

Introduction

Twenty years ago when I was seventeen, I picked up my first book on fitness and read it cover to cover in one day, and since then I have read just about every top seller fitness book known, and still continue to do so. My passion, which some may call an obsession, began early on in life with Jane Fonda workouts and early morning jogs with my sister and cousins when they would visit from New York. There was always some physical activity playing in my life whether it was dance classes, gymnastics, cheerleading or simply playing outside while bike riding with Blanca. It wasn't until recently that I took a deep look inside myself to try and figure out where this all stemmed from. I guess being a mom, I wanted to guard my children from all types of excessive behavior, and

since at times the obsession of being thin was mine, I felt the need to figure out why.

I grew up in an amazing household of loving, caring, hard-working parents who arrived in this country as teenagers from Cuba. As exiles in a new country, life as many of you know was very difficult. My parents married and settled in New Jersey where there was a very big Cuban population. Our culture was never compromised, and, in fact, it was instilled in us in everything we did. We were Cuban-Americans and very proud of that. My multicultural Spanglish life began.

It wasn't until recently when my five-year-old son, who acted upon his male instinct to squeeze my ass, that it all came together. The men that I have been around since I was a kid—and still am—are fascinated by our biggest physical *asset*, our asses. As a child I remember “*que linda con su culo parado*”, and as a young girl entering her teen years the famous *piropos* began. Latin men (like most men) love our *assets*, and although it took me a long time to accept it, now I do, too.

So with that I ran to the phone, called Blanca and told her we were writing a book. I was going to share my experience of trying to achieve a body that was never going to be mine along with what has proven effective for me through years of research and studying the fascinating world of fitness. And she, who is considered an expert in her field, will provide us all with proven

effective workouts to enhance the God blessed given curves and *caderas* we have as Latin woman. To wrap it up, since we love to eat and can never compromise our *comida criolla*, we have provided you with a few of our favorite dishes the healthy Latin way.

Con orgullo te presento the only guide to fitness you will ever need, *porque somos, y gracias a Dios que siempre segaremos haciendo, Barbara por Atrás, Barbara por Alante, y Barbara por Adentro*. I hope you enjoy it!