

Feeling stuck? Then watch this...

New series on W tracks several women as they gain confidence – making losing weight a winning proposition.



By Judy Gerstel

You'll meet seven Toronto Area women when you watch *Stuck*, a Canadian Series premiering Wednesday May 14 at 9:30 p.m. on W Network.

But you already know these women. They're your friend your sister, your colleague...maybe even you.

Because if you've ever wanted to lose weight, get healthy, look better and feel better, if you've ever been shocked by the scale, postponed the diet and found I

impossible to make time to exercise, *Stuck* is about you.

And it doesn't take more than an episode to feel like you're part of the group.

The interaction and personalities that emerge and evolve, the self-awareness that waxes as the weight wanes, make *Stuck* as addictive as, well, cookie dough ice cream.

One woman divulges the horror of weighing more than her husband. Another confesses holding on to her "skinny" jeans for 17 years.

Notable is how difficult it was for these women to lose weight without the support and accountability of the group. That's where the title comes from.

"I finally recognized that I'm stuck," admits one woman, before the group convenes. It's a sentiment women identify with, if not about getting fit, well, then about some area of life.

"In the beginning, they couldn't really tell you why they were stuck," says series producer Marianne Kushmaniuk. She interviewed over 100 women before putting together the diverse group of women age 28 to 52.

Following a group of women was the idea of David York, Executive producer at 52 Media. He wondered, says Kushmaniuk, “what women out there are looking for.”

She found, she says, “a level of loneliness out there. And we went from there.”

Nicole Williams, 28, blames loneliness for the pounds she put on after moving to Toronto from her hometown of Vancouver 18 months ago.

“I went from where everyone was close to me, where I had a personal trainer,” she recalls. “Here, I didn’t have a job, didn’t have a gym membership and was really homesick. The weight started to pile on.”

Williams came to Toronto to pursue an acting career so the weight was a real problem.

She says, putting into words an experience many women have, “I fell like I was one size- and then I wake up one morning and it’s ‘Where did this come from?’”

Williams say she tried to lose weight on her own “but it just wasn’t happening for me. There were always excuses...I was in a rut.”

That’s exactly what Kushmaniuk was looking for. “The overwhelming thing was how many women out there need support to do this. “

While Nicole has always been athletic and at home in the gym, Bonnie has diabetes and had to learn to use the treadmill. “This is fast,” she says with surprise, on camera.

She adds, “For me, the biggest hurdle is going to be showing up. To leave my house? Work up a sweat?”

But she says, “I just turned 40 and I can’t climb a flight of stairs without gasping.”

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The winning losing girls in *Stuck* pose on a pose left to right: Bonnie, Tracy, Nicole, Marianne, Mary and Nicole.

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Mary, a working wife and mother who put on weight after a miscarriage and the death of her brother, is one of the engaging personalities who emerges.

"I never have time for cool downs," she explains, "so I just cool down in the car."

Kushmaniuk says the series was driven by

the characters, even though following "seven women was like herding cats."

She described the show as "soap doc," not reality TV.

"I wanted it to be honest but gentle, intimate but inclusive. I didn't want a train wreck. There's enough of those on television."

She adds, "It's really nice to do a show where you see changes and happier, healthier people. And they all seem to be more able to deal with other stuff — stuff that got them stuck in the first place."

There was another bonus for Kushmaniuk in doing the series. She lost 12 pounds.

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