

Dec. 30, 2021

Inspiration to Take this Road

Carina Picolo was my personal trainer / exercise therapist. Carina brings exercise to life from the floor up. “Marilyn, begin with the feet,” she says. When I’m in the gym, I can hear her voice in my head “Aw Marilyn come with me, let’s try this”.

I’ve had several personal trainers over the years that assisted me with reaching different goals, being strong enough to enjoy ocean kayaking for days, hike 130 km, losing 30 pounds, and becoming a powerlifter. The list is long.

Carina was able to resolve a long-standing injury that no one else had been able to rectify long-term. Some felt it happened during prep for a powerlifting competition and others thought it was derived from the fall in late 2019. She didn’t care about the cause of the injury; she was interested in what wasn’t working and how to support the body.



She was patient and kind as she pushed to adopt a form of exercise that I was unfamiliar with mobility. I was a strength athlete, not one focused on small movements. She would show up with a planned program and toss it out the window, developing a whole new program on the fly to accommodate the limitations of the body that day.

Breath and meditation were used to regulate the nervous system that was still in flight or fight mode from the fall. She listened to the fears and reflected them back to me so that I could see them and determine what was real or a figment of the imagination. The fears were no longer to be hidden but brought out in the open. She pushed to try new movements so that I would develop trust in my body. She taught me to believe, to listen to my body. “What is your body telling you?”.

As mentioned in Blog Post #2, the Unexpected Entrepreneur, a career change was required due to persistent concussion symptoms that made it impossible to continue. The thought of being a personal trainer had crossed my mind years before, but it seemed irresponsible to leave a well-paying career. There are many types of personal trainers; everyone has their niche. If this was to become my future, it would be like Carina; a trainer that seeks to understand, to find the tiny imbalances and correct them and to teach their clients to be curious about their bodies. And most importantly to believe in themselves.

A good mentor is someone that guides, builds curiosity, encourages further learning, and tells the truth. When I shared with her that I was considering returning to school to become a trainer in her style, she immediately had lists of people to follow on Instagram, and what to look for in a good course. If she ever doubted my ability, thought that I was crazy to consider this at my age, she didn’t share that. She encouraged me, provided endless learning opportunities, pushed me to reconsider what I believed and most importantly understand how the body works. Being just ok is not enough.

She taught me that a good foundation is critical when building a strong body. She taught to begin in a different place, one that is more gentle and more personalized. Mobility and then strength.

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She is the inspiration for my second career. Thank you, Carina.