



## Accountability, Confidence, Change

### TLC Coach Helps Veteran William Brown Achieve His Goals

One look at Veteran William Brown's numbers and it's easy to see the success that he's had with the Telephone Lifestyle Coaching (TLC) program. Over just 4 months, he's lost 16 pounds, reduced his body mass index (BMI) from 29.8 to 27.4, and lowered his blood glucose level (A1c) from 8.9 to 6.1.

But these numbers don't tell the whole story of what he's achieved.

Yes, William has *lost* weight and *decreased* his BMI and A1c. But as importantly, he's *gained* a sense of control over his health and *increased* his confidence in being able to change.

"I wanted to control my diabetes instead of it controlling me," William says. "And I wanted to better manage my weight – I was tired of putting on the pounds and I just wanted to feel better. The TLC program I completed through the VA Butler (PA) Healthcare facility has helped me to do all of these things."

### Years-Long Struggle

William's struggle with weight began when he was 10 years old and has continued for almost 4 decades. "I was constantly gaining and losing weight," he explains, "and extreme dieting and skipping meals were just part of the way I lived." More recently, managing his blood glucose level was also proving to be a challenge: William's A1c readings had crept up slowly over the past 5 years.

A visit to his doctor's office in early 2012 was the final straw. "I realized that I had gained 10 pounds in the year prior to my last visit," he recounts, "and my A1c was way too high." Motivated, he talked with his doctor about TLC and signed up for the program there in the doctor's office. In his first TLC call with his personal health coach in February 2012, he set an initial weight loss goal of 10 pounds and began working toward it.

### New Habits

Over a series of nine TLC calls between February and June 2012, William worked with his coach to create —and stick to— a new blueprint for healthier living. It started with simply trying to choose healthier foods and get more physical activity, and has now become a whole new lifestyle for him. "I'm a vegetarian and I follow a diabetic meal plan," William explains. "I walk daily and do strength training with resistance bands." These healthy new habits have not only helped him lose weight. They have helped him maintain the weight loss he achieved through TLC.





### **Accountable**

According to William, his personal health coach was the key factor in reaching his goal. “It’s nice having just one coach, and talking to someone who’s not judging you,” he explains. “I also liked being able to make plans with someone, and then go over them.” But it was more than one-on-one follow-up with a health professional that William credits in helping him achieve success. “Having a coach made me accountable to someone besides myself,” he says. “My TLC coach made me stay on track.”

### **Less Is More**

After meeting his weight loss goals with TLC, William says that the biggest difference in his life is that he just feels better. “I’m not sleeping as much, and I don’t feel as tired and worn out all the time like I used to,” he reports. He’s managing his diabetes better, so now he feels less frustration and anger with himself and his condition. “I know I need to work at my health every day,” William explains, “but my success with TLC is helping me better deal with that fact.” Life also is more fun for William now, and his new walking regimen provides him enjoyment, as well as new possibilities. “On a recent backpacking trip, I was able to walk 7 to 8 miles each day!” William says. “That’s something that would’ve been difficult or impossible for me to do before TLC.”

### **Exceeding Expectations**

William recommends TLC to everyone in large part because it exceeded his expectations. “Things went better than I thought they would. When I started, I assumed that I’d have to increase my medications and wouldn’t lose the weight,” he explains. “But neither of those things happened. In fact, things went much better than I expected.” TLC worked for him and he believes that it can help other Veterans “a lot.”

William currently weighs in at 180 pounds and happily reports that he’s successfully met not one, but a series of weight loss goals—his initial goal of 10 pounds, as well as additional targets of 2 pounds each. Post-program, he’s already lost an additional 2 pounds and has set a new goal of 5 more pounds! “I’m happy with where I’m at, but I know I can do more,” he says. “Long term, I’m aiming to stay between 170 and 180 pounds...and now I’m confident that I can do that!”

