

the backstory

As someone who loves food, I feel strongly that one of the healthiest things you can do in life is have your cake and eat it too. For many years, I struggled with my weight and body image. I'd lose five pounds just to gain back eight pounds. I yo-yo dieted myself to weigh more than 200 pounds.

Shortly after the birth of my second son in 2003, I made a conscious decision to make physical fitness a priority in my life. I also decided that my dieting days were over. Instead of depriving myself only to end up overeating—which then led to feelings of worthlessness, which then caused me to overeat—I chose to fuel my body with a variety of nutrient dense foods and told myself that no foods were forbidden. That decision, along with making fitness a priority, literally changed my life.

About a year and a half after I stopped dieting and started moving my body, I had lost over fifty pounds and ran the Ottawa marathon (26.2 miles/42.2 kilometres). To this day, running and fitness are still a huge part of my everyday life. Although I was praised for my fit form and race medal, it was my mental health and newfound self esteem that was my personal driving force. Living an active lifestyle while considering no foods off limits gave me the confidence to set and achieve goals and live a life that I never dreamed possible.

The title *Delicious & Doable* refers to my recipes—they are delicious and doable—but I also want the title to inspire you. You are worthy of enjoying every last bite of all the delicious foods you love and crave—whether it's my Charlicious Salad (page 77) or an extra serving of Double Decker Gingerbread Fudge (page 125)—anything in life is doable if you put your mind to it.

Cheers to the *Delicious & Doable* lifestyle!