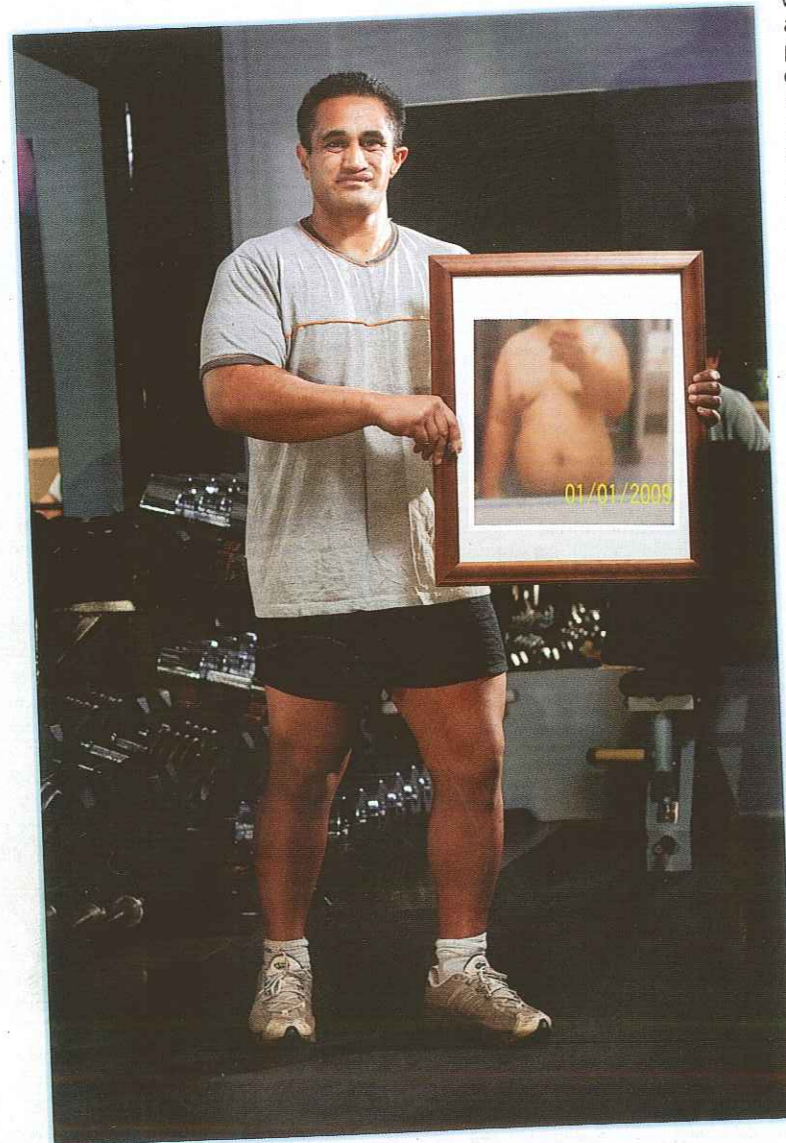


# How I help create a DIFFERENT man

An Inspiring Interview with Personal Trainer, Elise Firestone, and her client, Peter Haenga



This interview has to be one of the most inspirational and tear jerking 'before-and-after' interview I've ever held. You will go through so many emotions when you read this.

Peter was brutally assaulted, diagnosed with cancer, and lost his mother in such a short time. He became depressed and started eating to comfort his sorrows. Then something major happened that turned his life around. You will have to read the interview to feel the inspiration and motivation Peter found within him.

**Q: Usually I begin an interview with allowing the person I am interviewing to introduce themselves, but this time I'd like to take your story step by step in the interview. We will move slowly because I don't want to skip anything. It is amazing that you use to weigh 264 pounds! What type of toll did that cause your body and to you mentally?** PH: It took a great amount of toll on me first physically. I

was unable walk and excess weight put a lot of stress of my joints. Just looking in the mirror and seeing the size of my stomach wasn't anything to be proud of that's for sure. Mentally, I was unhappy and my self esteem was quite low and I fell into depression and the only source of comfort was eating food.

**Q: Could you tell me what challenges you faced to lose the weight?** PH: There were many challenges I faced while trying to lose the weight. Back in 2003, I was diagnose with cancer, but before that I had a brain injury due to an assault and about a year later, my mom was diagnose with breast cancer. In 2006, she

passed away. Those were the challenges mentally & physically I had to overcome first of all. Due to the depression, I became overweight because I found comfort in eating food. Then in November 5 2008 I decide to join bodybuilding.com. That's when I met a very

**"The hardest part was feeling good about myself. My self esteem took a hammering. I felt like life was not worth living and that I was not worth anything. I realized that life is worth living and I am worth something."**

wonderful woman named Elise Firestone. She is now my personal trainer and close friend, well, more like family really. She offered to train me and I started with her just before New Years of 2009 and train with her for 3 months. It wasn't all plain sailing either because of the diet. That was the hardest part for me to understand and was a major challenge for me. I did have arguments with Elise about the diet and I did lose her for about a week during my

3 months of training. However, I did see that the diet and gym programs were working for me. I looked at the progress pictures and saw that I was losing weight. I wanted to throw all her programs away, but I kept them instead and used them. Eventually, Elise and I worked through that little hitch in the road and we are now closer than ever. She's training me now for my competition. I guess we both learned how to forgive each other and now we are like family.

**Q: Peter, tell us a little bit about yourself. What was the heaviest you weighed before you realized it was time for a change?** PH: I realize at 264 lbs it was time to change and my little 5 year old nephew was the catalyst for the change. He's a big WWE wrestling fan and I was playing with him. He then landed on my stomach and grab a handful of my waste. He then said to me, "uncle, you look like Big Show, the wrestler, and he's fat." I wanted to ring the little guys neck at the time, but that was another turning point that made me change for the better.

**Q: Did you suffer from health problems when you were overweight?** PH: I guess sore joints and ligaments, low self esteem, and depression were the main things that affected me the most due to being overweight. The cancer and brain injury were caused by other factors and not a direct result from me being overweight.

**Q: Did you find yourself hiding your body when you were over weight?** PH: I did try to hide the fact I was overweight and obese especially during the summer time by wearing big baggy clothes at the beach.

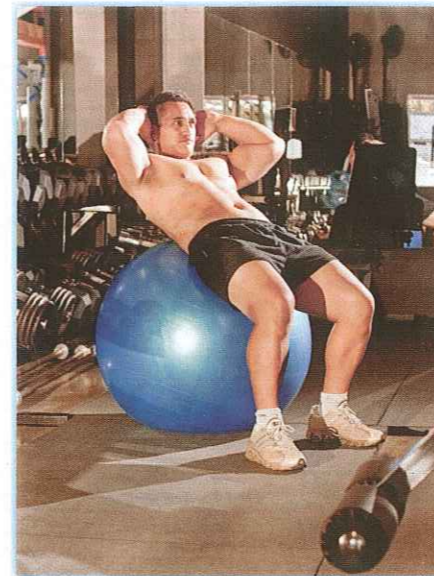
**Q: To what extent did you take to lose the excess weight?** PH: I work extra hard in and out of the gym. I followed Elise Firestone's gym and diet program the best that I could. She made a huge difference in my life and I will always be very thankful for her help.

**Q: How much do you weigh now? You are a true inspiration.** PH: I'm glad to say that I weigh 187 pounds and my body fat is now 13%. I was originally 264 lbs and 40% body fat.

**Q: While losing weight, did you ever consider giving up? If so, why and how did the thought of giving up make you feel?** PH: I've thought about giving up

numerous times, especially with the diet, as I would get frustrated and angry because I couldn't understand it. But it's different now though. I understand how important diet is to get the body you want. I'm still learning new things about diet nutrition and it has helped me to understand how the body works when it has good food.

**Q: Tell me, were there some little things you did to help control your**



**feelings and thoughts about yourself while you were losing weight?** PH: Just my faith in God and having good memories of my beloved mom and how she would like me to be happy

**"What keeps me motivated is just the beautiful, good times, and memories of my mom and seeing my best friend start his own weight loss chalenen. That is so inspiring and motivates me as well."**

and to never give up no matter how tough it may seem or get. Just having close friends and family support really helped a lot. All these things I've mentioned have helped me lose weight and control my feelings as well.

**Q: At what point in your life did you start losing weight? Who was it that helped motivate you to lose weight?** PH: The point in my life was when I was playing with my nephew, like I mentioned earlier, and meeting Elise Firestone, my trainer. The main person that really made a difference and helped motivate me was my beloved mom. Before she died, she said to me, "I'm so proud of you son and I will always love u. I'm so proud that you overcame your cancer." That memory, to this day, helps motivate me. I know my mom is watching down from heaven and she's so proud of me.

**Q: How long did it take for you to lose your weight?** PH: It has taken me 8 months of hard work in and out of the gym and following my beautiful and so talented personal trainer Elise Firestone's diet and gym program. For the guys, women do know best.

**Q: How did your life change once you started losing weight?** PH: It has definitely changed for the better. People notice me now and ask me many questions on how I lost so much weight in such a short time frame. They want me to help inspire others or be a role model to young kids as well.

**Q: What is your outlook on your life now since you've lost weight?** PH: It's a more positive outlook now and I want to help others and to say to them that hard work does pay off and just believe in yourself and make the impossible and make it possible.

**Q: What have you accomplished since you have lost weight?** PH: Doing an interview for World Physique magazine and

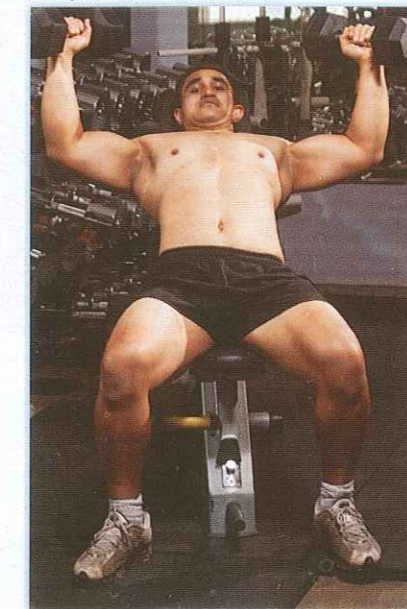
website & sharing my story with the world and losing over 63 lbs of body fat. I have been preparing for my first ever bodybuilding competition here in New Zealand on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009 with the help of Elise Firestone and her good friend Colette Nelson doing my music and routine and Caron doing my outfit as well.

**Q: Compare your diet now to that of when you were heavy. How do they differ and what changes have you made in your diet?** PH: My diet now compared to then has change a lot. Gone is the KFC, McDonald's, Pizza Hut, cookies, and soft drinks. I now eat lean meats like chicken, red meat, fish, salmon, tuna, rice, veggies, raw cashew nuts, fish oils, multi vitamins, protein powders, and other supplements. I also drink lots of water and try to take in less bread, however, it is hard for us maori or kiwi boys as we love our Vogel's bread. My two proudest moments were overcoming cancer and being able to share my story with the world with the help of World Physique magazine. I am also glad that all of my friends and family are very proud of me and my accomplishments.

**Q: Are you different inside since you have lost weight or do you feel you're still the same person?** PH: Just the outside

has changed. I am still the same guy, but I guess there has been some little changes from within. I am now mentally stronger and more confident and outgoing.

**Q: Any shout outs?** PH: First, to God for blessing me and to my beloved mom. I miss u so much. I will always love my family. Tammy Renee and World Physique crew, love you all. Elise Firestone, my beautiful trainer, I love you. Colette Nelson, Caron, Sam, Midnight Special Tyrone Chaffey, aka TC, Paikea Whalers League team, YMCA Gisborne, My Bodyspace, Bodybuilding.com All my friends, love you all. Gisborne Cancer Society and Gisborne Steward Centre, Ozhamn House Pamlerston North as well, Shelly Highamn and Gisborne occupational therapist Mandi Brandwell.



Peter Haenga: Photo Credit: Brett Stanley; Elise Firestone: Photo Credit: Gerry Paquette



My name is Elise Firestone, fitness model, competitor, and fitness expert. I grew up in Connecticut and currently live in the NY area. I am owner of Cosmetic Artistry by Elise. I offer a wide variety of cosmetic services including virtual personal training, makeup artistry, and airbrush tanning services, and more.

**Q: What made you want to be a personal trainer?** EF: Growing up as a competitive dancer I've always enjoyed staying in shape. In high school I joined a local gym and found my love for lifting weights and staying in shape even more so. It wasn't until 2002 when I was diagnosed with a chronic illness called Pulmonary Hypertension where I was faced with my own health challenge and battle to fight. This led me in the direction of fitness even more and furthered my interest and education in the field of health. Educating others and working with other people to help them achieve there goals is something I love to do. I am very passionate about helping others through the many challenges of life.

**Q: Do you believe that training a client is part physical and part mental?**

EF: I believe training is both physical and mental. When training a person virtually, it takes a lot of mental focus and discipline to follow something.

**Q: When working with clients, what do you find motivates them?** EF: Seeing positive changes both mentally and physically and seeing progress through body composition changes.

**Q: Tell us about Peter?** EF: He came to me at 5'7 and 254 lbs looking to lose some weight and to get into shape. Since then, Peter has successfully lost over 50 pounds and is now training for his first bodybuilding show in New Zealand this October.

**Q: What were the biggest challenges and strengths while working with Peter?** EF: Peter has been an amazing person to work with. He is truly an inspiration for others with his hard work and dedication. I think the biggest challenge has been the time difference and the difference in the metric scale when it comes to food and portion sizes.

**Q: How did you and Peter find each other?** EF: Peter found me on a networking bodybuilding site. •WP•