

# **Building engaging online weight loss communities using a communities of practice framework**

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## **Declaration of Interest**

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

## **Ethical Approval**

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## Abstract

The rise of internet use and social media platforms has revolutionized how people can access health and weight loss information and how providers can promote programs to geographically dispersed populations through virtual networks. Sustained engagement in virtual programs contributes to whether members will successfully reach their health and weight loss goals, yet identifying how to support sustained engagement remains an elusive quest. This qualitative study examined members' perspectives of the factors that contribute to their ongoing engagement in a social media (Facebook)-based weight loss program. We argue that sustained engagement of members is fostered through attention to supporting members' progressively increasing participation in a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Findings demonstrated that a supportive, non-judgemental online community that provides ready access to knowledge in multiple formats and supports interactions and situated learning with experts and more experienced members, first encourages legitimate peripheral participation, which grows to sustained engagement.

Keywords: *Online Community, Online Engagement, Sustainability, Weight Loss, Health, Wellness, Communities of Practice*

## Introduction

The rise of internet use and social media platforms has revolutionized how people can access information and health and wellness solutions. Computer-based technologies and social media communication platforms provide multiple networks through which providers can promote their health and weight loss programs globally to geographically diverse populations. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated social isolation and escalated the urgency of calls to understand how virtual communities may offer space for engagement and opportunities for moments of interconnection among members who share common interests (Carter and Alexander, 2020). An emerging area of interest is how social support can be facilitated through online networks and communities (Carter & Alexander, 2020; Libster et al., 2010; Stragier et al., 2016) and how social media communication platforms, such as Facebook may offer a safe and accessible environment for vulnerable people, such as those living with overweight or obesity as compared to in-person meetings (Libster et al., 2010; Underwood & Olson, 2019), .

When online communities are built and maintained effectively, they potentiate members' well-being, and sense of self-empowerment through social networking and connections to others who share interests and goals (Carter & Alexander, 2020; Johnston et al., 2013). For example, online communities have helped mothers with sick children cope with sorrow (Glenn, 2015); marginalized groups of people feel less isolation (Underwood & Olson, 2019); and people who are trying to lose weight feel empowered and motivated to do so (Hwang et al., 2014; Reading et al., 2019). Online communities also increase the chances that like-minded people who come from diverse backgrounds can connect and benefit from each other's experiences of shared (possibly rare) phenomena.

However, the effectiveness of any health-related initiative, offered in person or virtually, relies on the member's abilities to persist in the program long enough to reach their goals (Dumas et al., 2020; Locke et al., 2020). Research focused on adherence and attrition in clinical and community-based weight loss programs typically reports low adherence (Burgess et al., 2017; Leung et al., 2017), high attrition (Ponzo et al., 2021) and limited numbers of participants who remain engaged and persist through to their long-term goals (Middleton et al., 2013). Sustained engagement in online programs is a critical factor in whether a person will successfully reach their health goals and there is a lack of research into how best to support the sustained engagement of members of online health communities (Raggatt et al., 2018) Given the rapid rise of online initiatives for health and wellness (Abernethy et al., 2022), it is critical that we understand better how to successfully build and sustain communities through social media networks for people who have various health and/or weight loss goals. Thus, the aim of this study was to ask members of a weight loss community, facilitated through a closed Facebook group, what factors contributed to their ongoing engagement. The following research question guided this study:

*From the perspectives of members, what sustains their engagement in a social media-based health and wellness initiative?*

### **Communities of Practice**

To address the research question, we consider initial findings from an in-depth study of one social media-based health and wellness initiative through Lave and Wengers' (1991) Community of Practice (CoP) framework. The three elements of a CoP - domain, community, and practice

(Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium, 2016) - align with how The Livy Method (TLM) is enacted through social media. The *domain* provides a shared reason for member participation (weight loss), frames opportunities for learning, and enables members to make meaning from their interactions with staff and other members. Whilst members are acting individually, they are part of an online *community*, collectively engaging in information sharing, problem solving and building relationships with others which provides the social fabric of the online community. Members of TLM are seeking to transform their dietary *practice* to achieve their health and weight loss goals. Together, through attention to program activities, resources, information shared, and through active questioning and engagement, members take on new knowledge and practices and contribute to extending the repertoire of collective knowledge. In reflecting each of the three elements, TLM provides the context, repertoire of resources, and space for interactions that enable members to deepen their knowledge and expertise with respect to weight loss (Wenger et al., 2002). A CoP framework allows us to examine the inner workings of TLM from the perspectives of members, including identifying factors that support their sustained engagement throughout the three months of the program.

## **Method**

### ***Context***

The Livy Method is a 13-week program offered as a private Facebook group (Weight Loss by Gina Inc., 2023). The program is designed so that each successive week builds on the previous, with the goal of deepening members' knowledge and understanding of what is needed to achieve gradual weight loss. Information is disseminated to TLM members through daily short check-in

videos (3-5 minutes), informative posts, and live online sessions with Gina Livy, TLM leader. Members can access daily check in videos each morning in which Gina Livy reminds members of the focus of the week and speaks to any recurring questions raised through the online chat. There are multiple informative posts each week on a wide range of topics which are also available as a collection of pdf files in a book that is available through Amazon for \$25. There are 45-minute live online sessions six days a week, where Gina Livy speaks to key issues that might arise for members during that stage of the program and answers members' questions in real time. Members can post questions and share their own experiences with weight loss at any time through an online forum, visible to all members. Questions are answered by a team of TLM staff and often commented on by other members. There are also live streams with guest medical professionals focusing on various health issues that members might be experiencing and with past members who share their journeys.

### *Participants*

We purposively recruited members at week 12 of TLM to ensure that participants in this study had sufficient experiences with the online community to be able to talk about its features of engagement and were members who had remained engaged with the program across the full three months. All members who were currently enrolled in the program were invited to participate in an end-of-program survey and/or in focus groups facilitated through Zoom. This paper reports findings from a thematic analysis of focus groups conducted across two programs (i.e., Fall 2021 & Winter 2022).

### ***Data Collection***

This study received ethics approval from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (File Number: S-08-22-8375) on 08-31-2021. We sent an information letter about the study to TLM administrator to post in the Facebook group and email to members, to ensure we reached all members (a total of 35,601 members across the Fall 2021 and Winter 2022 programs), including those who may no longer visit the Facebook group on a daily/weekly basis. The information included a consent form with an invitation to register (via Eventbrite) for a focus group to be conducted through Zoom. We continued to add focus groups in response to demand, to ensure we included as many members' voices as possible.

Due to members' high interest in participation, we (RK & KA) facilitated 77 focus groups, each consisting of a maximum of 6 participants. Our intent with limiting focus groups to 6 participants was to maximize outreach while also allowing time for each participant in the group time to share in-depth experiences about the topic of interest (Galloway, 2019). The focus groups commenced in the final week of each session of the program (i.e., Fall 2021 and Winter 2022) and continued for 3 weeks. Each focus group lasted approximately one hour and was conducted online (i.e., via Zoom). Each was audio-recorded after obtaining verbal consent from all participants. Participants were asked open-ended questions about (a) their perception/experience of the Facebook group, (b) features of the program that encouraged their sustained engagement, and (c) what might be changed to encourage enhanced engagement in TLM in the future.

### ***Data Analysis***

We used conventional content analysis to thematically analyze and find meaning from the focus group data (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). This approach allowed us to inductively code the data using participants' own words, enabling us to immerse ourselves in participants' experiences of the phenomenon and set aside our preconceived notions during analysis. We (RK & HA) conducted the analysis in 3-steps. First, we chose ten focus groups to analyze initially (five from each of the Fall 2021 and Winter 2022 programs). We chose these focus groups together from focus groups that we had identified as providing especially rich, in-depth discussions in our respective notes made during focus groups. These ten focus groups were transcribed verbatim and used as a sample from which we developed initial themes. Working independently, we listened to each focus group multiple times while reviewing the verbatim transcripts. Second, we derived codes from participants' own words to identify factors that sustain members' engagement in an online community. Third, we sorted codes into categories based on similarities and we met to compare our categories and decide upon themes. Categories that did not show similarities among others formed their own theme(s). Together, we decided upon exemplar quotes for each theme. Due to resource limitations we chose not to manually transcribe the remaining focus groups, but we had Zoom transcripts to refer to as needed. We followed the same 3-step process with the remaining 67 audio-recorded focus groups. RK listened to 34 (HA to the other 33) of the remaining 67 focus groups, while reviewing the Zoom transcripts and deductively coded them based on existing categories. Codes that did not fit into existing categories formed new categories for subsequent discussion. Then, we met to compare our codes across these 67 focus groups, decide upon how they fit into existing and new themes, and finalize exemplar quotes (Guba, 1981; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005).

## Findings

Three hundred and sixty-seven members of TLM participated in this study. All except three identified as female. We identified six features of TLM that contributed to members' continued engagement in the Facebook community: (a) genuine, authentic leadership; (b) continual connection; (c) supportive and collective culture; (d) predictable, non-prescriptive pattern of activities; (e) self-directed engagement; and (f) flexible access. We present these themes separately, however, in practice, themes are experienced by members as intersecting aspects of TLM that create a community of practice. We include exemplar quotes in *Table 1*.

### *Genuine, authentic leadership*

Participants explained that having a leader who is “a normal person” and who is “real” and “sincere” and who has lived experience of struggling with weight loss is important to their ongoing engagement with the online community. When the leader shares their own vulnerabilities and life story, members could relate and viewed the leader as “a friend.” Sharing her own struggles and modelling vulnerability, Gina Livy held space for members to contribute their own stories, to enter conversations (chat) online, and engage in the community in meaningful ways.

The program leader (Gina Livy) plays a pivotal role in members coming to trust the process and the program. Part of this is reported by members as the uncanny way that the things Gina says in the morning check-in or daily lives “echoes everything that is in your head”. Another participant explained that “just when you are beginning to doubt if you are able to do this, it is there,” either

introduced in the daily interactions by the leader or through another member's questions that become talking points in the 'Lives' (i.e., live video chats with Gina).

Having a leader and program staff who have struggled with similar issues as members is important to them feeling part of the community and staying engaged. Knowing that the leader and staff have each navigated their own weight loss struggles reassured members and helped them to build trust in the program.

### ***Continual Connection***

Participants appreciated the daily interactions with the leader, staff, and other members because it "kept [them] motivated" to pursue their goals. They valued opportunities to learn from other TLM members and staff. They also appreciated that all staff had personal experience of TLM as members and it was not unusual for staff to share within the group their own setbacks as they navigated a range of challenges in their own weight loss journeys. Participants felt that knowing that staff "fac[ed] the same weight loss challenges I am facing today" gave them a shared sense of "being in this together" and supporting each other through.

The practice of TLM staff responding quickly, most often within the hour, to members' questions fostered a feeling of belonging and "being heard" within such a large online community.

Members of the community also responded to other members' questions or posted encouraging comments and reactions "so people are always supporting people" and this helped members "not feel so alone" when they faced difficulties, and in turn encouraged them to stay engaged in the community.

Daily posts and interactions with the leader, staff, other members, and guest speakers (for example, naturopaths, pharmacists, physicians, etc.) who unpacked how their area of expertise intersected with weight loss, provided opportunities for members to deepen their own knowledge of weight loss, of how their bodies worked and of the science underlying the TLM approach. The multiple opportunities for learning were identified as a point of contrast with previous diets the members had engaged with, where they typically followed the rules of the program (typically involving food restriction) without any understanding of how their bodies were working towards weight loss. Members appreciated that the “wealth of knowledge” they received and “understanding the why behind doing something” helped them stay on track, motivated, and engaged with the shared goals of the community.

### *Supportive and Collective Culture*

Participants recognized that their continued engagement in TLM was due to a culture of support and collective learning that was established so that members “never felt alone” and that there were daily opportunities to learn. Creating a space of “belonging” was instrumental to retaining members’ interest and participation in the community as it provided members with the affirmation that “what I’m going through isn’t strange or different.”

Even some members who did not personally post questions, reported feeling part of the community through reading other members’ online questions, responses and comments. They associated these opportunities with being part of “something special” and feeling like “you are not the only one having issues or struggles”. Having strength in the collective, in being part of a

huge group of strangers who share the same goal of health and weight loss, made members want to continue to participate and learn in the TLM community.

Participants recognized that building a culture of support and collective learning required that the leader of TLM (Gina Livy) *initiate* a “safe” space, where there is zero tolerance for negative, judgemental, or belittling comments, and members *maintain* this culture through their willingness to offer support and encouragement to other members. The positive, safe, and non-judgemental vibe of the community makes members “feel welcome” and confident that “no one is going to shame you or blame you” when sharing personal (sometimes sensitive) experiences of weight loss.

Participants report that the “generosity and kindness practiced daily in what amounts to a huge community of strangers” was “life changing”. For the first time they felt that they were part of a community that understood their struggles and did not judge them or blame them, but instead provided knowledge, encouragement and support.

### ***Predictable, Non-prescriptive Pattern of Activities***

Participants reported that the regular pattern to how information and resources (e.g., morning check-ins, live conversations, guest speakers, etc.) were posted in the Facebook community helped members stay engaged because it established a “predictable rhythm in the group” that they came to rely on. Although the focus or priorities of the information changed each week, the way the information was presented, and the schedule remained consistent. Participants agreed that the regular schedule of short early morning check-in videos served to “anchor my day and get me started with my intentions” and enabled a routine for their daily practices in the group.

Yet, participants also explained that the ability to “personalize [the program] to your own circumstances” enabled varying levels of participation and engagement. Members spoke of TLM striking a remarkable balance between “talking and connecting with the masses,” while also being personalized and individual. While a member’s experience of TLM is individual, their learning and behavioural transformations are supported by the reciprocal exchange of experiences happening daily as a complex web of interactions between or among members in Facebook forums, chats or messages. Participants explained that the multiplicity of interactions gives rise to some degree of repetition of information. This repetition served a real purpose in supporting learning, as “repetition helps keep you engaged and your head in the game,” and it was also necessary because members explained that information resonates with people in different ways and at different times.

There was a sense that the predictable patterns and repetition of different messages provided the time for members to take on new understandings and practices as and when needed. Participants appreciated the abundance of information and knowledge they gained through the official posts, but also through reading different members’ questions and responses, and the conversations and online interactions that evolved each day. They found it remarkable that, through TLM, they began to learn why the severely restrictive diets that they had practiced in the past do not lead to sustainable weight loss and how through reading the information posted and attending to the questions and responses “you begin to realize that you need to unlearn most of what you have lived and come to know over the past 50 years of dieting”.

Overall, the organic nature of the community and the multiple ways of interacting with the different resources helped members to connect with others, share personal stories, and allowed them to take the time to learn and to revisit information as and when required.

### ***Self-Directed Engagement***

Participants appreciated that members could choose to remain on the edges of the community, where they could view, read, and listen to daily posts and interactions and “test the waters before interacting”. Participants who did not actively post on TLM Facebook platform explained that having the option to “remain on the periphery” to read daily posts and listen to check-ins and live-streamed discussions and interactions with guests helped them stay engaged because often their questions would be asked and/or answered by others, and they would not have to be vulnerable themselves. Furthermore, having the option of remaining anonymous, through creating a Facebook account with a pseudonym helped members feel comfortable posting questions as they did not have to worry that people with whom they might already be “friends” with on Facebook would see their posts.

Overall, options to remain on the periphery, stay anonymous and interact only as and when one chooses, allows members to feel like they could participate on TLM on their own terms. This reportedly enhanced their ability and willingness to stay part of the community and progressively increase their active interactions with staff and other members as they felt comfortable to do so.

### ***Flexible access***

Participants in this study lived in countries across a range of time zones, and their respective work schedules did not always allow them to participate in TLM in real time. They appreciated that the Facebook group offered flexible any-time access to all activities and “still [allowed

members] to feel really connected to the group.” They also appreciated that members could connect whenever they needed clarification of information, personal affirmation, or reassurance. Being able to listen to (or view) the ‘Lives’, information videos, and guest interviews at any time allowed members to continue to “be part of the community as they did other things.”

Overall, participants expressed the importance of members “not hav[ing] to rearrange their lives” to be part of TLM, as well as being able to check into the Facebook group on their own schedules. They appreciated that members could “catch up” on information and conversations at their convenience, and the connection to others was always available, when needed.

*[Insert Table 1 here]*

## **Discussion**

This study examined members’ perspectives of a weight loss program offered through social media (a closed Facebook group) to identify factors that contribute to members’ sustained engagement. This study extends what is known about individual factors and argues that it is how the different features are purposefully curated through the format of TLM that is critical to members’ sustained engagement. Findings confirm that TLM operates as a Community of Practice that centers situated learning of members with and from others, leading to changes in practice (Wenger et al., 2002).

Considering the perspectives of members through the framework of CoP revealed how TLM provides the context and resources for situated learning and, as engagement is sustained, learning

is supported through the ongoing interactions of the participating community members. It allowed us to understand features of online engagement from many angles, from members of a CoP (i.e., TLM) who learn from others on the periphery of the group, as well as those who engage more directly (Borzillo et al., 2011). In the Facebook-based TLM community, learning is not just coming to know more *about* something; it is an active process of engaging with new knowledge, unlearning long-held knowledge and beliefs, and testing new knowledge through conversation and practice. It is about being engaged in shared activities, initially on the periphery and then, as new members' mastery of knowledge and skills evolve, becoming increasingly more able 'practitioners' of healthy eating/lifestyle. Members' peripheral access to TLM Facebook group was not considered secretive 'lurking', as might be the case on some online platforms (Sun et al., 2014), but rather as opportunities for learning with others. Anonymity on the Facebook page proved helpful for members to feel less vulnerable and more able to learn with the community directly (Jackson et al., 2018; Underwood & Olson, 2019). Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of 'legitimate peripheral participation' provides a way to speak to the interactions and relationships among TLM members, staff, and experts, and to the practices, activities, identities, experiences and communities of knowledge and practice that evolve across the 13-week program.

By 'de-centering' herself in the group and encouraging unstructured dialogues between members, Gina Livy provided members with 'legitimate access' to the learning community (Lave and Wenger, 1991), giving them 'permission' to bring their own stories, contexts and histories into the mix of learning resources available. Members had space to consider ways in which others' stories resonated with their own, which kept them eager to learn with and from others and to remain engaged in the group's informational content. The 'de-centering'

of expertise is a particular feature of a CoP where the leader initiates a culture of openness, sharing and multiplicity of voices. Yet, this culture must be *maintained* through the mindsets of members who show positivity, support, and encouragement to others in the community, through their posts, comments, and replies. A culture that values learning with and from others encourages participation and mitigates against the power dynamics and judgement that could otherwise cause members to be reluctant to participate and learn with and from one another in online communities (Amichai-Hamburger et al., 2016).

A CoP framework allowed us to approach this research with an openness to knowledge about weight loss being experiential, tacit, and social. Findings demonstrate that members' knowledge evolved as TLM members and leaders interacted with one another. Learning is a core component of a CoP that is achieved through keeping members interested in, and connected to, the group and content (James et al., 2022; Wenger et al., 2002). The predictable pattern of when and how information is presented in TLM facilitates engagement and opportunities for members to interact with content, as well as with TLM staff and other members. The ability of members to learn new information within a CoP keeps it vibrant and active (Wegner et al., 2002). Members learn with and from others, applying new understandings to their own dietary practices, and they become increasingly capable and confident in sharing their expertise, which in turn potentiates areas for growth and further opportunities.

In the case of TLM, the leader's and staff members' experiential knowledge provided members with both knowledge and lived experiences of the process of healthy weight loss, which, ultimately, helped them remain trusting and engaged in TLM. At the same time, the experiential knowledge of TLM staff instilled within them a sense of empathy and understanding for members' weight loss struggles and goals (Carter & Alexander, 2020; Hwang et al., 2014;

Jackson et al., 2018). The shared knowledge and experience of weight loss enabled TLM to release (post) information and engage guest experts in discussions at a particular rhythm, ensuring that learning materials and activities are relevant and relatable to members' needs.

While members report a somewhat overwhelming abundance of information, the repetition and accessibility of information ensured multiple opportunities for learning. In addition, assurances from the leader, staff and other members to focus on progress over perfection, simultaneously minimized chances for member discouragement due to 'information overload' (Hooks, 2010; Rodi et al., 2015).

Research has demonstrated that when life demands cause members of an online group to feel like they have fallen behind in the group, they are less likely to continue engagement (Martin, 2016).

The Livy Method does not require members to be 'co-present' in real time and place but provides members with flexible access so that they can catch up on content, if needed, and access the community at their convenience. Most participants in this study were long term dieters – having gone through years of losing and regaining weight never understanding how and why they lost weight but put it all back on (and more) each time. Research reports that people seeking weight loss typically relapse into old eating habits and behaviours after 'completing' a diet because maintenance requires behavioural and lifestyle changes, rather than a 'quick' fix program (Chao et al., 2024; Greaves et al., 2017). It is more likely that people will establish behavioural and lifestyle changes if they remain engaged in a community that offers them new educational resources and supports (Chao et al., 2024; Dumas et al., 2020). As a CoP, TLM offers an environment of sustained support that fosters ongoing engagement and situated learning. This is achieved through establishing a safe, non-judgemental space (via a closed Facebook group)

where members can learn (and unlearn) with and from others, with flexible access to carefully curated resources and activities.

Overall, it is not any one feature that sustains members' engagement in a community. Rather it is the ways in which this program (TLM) comes together as a Community of Practice that supports opportunities for situated learning with and from others, that keep members of TLM engaged. Members of TLM effectively lay their own path through the online program, acting individually and in concert with others, talking and learning about weight loss whilst simultaneously living within the shared practice of transforming their own relationship with food.

### **Limitations**

There are two main limitations to this study. First, it is possible that only members who were actively engaged in TLM participated in the study, and those who struggled with engagement were missed or did not choose to participate. Thus, the viewpoints of 'engagers' may not be the same as 'non-engagers'. While our large sample size of members is likely to represent a diversity of perspectives, further study is needed into what the barriers are for 'non-engagers', so that solutions can be sought. Second, time limitations and the impossibility for the researchers to conduct further focus groups prevented the participation of all the members of TLM who expressed interest in the focus groups. However, the large number of focus groups included in the study and the consistency of the findings across the two groups (Fall 2021 & Winter 2022) suggest the unlikelihood that new features of engagement would be identified.

## **Conclusion**

This study illuminates that building engaging online communities rely on features that align with Lave and Wengers' Community of Practice (CoP) framework (1991), particularly those that support collective learning leading to transformation of practice. Communities of Practice are environments that support optimal engagement of members who learn with and from one another, both individually and collectively around a domain of shared interest. Members of TLM provide insights into factors that promote sustained engagement in an online weight loss program. Findings address calls to better understand how to structure online and social media-based communities for health wellness, and beyond that will support sustained engagement of members.

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## **Declaration of Interest**

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**Table 1***Supplementary Table of Exemplar Quotes*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Exemplar Quotes</b>
Genuine, authentic leadership	<p><i>It is her [Gina's] humanity and vulnerability ... I have such respect for that, and I think it gives us all permission to be that real with her, because she's growing as she's doing the program.</i></p> <p><i>The weirdest things happen ... all this stuff comes up along the way, and you're thinking it, but then she [Gina] brings it up that day or the next day and you like think, 'how the heck did she know that?'</i></p> <p><i>The fact that she [Gina] was coming at this from a background of having lost 100 pounds herself and all the staff have gone through the program ... I was hooked, and intellectually, I understood what she was telling me was going to work.</i></p>
Continual connection	<p><i>No matter how I was feeling, the morning check-ins would get me off to a positive start and I could rely on that, seven days a week. It was like having your own personal cheer squad who really believed in you, wanted you to succeed and picked you up if you stumbled along the way.</i></p> <p><i>There's someone there, holding your hand through it, because it's a very lonely world out there and nobody else understands what you're going through. People who have never struggled to lose weight don't get it, they think you should just eat less and exercise more.</i></p> <p><i>The 'Facebook Lives' made all the difference because Gina Livy was there and you could ask questions and learn from the conversation generated by other members.</i></p>
Supportive and collective culture	<p><i>That sense of community is amazing. Everybody was very supportive of everyone's success and journey. Some people didn't lose a lot of weight; some people didn't start losing weight until the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> week, but I think it was just jumping online and being supportive of each other that made the community so successful.</i></p> <p><i>I've probably written on every single check-in, and the support I got was really motivating for me because it was almost like,</i></p>

	<p><i>not even about letting myself down. I didn't want to let the people who are rooting for me down.</i></p> <p><i>When you go into other diets, you're like, "oh my gosh, I ate that; I shouldn't have done that". You just beat yourself up, beat yourself up, beat yourself up, where she [Gina] just gives you the tools to say, "okay, you made the choice to do it, you enjoyed yourself, let's get back on track, and let's move forward" ... you feel so much calmer about your choices.</i></p>
<p>Predictable, non-prescriptive pattern of activities</p>	<p><i>...you might re-read a post or listen again to a live and you will hear something you totally missed earlier. Maybe you were not quite in a place where it made sense to you before and this time it clicked; you were ready to hear the information.</i></p> <p><i>You find yourself repeating in your head 'progress over perfection' and it helps. It helps when maybe you have not made the best choices but now, instead of berating myself I remind myself that it is all a process and 'progress over perfection' and I keep moving forward.</i></p> <p><i>I have lived my life through the mantra 'calories in versus calories out', counting, weighing, measuring everything I eat and logging everything I do. It makes sense intuitively. But we now have learned so much more. I feel like these past three months I have done a university course, debunked long standing and deep-seated beliefs, and flipped them upside down.</i></p>
<p>Self-directed engagement</p>	<p><i>There's sometimes where I didn't want to ask a question because I kind of didn't want any of my other [Facebook] friends to see it ... I don't care about the vibe ambassadors [TLM staff]; they're there to get back to me, but I don't necessarily want my friends to see it.</i></p> <p><i>The online platform does not pressure you to share, if you don't want to ... It is okay for members to take what they needed from the resources available.</i></p> <p><i>Having the option to remain on the periphery, to read daily posts, and listen to check-ins and live streamed discussion and interactions with guests helped me stay engaged.</i></p>
<p>Flexible access</p>	<p><i>My scale would go up, but then I would login and have those 'ah-ha' moments and I would be reassured that your scale is going to go up, and that's normal.</i></p>

*There's a lot of days that I listen to everything in the morning [as it is happening], but there's some days, workwise that I just can't ... but not having to miss something because of conflicts, because it's always there, is huge for me.*

*I really like the structure of it. So, I work during the day, so I wasn't always able to view the Lives, for example. But I like that structure of doing the 'Check-in videos' every morning, and her check-ins were always early enough for me that I hadn't gone to work yet, so, I could set my intentions; I knew what was kind of happening in the morning ... because it was online, even though I might be too busy, I could always catch up.*