



VERNICIA MALVEAUX

organizational psychologist Gary P. Latham, author of *Becoming the Evidence-Based Manager*, the focus on a specific challenge and a parallel goal—rather than just weight loss alone—a time frame and being held accountable for achieving that challenge are more likely to lead to better weight loss results.

We put that theory to the test by finding out if after 12 full weeks, three of our readers, including Malveaux, could lose the doctor-recommended one to two pounds per week while training for specific challenge goals: swimming, completing a 5k (3.1-mile) run and learning to dance.

Malveaux, who didn't know how to swim, was challenged to not only get over her fear of water but also perfect four swimming strokes.

Our dance challenger, Traci Johnson, 42, had to face a few hurdles of her own. Like Malveaux, Johnson balances a busy schedule as owner of a public relations company and a youth outreach activist. The entre-

preneur would often spend more days in fast food drive-thrus than in the gym, sneaking in quick meals before events, but now the weight was sticking.

"I've always lived by this rule that you don't buy bigger-size clothes, you just lose the weight first," says Johnson, who had always been around a size six, but found herself in a size 10 at age 41. "Everyone says in your 40s you just gain weight and it's expected. I was like, 'No, no, it's not for me.'"

After 40, women tend to lose muscle mass and see a drop in their metabolism. With these statistics against her, Johnson's goal was to squeeze back into a size 6 and to somehow squeeze dance into her schedule.

For our 27-year-old run challenger Tia Mosley, weight gain came with the diagnosis of polycystic ovarian syndrome, which sparked an ongoing weight battle due to insulin resistance and elevated hormone levels.

"Every woman I've ever met [with PCOS] has been overweight, and they

have this belief that they can't lose weight," she says. "I knew it wasn't impossible, but I knew it would take a great deal of work—more than anyone else."

The account executive wanted to prove the naysayers wrong—even more for herself. But Mosley, who lived a completely sedentary lifestyle, quickly found out in her first week of the challenge that she couldn't maintain a jog for more than 30 seconds, adding to her doubts about being able to run the 5K.

With the odds, their careers and critics against them, we gave the ladies a little extra assistance through the help of world-renowned nutritionist Rovenia "Dr. Ro" Brock, Ph.D., and several of Atlanta's top coaches and personal trainers. The trio was required to keep public food and exercise journal entries on Twitter, where their trainers, coaches and friends could follow their every move and meal. But even with this professional aid, public accountability and strong motivation, could they achieve their goals?