

Athlete, advocate and author Carole Staveley prescribes steps to be your own Health Champion

By Brittany Spencer

Every so often, certain people come along that possess the ability to inspire through their stories of personal victory over seemingly insurmountable odds.

Carole Staveley, a woman formerly restrained by the painful grips of a rare muscular condition who in 2012 crossed the finish line to become an official ironman triathlete, is the proud owner of one of these stories.

Staveley has turned her experiences of personal triumph into a philosophy of health and wellness that she shares in her book *Not Lying Down: How I Conquered Years of Pain to Triumph at the Finish Line*.

Her book includes nine steps to becoming your own Health Champion, which were inspired her own deeply personal stories of the challenges and successes she faced in her pursuit to maximize her body's full physical and psychological potential.

‘To be a Health Champion is to come to the realization that it really is no one's responsibility but our own to make sure that the health issues we may be dealing with are addressed to the best that they can possibly be addressed,’ Staveley explained. ‘We often expect that it's the doctor's responsibility alone to address and treat our issue. But the key is that we have to take the responsibility to be in the lead position, and allow doctors and healthcare professionals to be our resources in our pursuit of recovery.’

After sustaining a sports-related muscular injury in 1996, Staveley began experiencing chronic pains and tension throughout her body that became so severe that they often left her unable to leave her home. She then found out that she had chronic myofascial pain syndrome, an underlying soft tissue condition that limited Staveley's proper muscle function and made even simple everyday tasks a painful battle for her.

In addition to a soft tissue disorder, Staveley was also confronted by fertility difficulties in 2002, at which time her the foundation of her developing philosophy was set. ‘The (Health Champion) mind set leads to much more productive problem solving related to health issues. If you go in, like I did, with a list of questions and the expectation that the doctor will help to lead you to the best possible answer, it allows you to take ownership of the problem and arrive at a more satisfactory and comprehensive solution to that problem.’

Due to her extensive research and perseverance in presenting her doctors with specific questions until she found an answer, Staveley is now the proud mother of two and a successful ironman finisher.

Staveley's goals and physical training to become a Health Champion and ironman triathlete took her many places, including the C3 Canadian Cross Training Club in Caledon. She described her involvement with C3 as ‘an incredible stroke of luck that turned into the most amazing experience and relationships in regard to my development as a triathlete.’

Through her continued training at a quarry in Caledon, Staveley swims along-side professionally ranked athletes such as champion triathlete Andrew Yorke and nationally acclaimed triathlon coach Barrie Shepley. ‘We discovered that there are national and international athletes training with C3 in the quarry . . . It's absolutely inspiring to train with such a wonderful and inclusive group. The quarry is such a positive place both psychologically and physically and being affiliated with C3 really drives us to do that much better in our training.’

C3 Group runs organized swimming programs that are available to swimmers of any level and further information concerning membership or swimming schedules can be found at www.c3online.ca

Not Lying Down is a guide to encourage readers to become their own health advocate, and equip them with the tools to achieve their full potential despite any health condition.

‘This is my new career in life, to help others figure out their health problems,’ she said. ‘To even show up and say that I was prepared to take on an ironman triathlon was enough for me to feel like I had the right to start delivering my message and help others to find the Health Champion route.’

Further information regarding Staveley's journey and her steps to becoming a Health Champion can be found at www.carolestaveley.com. Her book *Not Lying Down* is available for purchase, both in hard copy and e-book, on amazon.ca



Carole Staveley attended a recent signing of her book Not Lying Down.