

FOREWORD

When we first met Joanna nearly three years ago, we immediately recognized something rare in her—a quiet strength paired with an uncommon intentionality. Even from across the world, with us in the United States and her in Singapore, her heart, discipline, and desire to grow were unmistakable.

Over time, we learned that this was not a passing trait or a phase of ambition. It was the way she lived her life—thoughtfully, courageously, and with a remarkable devotion to becoming the person God created her to be. To know Joanna is to witness someone who refuses to settle.

While completing her PhD—a monumental accomplishment on its own—she kept expanding who she was. She became a musician in multiple instruments, a committed athlete, a writer with several published works, and a young woman willing to challenge herself emotionally, spiritually, and physically. And yet, in every message we have exchanged, what has always stood out most is her humility and her desire to serve others through what she learns.

Small wins may be the subject of this book, but they have also been the heartbeat of Joanna's life. Nothing about her journey happened overnight. She chose to grow through seasons of discomfort, to take ownership of her health, to pursue her creativity, and to cultivate consistency in areas many people overlook. Her life is living proof that a person becomes extraordinary not through giant leaps, but through faithful, repeated steps. As weight-loss coaches, we teach our clients that transformation begins with small, simple wins—daily choices that build confidence and momentum.

When Joanna reached out to us years ago, she embraced that concept wholeheartedly. She lived it. She applied it. And she allowed it to shape not just her physical life, but her mindset, her habits, and her vision.

This book is Joanna's gift to the world. It is distilled wisdom from her own seasons of growth, her academic training, her spiritual foundation, and her lived experience. She writes with clarity, honesty, and a gentle authority that invites readers to reflect deeply

without feeling overwhelmed. Her stories remind us that direction matters more than speed, that identity determines decisions, and that consistency—however small—shapes who we become. We believe this book will meet you exactly where you are.

We pray that as you read, you feel the same hope, clarity, and inspiration that we have felt watching her journey unfold. Every day, find a way to win.

With admiration and gratitude,

Angie and Alan Thomas

Rethink Dieting

rethinkdieting.com

CHAPTER 1

KNOW WHO YOU ARE

A Short Book on Small Wins

Hi, I'm Joanna.

I decided to write a small book—a short collection of small wins—because I have noticed how easy it is for us to get discouraged along the way. I want this book to serve as a reminder that progress often happens in small steps, and that those steps add up to something bigger if we stay the course.

Who Am I?

I am Joanna, currently finishing my PhD as I write this book. Over the past few years, I have grown into identities I never thought I would claim: writer, musician, and athlete. Writing has been with me for a long time, but music and athletics were discoveries along the journey.

In 2021, when I started my PhD, I was struggling with backaches. That pushed me to pick up a sport—underwater hockey—and to take my health more seriously. Since then, I have committed to seeing myself differently. Over four years, I have lost as much as eight kilograms (with slight fluctuations), but what matters more is that I am fitter and stronger than I used to be.

I have completed a 21-kilometre half-marathon. I box, swim, cycle, jog, and do HIIT workouts. These are things I never imagined myself doing in the past—but they are part of who I have become.

Music and Creativity

As a musician, I play piano in my church, which has always been my main instrument. On the piano, I have composed original songs—including a 12-minute children’s musical—and even copyrighted some of my work.

In addition to piano, I now play drums, bass, and guitar for my church cell group. Music has opened up whole new ways of expressing myself and serving others.

A New Me

Looking back, I can see how much I have changed. I used to have a few hobbies outside of serving in church, where I mostly did video editing, design, and sound work. Now, I live a very different rhythm—one shaped by music, movement, and growth.

None of these happened overnight. It began with small wins. Small decisions. Small shifts in how I saw myself. Small mindset adjustments. That is the story I want to tell: who we are becoming is built - one small win at a time.

As Alan Thomas of Rethink Dieting says, “*Every day, find a way to win!*”

A writer, musician and athlete.

Knowing my roles in this season has helped me make decisions and decide what small wins are worth going for.

What roles do you have in this season?