



## Tough, But Worth It:

### Veteran Ronald Parker Teams with TLC Coach to Lose Weight and Get Healthier

After struggling with his weight for a long time, Veteran Ronald Parker says that he found the motivation to change when he looked at himself one day and had a big realization. “I knew that I looked ridiculous,” he says. “I realized that if I didn’t do something, the excess weight would just stay there.” And so would his constant pain, which Ronald hoped might improve with weight loss and lifestyle changes.

#### Coached

In December 2011, Ronald began the Telephone Lifestyle Coaching (TLC) Program after receiving information from his primary care provider at the Philadelphia (PA) VAMC. Almost immediately, he began to see the benefits that a health coach could offer. “I found everything that TLC offered to be valuable and helpful,” he says. “But I think that a big reason why it works is the coaching. You need something to motivate you, but you can’t do it without the full program to coach you along.” And knowing that “somebody does care and is trying to help” is what has helped him start changing his life for the better.

#### Never Say Never

Partnered with his personal TLC coach for 4 months, Ronald has made much progress in a relatively short time and only nine coaching calls. Completing the program has helped him lose about 40 pounds and successfully create a number of new health habits. “I’m on a regular basis with my veggies and fruit now,” Ronald explains, “and I’ve started eating the foods that I should—foods that are going to help me.” Because he writes down what he eats and checks his diet when he runs into challenges, he says that he now rarely makes a poor food choice. “I used to think that I could *never* change things, *never* lose weight, and *never* enjoy healthy food. But my mom always said ‘never say never,’ and I’ve really taken her advice to heart.”

Ron also never used to exercise, but now he’s doing a lot more walking. “Before the program, I could only stand for 3 to 4 minutes,” he reports. “Now I can walk for 10 to 15 minutes...that’s a huge improvement!”





## Happier

Because of these healthy changes, Ronald is happier now, too. “I feel a lot better—I have fewer ‘bad days’ and less pain than before!” And he says that his physician is also excited. According to him, she was always encouraging, but seemed disappointed sometimes because she thought he might never make the changes that she was talking about. “Now she’s smiling though,” Ronald reports, “and she seems happier now that she sees me making real progress.”

## Mindfulness

He says that when he made up his mind to lose weight, he was able to make the important behavioral changes that benefitted him most. “You can have all the programs you want, but you still need to do the work,” Ronald emphasizes. “I decided to make these changes for me, to satisfy myself, and that was really important.”

He also believes that a large part of his success comes from just being mindful. “You have to know your goals and what it takes to lose weight,” he says, “because you aren’t always going to have a program to guide you.” So Ronald stays focused on what he’s doing—and what he needs to do—and always keeps “moderation” in mind.

## Definitely Better

Ronald definitely recommends TLC to other Veterans because he thinks that the “fun and educational” program can benefit those who are ready to positively change their lives. He believes that “TLC’s coaches can help just about anyone who’s ready to lose weight and get healthier.” And he has some words of wisdom for Veterans who “want to stop looking bad and feel better.”

“It’s going to be tough—and there will be pain before the results—but it’ll be worth it. Like everything, there’s hard work involved. And you need to make big changes,” Ronald explains. “Determination and motivation are the keys, but so are the program and your coach—the work is going to be on you, but you need something and someone to help, too. I kept with TLC, and with the help of my health coach, was able to make changes for the better. You can, too!”

