made the difference. She believed in herself and her abilities. I cried with excitement when she got down to the mat by herself on both knees and then lifted herself back up using one knee without my assistance.

Then she cried with relief. This may seem like a small milestone to you but not to us. She tells me how she is now enjoying her life again, how she is getting out of the house, taking swimming lessons, driving lessons and woodworking classes and loves her new lifestyle. We haven't yet achieved her goal of tying her own shoes but we are oh so close. What touches my heart the most is the successes she is achieving every time she comes to the studio for her personal training sessions.

My approach is not just about physical activity with my clients - we have specific goals and we reach challenging milestones. I cry with joy when I see my clients progress from one milestone to the next. It seems that I am moved just as much as my clients with their own breakthroughs. Now that is something to experience!

Do you want to reach your own milestone? Let us be your guide to help you too. Please call us.

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