

summer 08/09

christian women's magazine

# enhance



julie hadden  
the golden girl of  
america's *biggest loser*

fa la la la la...  
christmas goodies  
ordinary women.  
extraordinary  
circumstances.

plus...  
joyce meyer  
jane evans  
lisa bevere

**DARLENE  
ZSCHECH**  
what's she up to  
these days?

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# GOD'S BIGGEST LOSER.

julie hadden:  
america's *biggest loser* golden girl

words\_julie hadden

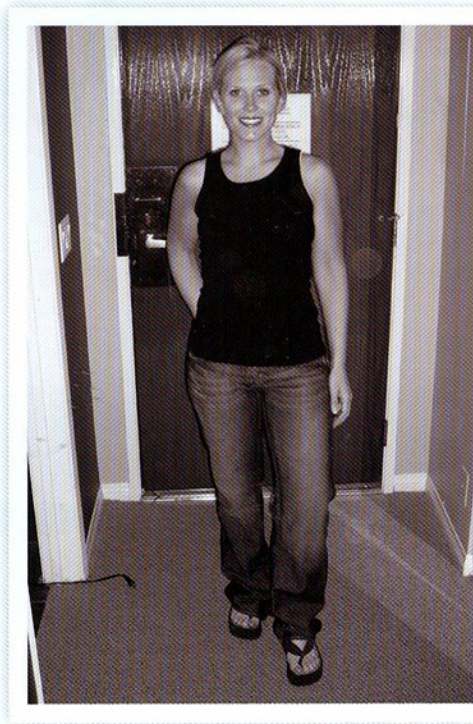




before.



after.



**There is no doubt in my mind that God customises His help for us in our time of need.** But I also believe that He customises our trials too. He knows what we are now. And He knows what we can become and how to get us there.

All my life I struggled with my weight. Even as a child of God, I fought feelings of inadequacy and failure because of the way the world saw me. I even wondered if God was mad at me because I was fat. My weight and my self perception limited me as a woman and as a Christian.

Despite all this, I was blessed to marry a wonderful man. And after two years of marriage we welcomed a precious baby into our family. But I found that with the best intentions of caring for my family and the many demands made of my time and energy, I was the last thing on my own list of priorities. Due to my own self neglect, my weight, which had always been a battle, ballooned completely out of control. It was

no longer a vanity issue. I was losing my quality of life. My relationships were being affected... even my relationship with God. So I cried out to Him for help. I needed a divine intervention.

His answer came in a most unusual way – through reality television.

A friend heard a radio spot announcing that casting producers from “The Biggest Loser” would be in my city and would interview the first 500 people who showed up. The show offers its participants a whole new life through dramatic weight loss, fitness instruction and nutrition education. I had watched the show for three years and marvelled at the transformed lives.

I asked every other fat person I knew to go with me to that audition. Nobody would. That’s when I knew how important making a change was to me. I never went anywhere alone and I was willing to face that fear.



At the audition I felt like there was nothing special about me that would cause me to stand out in the crowd. There were so many others with more glamorous or interesting stories. I was just a morbidly obese wife and mother. But God often chooses the least likely. I think that's why He chose me.

Over 250,000 people applied to be a part of "The Biggest Loser" and the casting process took about a year. The day I found out I had made the show was the day I refer to as "the day that changed every other day for the rest of my life."

Even though it was "reality television", the plot was full of twists and turns. On the very first episode after an intense physical competition, six people were told they would be eliminated and sent home immediately. I was one of them.

Despite the belief that God was in control, I was devastated. My worst fear was coming true. I would have my weight broadcast before millions of people on national television and then sent packing with no opportunity to make a change in my life. All six of us who were not chosen cried together and prepared to go back and face the lives we had left just a few days before; unchanged.

But God had other plans. In a change to the normal format where two teams compete against each other; a third team was created. The "Black Team" was formed and fitness trainer and health and nutrition guru, Jillian Michaels was brought in as the coach for the team of rejects. We were without hope and then things changed in an instant! It was a picture of God's grace and hope in our lives. We get consumed with circumstances, and He springs forth with hope for a new day.

## her life before.



△ Julie leading worship at her local church.



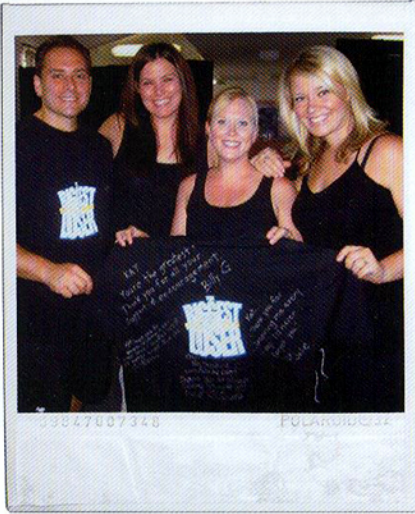
△ Julie at home on her couch during her pre-interview for America's Biggest Loser.



△ Julie before losing almost 45% of her body weight.



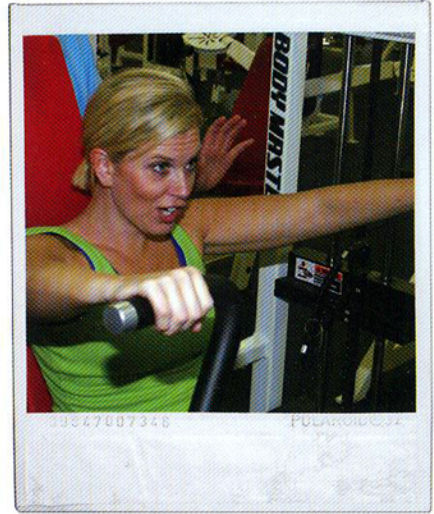
# her time on *america's biggest loser*.



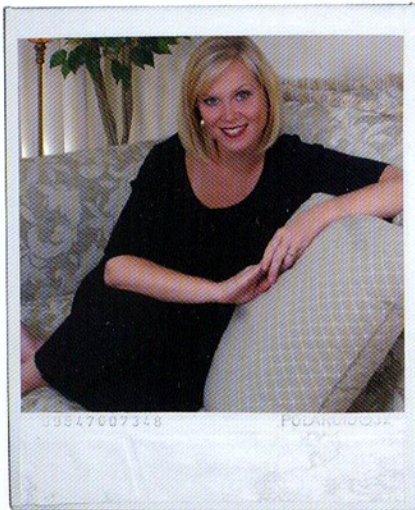
△ The final four competitors: Bill, Hollie, Julie and Isabeau



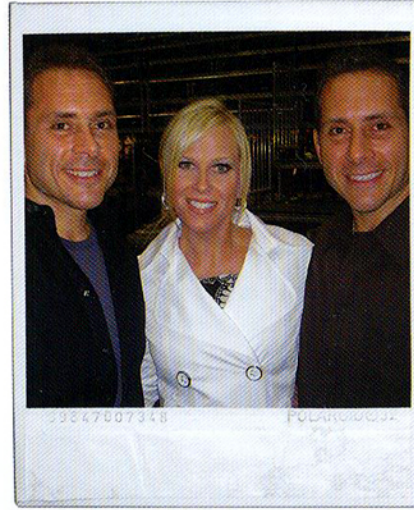
△ Julie with her trainer, Jillian Michaels.



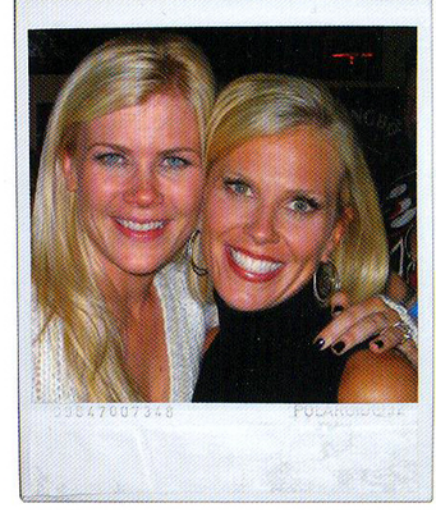
△ No pain. No gain.



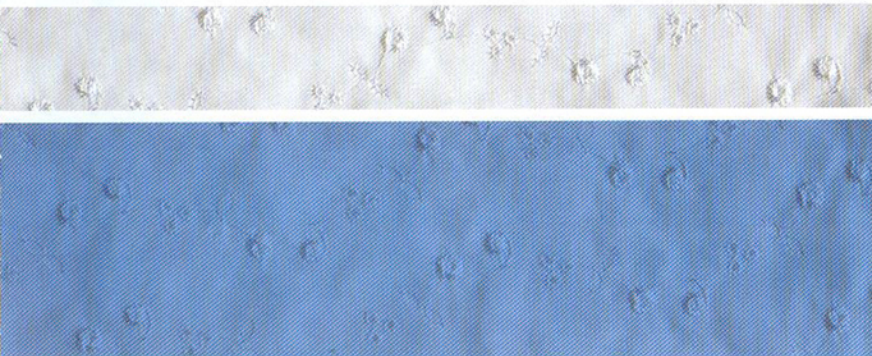
△ Same couch. New Julie. At home on her couch during her final interview on the show.



△ Julie and two fellow competitors, the Germanakos twins, Bill and Jim.



△ Julie and Alison from Australia's Biggest Loser

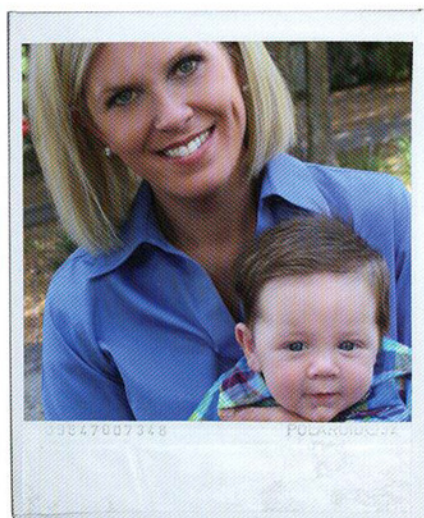


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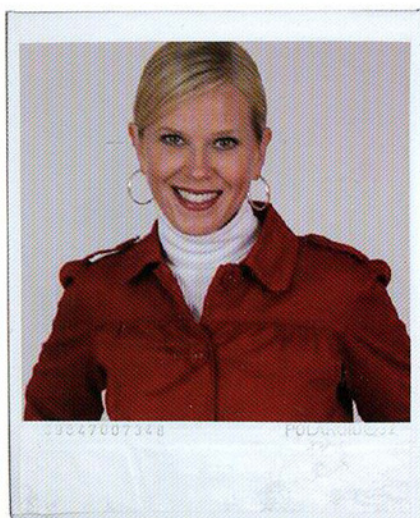
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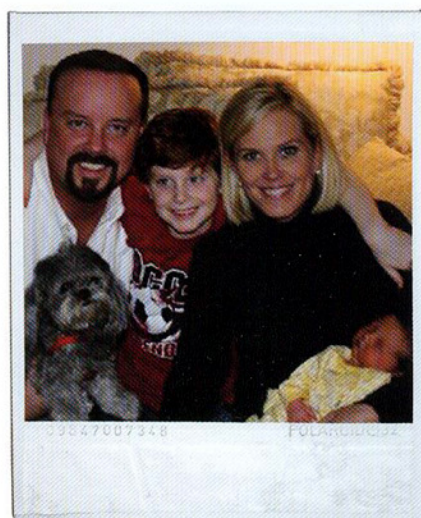
# her life after.



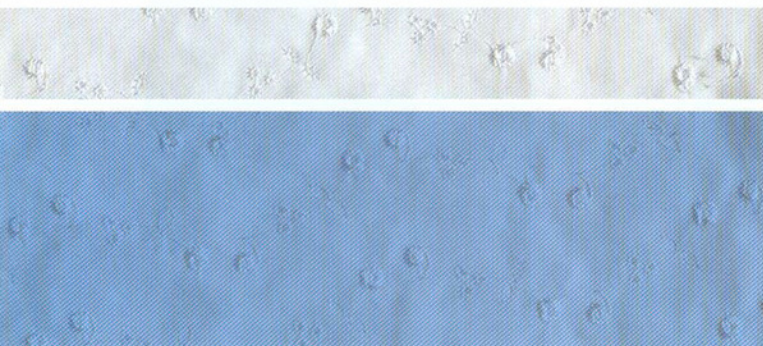
△ Julie with her precious new adopted son, Jaxson



△ Looking radiant in red!



△ Julie loving family life more than ever, with husband, Michael, eldest son, Noah, and baby Jaxson.



The entire season we were reminded that we were the ones nobody wanted. The rejects. The unchosen. But we didn't have time to dwell on that. We had work to do and much to prove. Jillian was a tough task master who accepted nothing less than our very best and would not take "no" for an answer. She was the one who pushed me to realise how strong I was and encouraged me to draw on my belief in God's power to give me strength.

Ironically, in "real life" I faced prejudice for being "too big." Whereas on "The Biggest Loser" I faced similar prejudice for being too small. At 218 pounds (just shy of 100 kilos) I was still the smallest contestant. And since the weight loss is measured by percentage rather than pounds, everyone counted me out. I doubted myself too. How could I compete with 300 and 400 pound men who were dropping 10 and 20 pounds a week while I was dropping 2 or 3?

I learned to live the scripture from Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." I didn't know if God intended for me to be The Biggest Loser, but He had ordained all my days... which included my time on this show. Regardless of the outcome, I knew I was in the centre of God's will for my life and that's the very safest place to be. It was a gruelling, physically harrowing experience that tested every part of my body, mind and soul. But it was worth every drop of sweat to experience the total transformation I received through the process.

On the night of the nationally televised live finale, on December 18, 2007, I stepped on the scale having lost 97 pounds (43 kilos) and nearly 45% of my body weight in an incredibly fast eight months. Although I wasn't expected to be able to lose as much as the bigger contestants – I actually lost a greater percentage than most of them. I was the "biggest female loser" of Season 4 and came in as First Runner Up to the overall title.

“  
*I learned to live the  
 scripture... "I can do  
 all things through  
 Christ who gives me  
 strength."*  
 ”





About a year ago I was mortified to be recognised by someone in public. I wanted to crawl in a hole and hide. But the Lord has done a transforming work in my life and shown me – and hopefully others as well – that HE can work all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

It was not God's will for my life to become "The Biggest Loser" – but through this experience I have gained so much – that I can actually consider myself "The Biggest Winner" – not because of anything I did – but because of what God did in me and through me.

To learn more about Julie, visit her web site at [www.juliehadden.com](http://www.juliehadden.com)



“

*I knew I was in the centre of God's will for my life and that's the very safest place to be.*

”

## ON A LIGHTER NOTE WITH JULIE

**Favourite book?** The Bible. And almost anything written by suspense / mystery novelist Patricia Cornwell.

**Favourite movie?** Steel Magnolias

**Favourite chill out activity?** My family (husband, two kids, me and the dog) climbing in bed together on Saturday mornings with nothing to do but just spend time together.

**Favourite song?** *The Way You Look Tonight*

**Favourite quote?** *"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."*

**Favourite place?** Anywhere my family is.

**Favourite exercise?** Running

**Favourite childhood memory?** Racing go-carts with my sister and cousins out on our grandparents property in the country.



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