

KURT AND DEANNA MANGUM ARE A POWER COUPLE CUT FROM A DIFFERENT CLOTH. ONE CAN'T HELP BUT IMMEDIATELY BE CAPTIVATED BY THEIR KNOWLEDGE, PASSION FOR FITNESS AND INNOVATIVE OUTLOOK. IF THOSE QUALITIES DON'T HOOK YOU, THEIR ENERGY WILL.



Together, Kurt and Deanna have developed a wellness program called CoupleyFit, a fun program aimed at getting couples to experience their official motto of "Feeling. Better. Together."

#### The Meet Cute

The couple first connected while out in Scottsdale on New Year's Eve in 2012, a chance meeting since Kurt didn't typically spend the holiday out. "I was very attracted to Deanna from the second I saw her," Kurt says. "We're both faith-based. I grew up in the church. I spent every New Year's in church with my family and I never went out on New Year's. I had spent all those days and nights praying while growing up. It was for Deanna."

That night, Deanna gave Kurt her phone number and he sent her a few texts and admittedly looked into her social media accounts.

Kurt was a football player achieving the distinction of All-American coming out of Chandler High School, and after college, he had the opportunity to play for the NFL. "I tore my hamstring on my actual pro day in front of all the NFL scouts," he says. "At the time I met Deanna, I was still playing football and her dad had been an athlete, too."

Deanna wasn't interested in dating an athlete and wouldn't let Kurt take her out. Five months passed, but Kurt stayed persistent and soon after, they went on their first date to Dave &

Buster's at Tempe Marketplace. "We really hit it off after that," Kurt says.

The two married in Phoenix in 2016. Although Kurt's NFL aspirations didn't work out, the couple set off on their own journey.

#### Working as a Team

The CoupleyFit lifestyle brand evolved naturally after the pair came up with the idea in 2015, eventually developing their vision as a program and business and trademarking the name.

"It started out with Kurt's family that owns The Refuge Coffee & Wine in Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport," Deanna says. "Kurt was going to expand with his family in its business, but he said, 'I'm into health and wellness. I'd like to teach women how to be healthier, understand their bodies more and understand hormones.' It started out with Kurt helping me to get on my own path to fitness."

In addition to Kurt aiding Deanna, the two were constantly getting asked questions about health and fitness from people looking for guidance.

"People at the airport cafe were seeing Kurt bringing meals to work and they would say, 'Hey, can you help me out with my eating patterns?' And it all started out in the airport," Deanna says. In fact, the couple had their first business meetings at the Starbucks near the baggage claim. Just like the planes, their idea took off.

"What really opened our eyes is one of the employees of my family's business, Maricela Aranada," Kurt says. "She started off without any idea about health or fitness. She said, 'I thought everything had to be deep fried.'" Deanna adds, "We were going over her meal plan with her and I noticed that she was looking at me with kind of a blank stare. Maricela said, 'I don't know what a carbohydrate or a protein is.'"

It was then that the Mangums realized a lot of people don't know the basics and need to learn them before taking the next step. The couple was still in the phase of developing the full CoupleyFit philosophy and they saw how they could make a difference.

"The impact was that as a single mom of two very handsome boys, Maricela changed her normal lifestyle patterns and lost almost 80 pounds," says Kurt, noting Maricela has since inspired her own fiancé, who has lost nearly 80 pounds. They are now both following the CoupleyFit lifestyle program.

In addition to stellar teamwork, both Kurt and Deanna's respective education and skill sets make them an even stronger force. Deanna spent nearly a decade working in the food and beverage industry while pursuing her psychology degree at Arizona State University. She obtained her degree and is also a certified nutrition and wellness consultant. Kurt earned his master's degree in sports science from the University of Akron. On top of his role with CoupleyFit, Kurt is a fitness education advisor for International Sports Science Association, while Deanna manages CoupleyFit full time.

The company's engaging website is user-friendly and

includes free downloads; delicious and healthy recipes; creative workout ideas; a link to the couple's podcast; and a link to their store on Amazon, featuring products that align with company's healthy lifestyle brand.

Another highlight of the CoupleyFit website is the S.W.A.N. daily journal. The trademarked S.W.A.N. philosophy is an easy-to-follow method to keep good health at top of mind. The acronym stands for: sleep, water, activity, and nutrition. Many of the features of CoupleyFit are complimentary on the company's website and complete meal planning and customized workouts are also available through the business.

#### Social Impact and Accolades

In 2017, CoupleyFit became a benefit corporation.

"We are a for-profit organization, like an LLC, however we do have to have some sort of social impact every single year," says Deanna, noting helping others is an important factor for the couple both in business and personally.

"One of the nonprofits that is near and dear to our hearts is ICAN," Deanna says. "We had been able to do their health and wellness fair there for the past three years."

The ICAN nonprofit works to empower youth through various programs. Due to COVID-19 the Mangum's work has been limited so they switched gears and partnered with State Forty Eight apparel, now selling a "Unity" design T-shirt on the CoupleyFit website with \$10 of each purchase benefitting ICAN.

"We continue to use our business as a force for good whether acting environmentally, socially and any way we can to create generational health because that's ultimately our mission and our vision," Deanna says.

Their *Magnesium of Optimism* podcast is another avenue for the couple to get the word out to their fan base and clients. The podcast covers topics such as spiritual and mental health, race in America, optimism and love.

"The Maricela transformation opened the door up to more things," says Kurt, noting that the couple has since worked with many employees at The Refuge Coffee & Wine and those employees have lost more than 200 pounds. "When the staff lost that weight, our customer reviews got better. We saw a correlation between when you feel better, you're able to be better and give more and help more."

CoupleyFit was recognized in 2018 at the Innovation Fair at Barrett Jackson in Scottsdale and was also elected by South by Southwest as one of the prominent new and emerging companies in the world. Additionally, the couple was honored to represent the Valley at the 2019 SXSW Startup Spotlight in Austin, Texas, in 2019.

"We represent a health and wellness brand and we represent and husband and wife team," Kurt says. "More importantly we're a 50% woman-owned company and a Black-owned company."

Looking toward the future, the couple looks forward to starting a family and incorporating a family angle into the CoupleyFit lifestyle brand.

Learn more at [www.coupleyfit.com](http://www.coupleyfit.com).