

Coaching “Magic” — Navigating Postpartum Weight Loss Expectations

You have a client who wasn't able to work out as much as she wanted during pregnancy. She gained 40 pounds and is still carrying 25 of those pounds six months after delivery. She's struggling with her body looking different than it used to and is being very hard on herself because her sister seemed to lose her pregnancy weight within eight weeks.

The conversation may look something like this:

Client: Ugh. I'm so frustrated. I expected that I would've lost the majority of this baby weight by now, and I'm still 25 lbs heavier than before pregnancy.

Coach: I know it can be frustrating when we have expectations that we haven't met, but your body is still adapting to the major changes it has just undergone.

Client: My sister was able to lose all of her baby weight in eight weeks, and she even gained more than me! I just wish I had been more active and kept up my workouts during pregnancy. Maybe I wouldn't have so much to lose.

Coach: Every person is different, even siblings can dramatically different experiences. When we compare ourselves to others, we don't appreciate what is ours to own during our experience. What are some positives from your pregnancy?

Client: My sweet baby girl.

Coach: For sure! You're also adapting to motherhood and finding a new rhythm for yourself and your family.

Client: Yes, I just wish my my body wasn't so different from what it used to be. I hate when I catch my reflection in the mirror. Thank goodness everyone is always focused on the baby because I don't want them to notice me!

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Coach: I understand it is hard to see your body look different than what you desire. But the good news is you are actively taking steps to move toward the body you desire for yourself. Why don't we think of ways to focus on what you are actively doing rather than beating yourself up over where you are now, or how you handled pregnancy?

Client: Oh, I know I should do that. That would be good.

Coach: OK, so one way to do that is to create a positive affirmation around your choices as a way to remind yourself of the good. An example could be, “I am actively taking care of my body, myself and my family.” Or, “I am confident and happy in my choices to take care of my baby and myself.” The affirmation is yours to decide, based on how you want to feel and what you want to prioritize.

Client: Fun. Hmmm, I like, “I am confident and capable of becoming strong and fit.” What do I do? Say this daily?

Coach: You could say it or write it down each morning, or both. It's a powerful way to remind yourself of where you are moving toward rather than judging or shaming yourself over where you are.

Client: I like it. I'm going to give it a try.