

Beyond a Physical Transformation



Derick Brothers before his gastric bypass surgery.

New York Methodist Hospital. “My orthopedic surgeon, Placido Menezes, M.D., said that surgery could help my knee, but that I needed to lose a significant amount of weight for it to heal like it should. He recommended that I look into NYM’s bariatric surgery program. I was really impressed that NYM is recognized as a Center of Excellence in Bariatric Surgery, and saw that Piotr Gorecki, M.D., chief of laparoscopic surgery and director of metabolic and bariatric surgery, was giving an informational seminar. I decided to go and find out more about the Center and my options.”

“We offer informational sessions and support groups three times a month for people at all stages of their decision process,” says Dr. Gorecki. “We provide information, answer questions, review risks and benefits, and point people towards the resources they might need to help determine if bariatric surgery is the best choice for them,” explains Dr. Gorecki. Mr. Brothers decided that he wanted to pursue a gastric bypass procedure to help him reach his weight loss goals.

A New Life

“Eight days after the surgery, I had already lost 27 pounds, and Dr. Gorecki gave me the green light to start working out again.” So Mr. Brothers went to the gym, got himself a personal trainer, and began the process of reclaiming his health.

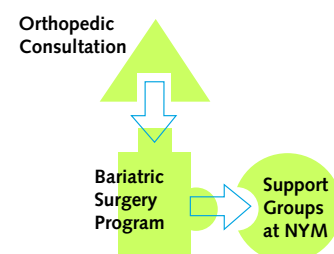
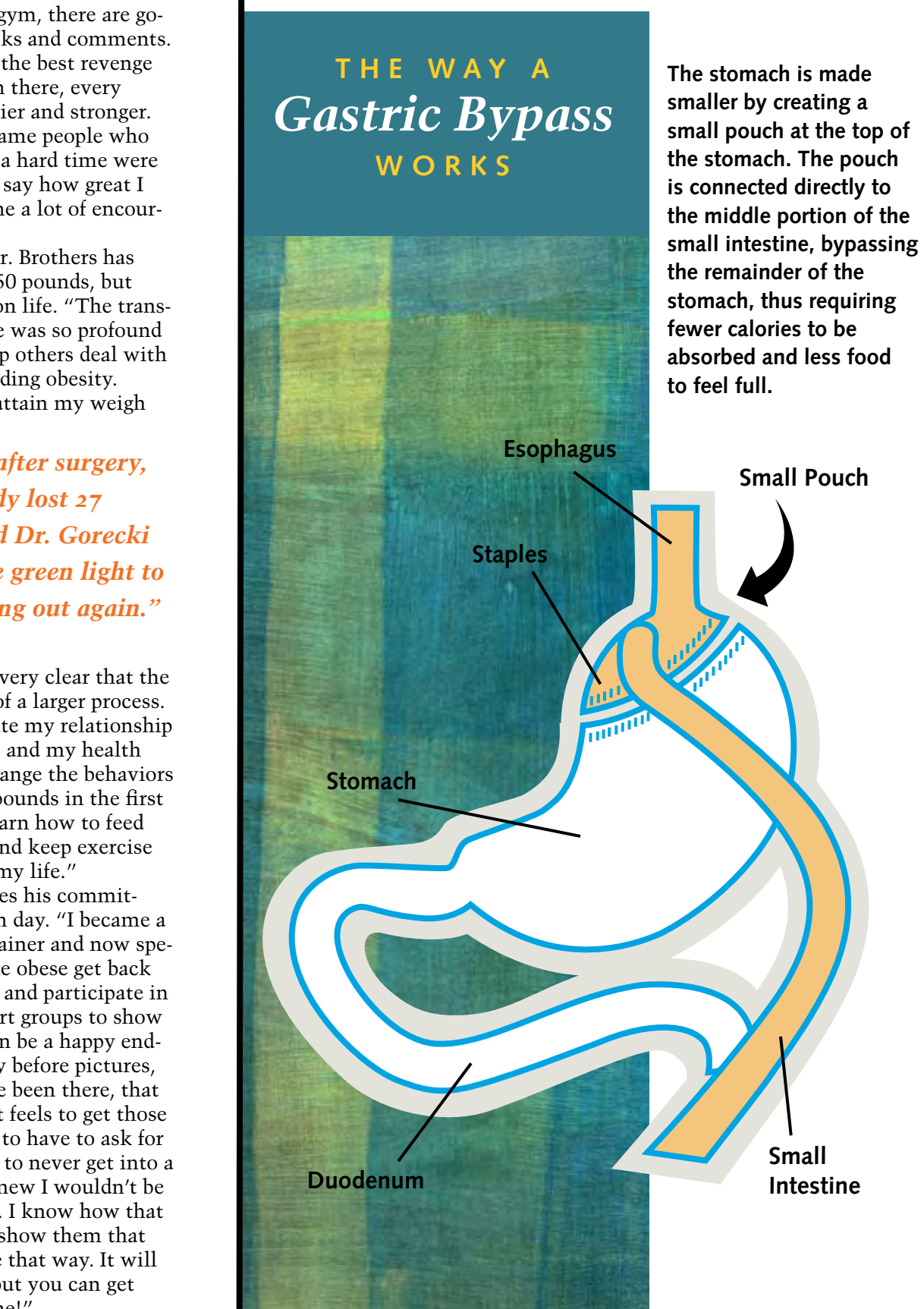
“To tell you the truth, when someone of that size walks into the gym, there are going to be a lot of looks and comments. But let me tell you, the best revenge was walking back in there, every day—thinner, healthier and stronger. Pretty soon, those same people who had been giving me a hard time were coming up to me to say how great I looked. That gave me a lot of encouragement.”

At this stage, Mr. Brothers has lost, and kept off, 150 pounds, but gained a new lease on life. “The transformation in my life was so profound that I wanted to help others deal with their issues surrounding obesity. Surgery helped me attain my weight

“Eight days after surgery, I had already lost 27 pounds, and Dr. Gorecki gave me the green light to start working out again.”

loss goals, but I am very clear that the surgery is just part of a larger process. I needed to reevaluate my relationship with food, my body, and my health and be willing to change the behaviors that got me to 350 pounds in the first place. I needed to learn how to feed my body properly, and keep exercise front and center in my life.”

Mr. Brothers lives his commitment to change each day. “I became a certified personal trainer and now specialize in helping the obese get back into shape. I still go and participate in Dr. Gorecki’s support groups to show people that there can be a happy ending. I bring them my before pictures, tell them that I have been there, that I know how awful it feels to get those stares and snickers, to have to ask for seatbelt extensions, to never get into a bathtub because I knew I wouldn’t be able to get back out. I know how that feels, and I want to show them that it doesn’t have to be that way. It will take a lot of work, but you can get there. Just look at me!”



Derick Brothers was 49 years old, 384 pounds and at the end of his rope. He knew he had to do something about his weight “or I was going to die, I knew it. I was two years shy of my retirement from the MTA, and I wanted to live long enough to enjoy it.” He found a bariatric surgery program in Manhattan, where he was told that he would be observed for six months before the operation. “I thought they were crazy,” Mr. Brothers remembers. “I could lose it all myself in that time!” But over the course of those six months, he only gained more weight.

“Growing up, I was athletic, always in the gym, so as the weight started to come on, in the back of my head I thought, ‘hey, I can hit the gym and drop this weight anytime I want,’ but I didn’t and my weight only got higher, to a point where it was far out of my control.” Mr. Brothers remembers.

It was actually a knee problem that brought Mr. Brothers to