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The Power of Conflict in Healthy Living

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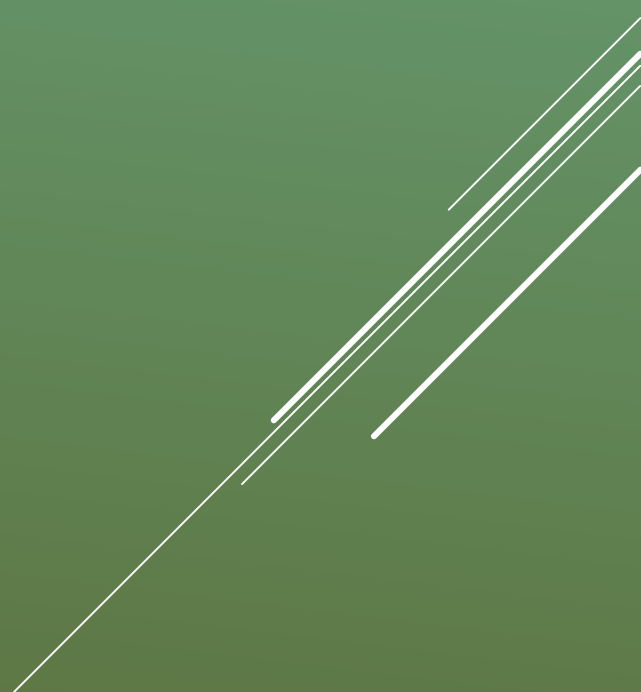
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This piece reflects the conflicts
encountered while embracing
a healthy lifestyle.

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT
CHASITY O'MALLEY



THE POWER OF CONFLICT IN HEALTHY LIVING

They say a picture is worth 1000 words and seeing how I've physically changed in the past several years is never more apparent than in photographs. In the picture below, the left image was taken in 2019 just before I made the decision to get healthier. The right image was from February 2022, when I was still mastering the power of conflict to be healthy. These photos represent 80 pounds of conflict resolution where I made good choices to live a healthier lifestyle.



What does conflict mean to me? For many, conflict stirs up negative thoughts of war or disagreements with others. For me, conflict represents two opposing ideas, which aren't always negative. I like to think I'm working to overcome the power of conflict when I think about the challenges I've faced to live a healthy lifestyle. The number of conflicts I face related to living a healthy lifestyle in just one morning can give some insights into how challenging it has been to choose the better side of the conflicting choices.

When the alarm goes off at 4:30 am, I am faced with the conflicts between staying in bed or getting up and getting a workout in before the workday begins. Then I'm faced with the conflict of eating my breakfast that I prepared on Sunday for the week or indulging in the cinnamon rolls my son requested for breakfast. Do I pack up the items I prepared to provide myself with healthy snacks and lunch for the day or do I decide to wing it and just get what I need at work knowing that too often it is not a healthy choice.

More often than not, I choose the healthier choices. By consistently choosing the "better" options over the past 2 years, I've successfully lost 85 pounds and it's staying off. However, I know that I have to consistently manage that power of conflict to choose the healthy side more than I choose the unhealthy option.

THE POWER OF CONFLICT IN HEALTHY LIVING

The power of conflict is strong, but I feel it can be used for good. Through personal conflict resolution, I managed to accomplish a huge goal of mine in running a full marathon. During those long runs of training and on race day, the conflicts would pop into my head. “You’re tired, you can’t do this, you can stop now, why are you doing this?”

Each and every time, I had to manage the conflict with positive self-talk. “Yeah, I’m tired, but I’m doing this.”


“I will do this.”

“I’ll stop when I cross the finish line.”

“I’m doing this for me to prove to myself that I can do this. I am stronger than I know and I can do this.”

These thoughts, plus a few “You got this O’Malley” were how I worked through the power of conflict to stop when it got hard or I was tired. I’m sure my neighbors thought I was a little bit strange when I vocalized these words not just in my head, but out loud at times. It takes a lot to get through 26.2 miles!

My quest to live a healthy life is not complete, and quite honestly, it will never be complete, as I strive to be better each day. The power of conflict drives me to make the right choices in each situation. These experiences with conflict have also helped me to be more empathetic with others who struggle with their personal conflicts. When faced with conflicts in my life, I try to take a positive approach and to make the best decisions I can. The practice with the conflict of to eat the cookie or the orange, and the choice to put the cookie down, helps me to shine in other daily conflict resolutions. Now, *put the cookies down! (for now).*

Three parallel white lines of varying lengths are positioned diagonally in the bottom right corner of the slide, pointing towards the top right.

Chasity O'Malley is an Associate Professor of Medical Education and Physiology at KPCOM. She is also a wife, a mom, and a runner. She shares her challenges with healthy living to help inspire others to keep trying to live their best lives.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR