

Struggle Becomes Accomplishment

JENNY CRAIG

By Suzanne Takowsky

Fifty years ago Jenny Craig was on a personal mission: To lose the excess 45 pounds she gained during a difficult pregnancy. Her mother had also been overweight after giving birth and, at the young age of 49, died of an obesity related stroke. Craig was determined that it not happen to her. "I knew if I wanted to live to see my children grow up, I would have to maintain a healthy weight," she says. Determination and perseverance guided her on a journey to lose weight and, in the process, she learned a philosophy of balancing lifestyle, and nutrition with physical activity. Her formula has helped millions of women and men throughout the world to lose weight. "Unhealthy crash diets and feelings of deprivation are obstacles to long-term change," states Craig. "Moderation is the key. One secret of successful dieting is realizing that thinking about not eating is as obsessive as thinking about eating. Life is to be enjoyed, not wasted counting fat grams and calories. Instead of centering your day around food, take walks, spend time with friends and family, develop other interests that promote a more active lifestyle. We help clients develop a healthy relationship with food and, create a more balanced approach to living."

The name Jenny Craig is synonymous with a weight-loss empire that has accumulated almost 1,000 weight-loss centers spanning seven countries. The business of Jenny Craig has yearly revenues in the multi-million range.

Co-Founder and Vice Chairman of the Board, Craig has one of the most recognized names and faces in North America. Since the Jenny Craig weight management program was created in 1983, Craig herself has stood at the front line, motivating and inspiring people from all walks of life, in countries around the world — to get healthy.

"For most people, weight gain reflects a lifestyle out of balance," Craig says. "The constant juggling of multiple roles and responsibilities leaves little time to eat healthy, exercise regularly and relax. We help people become successful self-managers of their weight and their lives. It's our goal."

Craig inspires us to do more than lose weight. The author of several best-selling books, she has appeared in numerous magazines, as well as on news and talk shows internationally. Through her own example, she has taught us that it is never too late to turn a dream into a reality.

Craig was 50-years-old when she decided, along with her husband Sid, to open the first Jenny Craig Center in Australia. "No matter what the odds are, if you believe in your heart that you can accomplish something, you can do it," she points out.

The Craigs, who have been married for more than 30 years, met in a gym in her hometown of New Orleans. Sid had come to open a branch of his

California-based fitness salon, Body Contour, Inc. Both was divorced. Over the years, his three children and her two daughters formed a family that has worked together to build a weight-loss empire.

Craig worked 15-hour days during the company's modest beginnings. Although she is still active in the day-to-day operations, she now takes time to enjoy other pleasures, like playing with her grandchildren.

A few years back, Craig went public in PEOPLE magazine to disclose a health crisis that left her struggling to regain the power of speech. During 1995, while dozing in her favorite chair, Craig was startled awake by a sound on the T.V., and she snapped her head back so fast that she injured muscles in her jaw. Within days, she could barely speak, and shortly afterwards, her speech became slurred. Unable to continue doing promotional public relations for her company, she had no choice but to retreated from public view.

Over the next three years, Craig sought help from several doctors, but no one had ever seen a patient with her symptoms. Then, a friend referred her to a surgeon in California who specialized in facial deformities. Although a highly technical surgery eventually did correct the trauma to Craig's facial muscles, regaining her speech was another matter altogether, and a very long way off. It took several months of seven day a week 90-minute speech therapy sessions for her to recover and finally be able to speak clearly again.

"It's funny the things we take for granted," she states. "If there's one thing I've learned, it's that you never know what is going to happen in life. This experience has taught me not to postpone pleasure. Life should be enjoyed to the fullest."

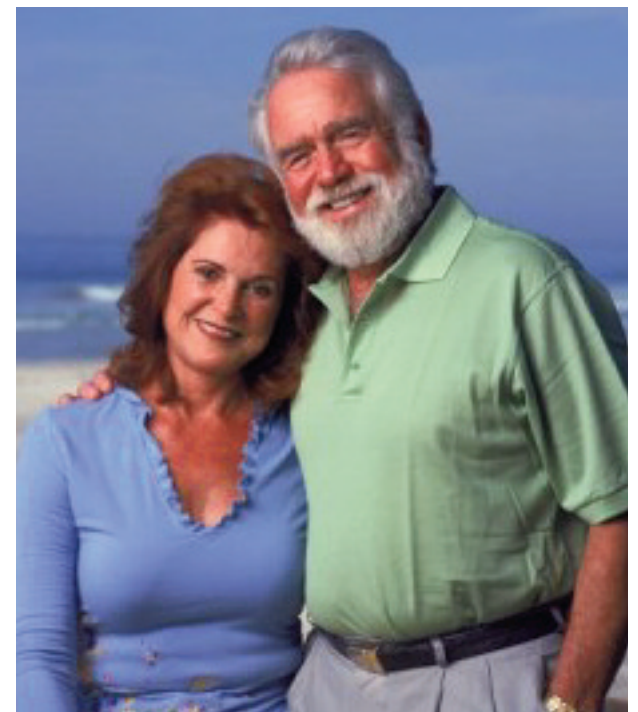
ST: Everyone at one time or another dreams of starting their own business. What got you started on the path to turning your dream into a reality?

JC: I started in this industry in 1959 when I decided to lose weight. The manager of my gym asked me to go to work for him. I accepted the job and saw that there were so many things needed to enhance the programs. They weren't doing it, and so I decided to open a gym.

Along with a partner, we opened our own gym and my career evolved from that. Soon after, I began doing research on how daily diet affects health. This has remained the focus of my business.

ST: What elements should one keep in mind when considering starting a business?

JC: Number one: Is there a market for the business, the service or product that you are offering? The second: What is the potential for success and



how much do you know about it?

You have to grow in the business and have a sensitivity and understanding of what makes the business work. I evolved with my business and grew into the position I now have. Ask yourself, "What am I risking in order to do it? Your life savings — your relationship with your family? Is the risk worth the reward?"

ST: There are people with great ideas who are afraid to "go for it." What are your thoughts on fear and change?

JC: Under capitalization is the number one reason for fear when contemplating starting a business. People are afraid they won't have enough money to carry them through if things don't work out according to plan. When going into business, you have to have enough money to handle hard times so they don't create stress in your life.

ST: Starting a business takes profound commitment. What should people be prepared for?

JC: Business has to be a priority. Some people go into business for the wrong reasons, and that could be why they don't succeed. They are tired of being an employee...they want to be "the boss." And, they think it is going to allow them freedom and leisure time, and that is certainly not the case. If you are dedicated to making your business a success, then you will be working harder than you have ever worked. If you aren't willing to do that, save your money.

It's hard for some women to make the commitment that work is going to have to be a priority, especially when there is a family involved. Most women seem to feel some kind of guilt. When they are at work they feel they should be at home, and when they are home, they feel that they should be at work.

That's why it's important to decide whether the rewards are worth the risks before you invest your time and money. Be certain of your goals and what it will take to make your business succeed. ●