

Transcript: Feeling More Confident

My name is Caroline. I live in Jersey City.

I've always been overweight. I've always struggled with my weight. I was a chubby child. So growing up was difficult at times because I also have a condition which is asthma.

I always felt like I was a little bit on the outside because I wasn't like everyone else. It was hard. It felt like I was an outsider. Being overweight was always difficult because I never felt like I was like everyone else. I always felt a little bit different and unique. So sometimes I felt like I was alone or I just didn't fit in.

When I got out of school, I went to work for a couple of county and federal agencies and it was a very sedentary job so I spent eight to nine hours a day at a desk. You know I went home and of course then I sat for many hours. My highest weight that I ever got to was around 298.

When I traveled to India, and I was so excited to be there and it was such a wonderful experience. I was travelling in a bus and I couldn't fit in the seat without being just scrunched in there. I was always uncomfortable and it was because of my size. At that moment I felt like I have to change this because I don't want to feel this way.

I think everyone knows about bariatric surgery but I started looking at it very seriously. I researched different types of surgery, you know, which ones are available. I made an appointment with my primary care physician.

He just flat turned me down. I called my insurance company. I said, "I want another primary care physician." I went to visit this doctor and he was very supportive. He recommended that I have the sleeve gastrectomy.

They entered me into a pre-surgery preparation program. You know just different things you may not consider about how your eating will be different once you have the surgery. It was a little bit scary, you know, the idea of it, but I'm happy that I made this decision.

Since surgery, the biggest change in my life has been my confidence. In addition to that, I have a lot more energy. I feel good every day just eating right and exercising and focusing on my health.

I was happier because I was taking care of myself and I was eating right and I was doing the right things. And I was living my life in the way I wanted to live it, which was to be healthy, to be active and to not be a slave to food.

I surprise myself sometimes because I'm not able to eat the portions of food that I was able to eat prior to the surgery and it's actually a good thing. I find that I enjoy what I do eat more, because I know that I'm not going to be able to eat as much of it.

You know food is not everything, life is more important than food. The life that I have now, and the freedom that I have now, and the confidence that I have now. You can't put a price tag on that.

If I hit 160, I have a pair of pants that fit me when I was that size that I've just been holding on to because I can't wait to try them on and have them fit. And when I hit that goal weight, I'm going to put those jeans on and I'm going to jump in the air.