

my paper 新報

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## PERSONALLY SPEAKING

WITH ABIDAH 'DEE DEE' MAHMOOD

## FROM (VERY) FAT TO AB FAB

After shedding 30kg she is an inspiration to others fighting obesity

## DAWN TAY

**S**HE used to weigh 80kg. And in her own words, she was "morbidly obese" for her 1.55m frame. Sales assistants would pass snide remarks whenever she shopped for clothes.

But fitness trainer and nutritionist Abidah Mahmood – better known as Dee Dee – now has the last laugh. Not only has she shed 30kg over the past 10 years, but she has also become a role model for other women.

To top it off, the fitness consultant released her first fitness and music video, together with the Singapore Heart Foundation, earlier this month. She is also writing a book about her weight-loss journey and it's due out at the end of the year.

Said Dee Dee on her mini-celebrity status: "The best bit is when women thank me. They say my story and fitness classes have given them a second chance at health and life."

Dee Dee was adopted at birth by her aunt but she told *my paper* that obesity runs in her biological family.

Many of her siblings are overweight. Her father died last year from a heart attack and her mother is now wheelchair-bound after a stroke.

Her weight problems started in 1992 – in two years, she piled on 30kg.

In desperation, she popped pills that gave her insomnia and heart palpitations, tried different diets and visited slimming centres. She also battled bulimia and was hospitalised for gastric problems after trying an all-orange-juice diet.

But the toughest part was dealing with her low self-esteem – she had contemplated suicide at times.

Said Dee Dee: "I'd look in the mirror and feel lousy. I didn't want to meet friends or go shopping."

"People would treat me differently because I was fat. They wouldn't bother to get to know me."

Dee Dee recalled a particularly hurtful comment someone made about her figure, in the gym lift. That, she said, spurred her into action in 1997.

She took up a degree in sports science in Australia and began applying the proper exercise and nutrition techniques she learnt.

Since then, she has won various accolades for her health work in the community – this year, she was selected as the Singapore Heart Foundation's Go Red for Women Ambassador.

As for love, the "30-something" would only say that she is "attached".

Aside from being a fitness instructor, Dee Dee also teaches dance.

Her clients range from ministers' wives to housewives and the elderly with medical conditions. But she has a soft spot for obese clients.

Said Dee Dee: "I empathise with them because of my past."

On her struggles with low self-esteem, which still plague her today, she said: "I've learnt to think positive. I want to give people like me hope."

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## HELPDESK 我的字典

➤ **Nutritionist:** 营养学家  
yíng yǎng xué jiā

➤ **Bulimia:** 易饿病  
yì è bìng



**JUST FABULOUS:** Dee Dee, a trainer and nutritionist, now weighs a petite 47kg. (PHOTO: NEO XIAOBIN)

NEWS  
CAMN-Day  
clean-up

*MS DOREEN Goh chats with Madam Ho Yup Yong, 80, as her colleagues (from left) Tan Siew Foong and Stephanie Costonis clean the gate of her flat. The trio, staff of logistics firm DHL, took time off their National Day weekend to refurbish and clean Madam Ho's home.*

(PHOTO: NEO XIAOBIN)

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