



Photo by Luke Edmondson

# A New Woman

## Fortitude and healthy choices make **Michelle Aguilar** *The Biggest Loser*.

by Beth Douglass Silcox

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Michelle Aguilar is a new woman, thanks to her own fortitude and reality TV. While the whole world watched her physical transformation into the sixth-season winner of NBC's reality weight-loss show *The Biggest Loser: Families*, Michelle's perspective on life, health, fitness and emotional well-being was changing as well.

Originally partnered with her father for the show's fifth season, the pair narrowly missed the cut, going home just before taping began. "That was when my light switch turned on," Michelle says. "I knew if I was willing to go on a reality show to lose weight, something needed to change."

Looking inward, Michelle explored the whys of her weight gain and began a slow reconciliation process with her mother. Their relationship had been strained since her parents divorced. Little by little, the two began mending their relationship.

When *The Biggest Loser* came calling for the show's sixth season, Michelle's dad suggested she pair with her mom, who jumped at the opportunity to not only get healthy and lose weight, but also to reconnect with her daughter.

That's when the real work began.

"Until the show, I didn't have a good grasp on what healthy living was," Michelle says. "As far as the physical part goes, I understand now that if I have a cupcake, it means more time in the gym; it doesn't simply mean that I had a cupcake and it's Tuesday!"

To get fit, her habits and her thinking had to change. "I had to learn to eat right, live better and work on the emotional reasons why I'd put on the weight," Michelle says. "I learned

that there were lots of reasons I turned to food and that I needed to resolve them, instead of turning to food for comfort."

As the show progressed, so, too, did Michelle's willingness to express her emotions.

"Sometimes people are going to understand, and sometimes they aren't. It's all trial and error, but that's OK. The show was a dynamic way to change my life; I saw it as an opportunity to change. It wasn't always easy, but it was necessary," Michelle says. "Thanks to the show, I've got a good base of tools for everyday life." Sometimes this means being a "high-maintenance" customer at restaurants, where she asks for sauces on the side and substitutions for fries, but healthier choices make for a healthier life.

Michelle is an avid label reader and ditched sugary energy drinks for efusjon. "I view efusjon as a healthier option, and it tastes good. It has replaced some other drinks that had more sugar and weren't as good for me," she says.

The product impressed Michelle and her new husband, Micah, so much that they started their own efusjon business this spring. "We've jumped into it with both feet. We don't want to sit on the sidelines. We want to make the most of it from the beginning, so it'll be an added benefit to our lives for a long time."

Michelle plans to apply the lessons she learned on *The Biggest Loser* to their new entrepreneurial venture with efusjon. "I need to take ownership of every day of my life," she says. "I need to be the one to make the strides to make that happen." SFH