

SUPPORT & ENCOURAGEMENT

Tina Smith

So, what's it like to live with a bodybuilder? Well, that depends upon who you ask. Very often, commentary from spouses or a close relative of the athlete sounds like; "You are simply self-absorbed, and might as well actually move into the gym to live. You are never separated from that special chicken or "whatever-protein" carefully measured into Tupperware compartments, and obsessively log everything into those tattered notebooks". This is usually followed with; "Of course, I love you, but I'm worried about you. This is weird, and it's driving me crazy!" Someone who's never participated in this sport really can't help but view bodybuilding in this manner. As a NANBF contest promoter, I do spend a great deal of time encouraging athletes, but also in counseling their mates along the road to competition.

Luckily though, in my own personal experience as a WNBF Professional, I have the perfect support system: Bob Bell, another bodybuilder as my husband. As of April 7th, when Bob was the Heavyweight winner, and top American at the CNBF Can/Am Championships in British Columbia, we are the first husband & wife team of WNBF Professionals! In sharing the experience of this wonderful sport, we are actually closer than ever, and have found our way to an even stronger marital union.



Competitive bodybuilding is extremely demanding. The long hours of training, the mental concentration, and restricted diet along with normal life pressures; money, family issues, and job responsibilities can easily lead to stress. This however, has led Bob and I to structure our lives with an open line of communication which is the foundation for a solid relationship. We completely understand and respect what the other is going through in terms of training, but more importantly in terms of our life goals. Indeed, bodybuilding requires a great deal of self-discipline and mental tenacity. To really be successful however, you also need a support system. As I go through the course of several weeks prior to a contest, my motivation will sometimes wane. As I'm frustrated from work, starving for carbs, and patiently awaiting an open treadmill for my beloved second hour of cardio, this question will arise: "So why am I doing this?". Bob is the one to always remind me of the rewards of my dedication, and to commend me for progress thus far. At the end of the day, he's always there to congratulate me on being one step closer to the goal. Seems like fate that the days when he needs the encouragement, I'm there to pull him along in the same fashion.

Finally, the notion of "success" is one which we define for ourselves. It has not so much to do with the 1st place trophy, but rather upon self-exploration, personal accomplishment, and pride. Bob and I think of this experience as a wonderful adventure, and we constantly remind each other to relish in the journey. We are able to experience this together, and are truly gracious for the opportunity.

"Unlike the mediocre, intrepid spirits seek victory over those things that seem impossible" (Ferdinand Magellan)