



## How Farrell's Has Changed My Life

When I sat down to write this essay, I thought it was going to be easy to describe all the changes I have seen over the past year since joining the Farrell's program. There are so many that I think I could write a book about them. The physical changes are innumerable; I have a lower body weight, I have lower blood pressure, I no longer need my CPAP machine, my resting heart rate is under control, I can fit in my office chair, etc. The non-physical changes are just as incredible and include being a better husband, father, friend, and an all-around better person. But upon reflecting a bit deeper, I started thinking about what truly sets this program apart from any other diet and exercise program and I realized that I am in a unique position to offer insight as to what *truly* makes Farrell's better than the rest and how it has transformed my life from day one.

I have been here before. Throughout my life I have consistently struggled with weight and self-image and was often bullied by my peers as a child. This led me to develop horrible eating habits and to rely on food for emotional comfort. By using food for comfort, I wasn't eating because my body needed food, I was eating because I had developed an addiction. At the time, it was the only thing in my life that I could depend on to make me feel better. In turn, it led to an enormous amount of weight gain which actually ended up making me feel much worse about myself. This vicious cycle eventually led to me reaching an all-time high of nearly 400 pounds by the time I was 20 years old. At the same time, I found myself broken up with the only girlfriend I had ever had, living in a broken home with alcoholic and drug addicted parents, and on the verge of self-destruction with my eating habits. I had hit rock bottom and I set out to change my life. I researched diet and exercise programs and set out in the best way I knew how. Over the next year of my life I cut my daily caloric intake to 1400 and performed a minimum of one hour of cardio exercise per day. The pounds *flew* off. At one point I was losing 7 pounds a week! I was obsessed. When it was all said and done, I reached an all-time low weight of 188 pounds. I had done it. I had gotten rid of the thing that had haunted me for most of my life; or so I thought.

Fast forward a few years and I had managed to keep most of the weight off by continuing to exercise daily and restrict calories. During this time-period, I met my wife and decided to settle down. Life was going well for the most part until we began to hit the obstacles that all married couples seem to hit. As soon as the stress set in, I began resorting to my old habits. Over the next ten years I would slowly slip back into the same vicious cycle that led me to my rock-bottom breaking point so many years ago. In September of 2015 it became official; I had gained every single pound of weight back that I had worked so hard to lose before. I constantly asked myself, "How could this happen?" with no clear answer. It is only now, as I sit here and reflect on the journey that I have taken over the past year that I can honestly answer that question. I had not really learned a damn thing the first time.

Searching for a way to gain control of my life, I confided in a coworker who told me of this Farrell's program just across the river from our office. I was skeptical, but he assured me that this place had a reputation of delivering results. He even agreed to do my first 10 weeks with me. We signed up and I

took my first step toward total transformation on October 3, 2015. It only took a few classes for me to realize that this program was extremely different from anything I had ever seen or heard about. I was taught by knowledgeable coaches and instructors about nutrition, strength training, and kickboxing. I saw amazing results my first 10 weeks in both my physical and mental journey. I was hooked. I signed up for my FIT membership and as I was doing so, our head coach mentioned the Farrell's National Challenge. I took the plunge and signed up online and I am so very glad I did.



This journey has really shown me what makes Farrell's so special. You see, this gym transforms you from the inside out. The coaches and instructors are all coming from the same place as you. They are real, relatable people with struggles and triumphs of their own. Everyone cares about your journey and takes the time to lift you up. The people create the atmosphere. The atmosphere breeds success. This gym has changed me from the inside. I love helping others achieve their goals and now look forward to living life every day. That's what Level 10 is all about. It is not simply a Level 10 effort on the mat at the gym or in following the nutrition program. It is being able to live

your life at Level 10 everywhere you go.

The physical changes are easy to see, but that is not what truly changed my life. Farrell's gave me the tools to do something I have never done before. I have found myself and for that, my wife, my son, my friends, and I are truly grateful.

*Michael Cochran, Farrell's eXtreme Bodyshaping 2016 National Challenge Male Winner*