

By Darren Hallesy

Rewarding yourself with a chocolate while trying to lose weight may seem like a crazy idea, but for weight loss queen Sally Symonds, it was part of her plan to motivate an incredible drop in kilos.

# Brisbane's Biggest Loser

Sally weighed over 106kg, and decided enough was enough. On her own, without any fad diets, she lost a staggering 53.5kg, a body percentage loss of 50.23%. To put that in perspective against all of the previous contestants on TV's 'The Biggest Loser', only one person has recorded a higher percentage loss than Sally, and that was the winner from 2009 Bob Herdsman.

"I am the same person I was when I was fat, only I see it as a new improved version," Sally said.

"I was a dedicated teacher, and weighing over 100 kg, I got turned down for a promotion at work. I was devastated. I told myself 'its only a job', but then I thought, no...hang on a minute...this job is my life. I realised that all I did was work, and eating on the run, plus eating to deal with stress was the cause of my weight. I'd eat two blocks of chocolate at night which was my way of dealing with pressure.

"I went to boarding school when I was eight years old, and because food was controlled at school I would always put on weight during the holidays, and I think that's what really started the cycle, and over the years I gradually got bigger and bigger.

"All this made me one day come to the realisation that I had to change my life. It was 29 years old and size 24, it had to stop. I went through my house and put all the junk food in a box and gave it away. I began by going for a walk, and ten minutes was all I could do at the start, but it was a start."

What has made Sally's weight loss even more amazing is the fact that she has managed to keep off the weight. Sally has chronicled her experiences in a book titled '50 Steps To Lose 50kg and Keep It Off!' which has resulted in a whole new life for the former teacher.

"There are huge numbers of people out there who lose weight and then quickly put it back on and its because

they don't stick to something, they don't make the commitment.

"Walking every day is something that you can start with and its easy to stick to. Ninety to ninety five per cent of people don't keep the kilos off. I'm proud that I wasn't going to meetings, counting calories, living on shakes.... it's just not a natural way to lose weight, and the answer is so simple. Just exercise consistently and cut out the junk, its not rocket science!

"I did try to lose fat fast, including lots of different diets, and you do lose weight, but it came back every single time. That's the hardest part....keeping it off, and doing that is just a mindset. I don't struggle to keep it off.

"I recently met a woman at a book signing who was so petite and told me that she lost twenty five kilos, but found that every day for her was a struggle. So much of it is in the mind. Now, I don't want to eat junk food, I have got it into my brain that I don't need it and I don't want it.

"I reward myself with food all the time. People say don't do that, but if you do reward yourself that's how you can live life. Food and celebrations go together, so why can't you have a night out with friends and indulge a bit, you have to live after all?"

Sally lost the first seventeen kilos by cutting out junk and walking every day, then joined a gym to get her body into shape.

"I didn't like the idea of having loose skin surgically altered, and I was determined to burn it off. Weight training helped me do that, and I got a personal trainer who spurred me on. I just went to the gym twice a week, that's all it took!"

So why does Sally think that losing weight is so hard for many people?

"You're constantly told that losing weight is difficult, its hard and that you can't do it on your own. But who are

you hearing that from? Nine times out of ten it's on TV commercials for weight loss products! You can do it on your own, I've proven it and you just need to be realistic.

"Movie stars look great because they have someone who shops for them and cooks up the meal. They get paid to look good, but in the real world, our world, it's a bit different.

"Everyone knows its as easy as energy in versus energy out. I can ask anyone, anytime, to tell me ten things that they can do right now to lose weight, and they'll tell you.

"You have to find ways to make it easy for you to do it. Its all about transferring your strategy for success...work out what you are good at and use that as a way you can lose weight."

Sally is now a full time career mentor and weight loss advisor through her website at [www.sallysymonds.com.au](http://www.sallysymonds.com.au).

"Encouragement is a great thing and I have everyday normal people who have tried many things that haven't worked. Support and motivation work wonders.

"Remember that weight loss is a multi billion dollar industry, and I think that you need to look at it on a holistic level. People in the 1950's never ate out, but today food is everywhere. People are bigger now than ever. Working hard, and doing long hours is where it gets easy to put on weight. But there are also a lot of choices with take out food, not all of it is bad for you, just stop and think what the best options are.

"Believe me, there are NO negatives to losing weight. You are fitter, healthier, happier, more energetic and you make a better employee...healthy people work faster, it's a fact, and I'm willing to try anything now because I feel simply fearless."

**Sally is appearing in store signing copies of her book at Mary Ryan Bookshop, Park Road, Milton at 6pm on Thursday 7th April.**



**Win!**  
A COPY OF SALLY'S BOOK  
"50 STEPS TO LOSE 50KG...  
AND KEEP IT OFF"

HOW TO ENTER: To be in the draw, email your details to [win@strikepublications.com.au](mailto:win@strikepublications.com.au) with the competition word 'Sally' in the subject line or post your details to PO Box 27 Amberley QLD 4306. Entries close April 18th.

50 STEPS  
TO LOSE  
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*"The inspirational story of how one woman healed her weight... and doubled her life."*