

Katrina Kavvalos

After a health crisis landed Katrina, 42, in intensive care, it proved how resilient she could be. Now, she's finally pursuing a life-long TV dream

It was in March 2015 that I decided to change my life. I was lying in intensive care, not knowing whether I'd live or die, after being admitted with complications from Crohn's disease. What went through my mind was 'What are my regrets? What didn't I do?' I've always dreamed of hosting my own television talk show but put it on hold because I felt scared and thought I wasn't good enough. But right there and then, I said 'God, if you give me the gift of life, I'm going to pursue my goal'. And that's what I did.

I was first diagnosed with Crohn's—a chronic inflammatory disease of the intestines—when I was 16 and had managed it for years, but in September 2015 I had to have major bowel surgery followed by a second operation in April 2016. Because of the illness, my weight had gone down to 39 kilos before the first operation. I was, quite literally, skin on bone. Not only did I see my weight diminish but my confidence and self-belief, too. I lost my energy, I couldn't walk ... When you look in the mirror your mind starts to tell you you're worthless and disgusting... It's terrible.

When you're sick, it's really hard to stay positive but my driving force was 'This is not going to defeat me'. Every single day, I thought; 'What can I do to keep going until I get out of this?' I had to learn to slowly rebuild my body and gain weight in a natural, healthy way, but I also had to begin rebuilding my mind. I connected with a really amazing company called Belief Reset, which creates neuro-subliminal audio recordings that I listen to daily—first thing in the morning or just before bed. The tracks contain affirmations spoken in the present tense (for me, it's things like 'I am confident') that only your subconscious can hear. It sounds bizarre but over time you really do feel yourself changing! I still use them regularly and would highly recommend it.

Another thing that helped me feel empowered was doing my homework about what I was going through. If you're experiencing a health challenge, be proactive and do your research. Also know there are people out there in the world who've been through similar experiences, so go online and seek them out. Perhaps they can help.

My health ordeal showed me I never want to have regrets in life. I have a career in social media but I'm

now entering a whole new industry to chase my dream, connecting with TV people and production companies. I've got a team behind me and we plan to travel to the US twice next year. I love hearing peoples' stories, so I'll be interviewing entrepreneurs and celebrities with stories to share who can help others on their journey. The interviews will be streamed live as well as uploaded to my YouTube channel. Don't get me wrong—it's still

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extremely scary! But the way I see it, whether it works or it doesn't, at least I tried. Then I can honestly say, everything I've truly wanted to do in my life, I've given it a go and I'm content. That's such a good place to be. And if just one other person sees it and thinks 'If she can do it, then so can I'... That's what drives me.

The daily confidence lifters I swear by? I make sure I walk at least once a day. Going outside to breathe fresh air, getting sunlight, drinking enough water, meditating. It all helps. Food is great medicine so I eat well and love juicing—if you can't eat it, juice and drink it! My faith in God helps me get through the most challenging times and I also have an amazing support team, including my husband and three kids, who help me when I hit a low point. It's about making sure I do one thing every day that brings me closer to my goal. As I've learned, it doesn't matter how slow you go, forward is still forward.

Age is just a number and doesn't have to reflect you in any way, shape or form—the minute you think it does, it will. There are so many people who were successful after 40, even 60—Louise Hay was 62 when she started the publishing company Hay House! You can't rewind the clock, so you might as well embrace it. Confidence means being open to living your true, authentic self and not giving in to what society says you should be doing. It's about self-empowerment. I've got no idea where my journey will take me, but I look forward to enjoying it. **P**



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WITH THE
RIGHT PEOPLE
A SUPPORT
TEAM IS VITAL