

MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

60 Masonic St. Northampton, MA 01060 | TEL 800.897.0089 | info@mediaed.org | www.mediaed.org

BEAUTY MARK

Body Image & the Race for Perfection

Transcript

DIANE ISRAEL (Voice Over): My name is Diane Israel. I have been a psychotherapist for 15 years in Boulder, Colorado – one of the thinnest towns in the United States. Over the last decade, I have worked with a shocking number of men, women, and teenagers with serious body issues. I have had clients who had miscarriages because they starved themselves, clients who lost their hair and teeth from bulimia, clients addicted to cocaine, and women who ate so little that they grew facial hair to keep them warm – all in the name of thinness. Their stories made me angry. So I decided to make a film about how beauty is portrayed in our society. What I didn't expect is that I would have to face my own personal demons along the way. This is my story.

RACING HER HEART OUT

DIANE (VO): Running was natural and fun for me. It was a way to get attention. By the time I was eight years old, running became my world.

DIANE: I became, starting at age 14, a roadrunner. I started to train and put in miles with the Scarsdale Antiques running club.

DICK TRAUM: The Scarsdale Antiques was a group of people – it was more of a social club. The name 'antiques' came from the concept that these were old people, old in those days being, you know, in their 40's, maybe their 50's. Diane had too much talent for that team. She came in and she joined the Greater New York, which was, from my perspective, the finest female running team there was. But what she needed to do, she needed to really enjoy the sport and what she was doing. She was too much into the speed and the mileage, and she wasn't having fun. I felt Diane raced her heart out.

LINDA ZIMMERMAN: The excessive exercising – I've noticed it's been a theme her whole life. That's part of the reason why I never saw Diane. She was always running. She was always gone.

DICK TRAUM: And what happens is you're out there and your pushing and your pushing, and your heart is bursting. You don't know if you can go any faster. You don't know if you're going to make it across the finish line, but you have to do it because you have to pick up another 6 seconds in order to make the time that you're going for. And it hurts and you don't know if you'll ever be able to do this again because it hurts so much. And here you are, and you're killing yourself and you succeed, or you don't succeed, but whatever happened, you have really finished the day off. And what you want to do there is you want to lie down, and you don't know how you're gonna get home or how you're even going to get up off the pavement because you've hurt yourself. I felt that she probably did that more than might have been appropriate.

DIANE (VO): Injured and burnt out as a marathon runner, I turned to triathlons – which was nuts. Three times the obsession: swimming, biking, and running. And you have to be good at all three.

DIANE: I was just finishing college. The first triathlon I did I won. I got a thousand dollars for winning the race. I was hooked.

JACQUELINE STANFORD: She wanted to win. That was her goal. A pound could mean the difference between 5 or 10 seconds and winning or losing. And it meant a great deal to her.

DAVE SCOTT: And I thought, golly, she just doesn't eat. She's got to be training a tremendous amount, burning a lot of calories, but this woman does not eat. She is so thin and so frail; you've turned the corner of being a really good athlete where you could have been great. And now you're too thin. And I kept thinking, if you probably put on 5 or 6 or 7 pounds, you'd be right there. But you didn't do it.

RACE ANNOUNCER: And behind her in third, Diane Israel. So the results are in: Beth Mitchell is the winner, Jan Gerard finished second, and Diane Israel here came in third. An outstanding day for all of the tri-athletes, and we will congratulate the champions when we come back here in just a moment.

DIANE: I had 17 stress fractures. I ran on broken metatarsals for years. I didn't eat enough so my bone density was like the bones of a 70 year old. And I just trashed myself, you know? I felt like trash, I trashed myself, and I didn't eat. It was in the late 80's when chronic fatigue set in and I felt paralyzed by my own machine. Everything was in like slow motion, and I was just moving through lead. I started to recognize that my physical body was failing me. And I didn't know what was wrong. In my last race, I just basically walked off the course. And to be honest, I was so brain dead and so tired and so fried, I don't even know what my last race was. I couldn't run anymore. I couldn't run. I couldn't go anywhere.

I could hardly lift my head off my pillow. And that's where I really was stopped in my tracks.

DIANE (VO): I was only 28 years old, and my body had already collapsed. My immune system was totally depleted, and I felt like an empty gas tank. And truthfully my friends were so busy training they did not even notice that I was gone from the sport. I started therapy for my body and my mind. And I wondered why was I so terrified from being fat. What was driving me to be so thin and at the top?

A DISTORTED MINDSET

BRENDA MALLER: There are some people that have body issues who are in the room. Some of them I've spoken to who are past anorexics. Some of my guys have body issues. I think everyone in the room has some sort of body issue, in order to be in here. And this class is like a drug for them. It's an adrenaline rush. The endorphins that are released from the class create that happy feeling. And the drug lasts for the couple of hours here.

DIANE: How do you feel about your body?

BRENDA MALLER: I don't wanna answer that. (laughs nervously) I don't have a great body image about myself. I don't. I think I'm a little fat here, and, I haven't always had a good body image. I did a body building show once where I was Miss Colorado Natural. I was on stage and got first in Colorado and was invited to go to Nationals, and I said 'they felt sorry for me.' And they chose me because, I don't know. I just feel sad sometimes that I can't truly love myself for who I am. Like, I'm never enough.

ELLEN HART-PENA: Anorexia is a distorted mindset where it doesn't matter how thin you are, you never feel as if you're thin enough. Bulimia is the bingeing and purging. The purging part either by vomiting or by diuretics and laxative abuse. And there is something called exercise bulimia, where you exercise to such an extent that you purge all of the calories that you've included. From my senior year in college until when I was pregnant with my first child, so a little over 10 years, I suffered, struggled, and at times felt like I was in the death throes of a battle with eating disorders.

DICK TRAUM: Now as you can tell while I'm sitting down, I may be 3 to 5 pounds overweight. Ten pounds, whatever. And the way that I would control this issue was by exercising. It's done not only by people who are fanatical, but it's done by many folks. Here's a wonderful way of losing weight that doesn't hurt. And it's quote, not dangerous. Although obviously, it can become dangerous.

ELLEN HART-PENA: It's presumptuous, but I think I lost the chance to make the Olympic team – because I was so talented and had so much opportunity. And I was asking my body to run 26 miles at world-class speed, and I wasn't nourishing my body.

DAVE SCOTT: I would weigh myself a couple times a day. In morning practice, I'd weigh myself. I'd weigh myself in the evening, and was always into making sure that I didn't miss a workout. I remember being so sick, and I came to workout, and I said, well I'll just get in 2000 yards at the time, which is a very, very short workout. But for the average person they say, 2000 is a fairly good dose. And I did it, and I remember being in the shower and telling coach, gee, I feel really ill. And I came to the shower, and I just collapsed in the shower. And they rushed me to the emergency room. But while I was in the hospital, the doctor walks in and I'm doing bench press with the hospital bed. Now that's a little bit nutty, so that has been with me for a while.

RICK JONES: When I looked in the mirror I saw that little Ricky – 135-pound, lucky if I could bench the bar – person. Growing up, all my neighbors were bigger, and they enjoyed picking on me. I was the smallest and the weakest, so I got into weight lifting. I basically got into a conversation with somebody about anabolic steroids. I was afraid of needles, but the whole idea of getting bigger overpowered my fear. The other thing about the anabolics is as soon as somebody says: 'Wow! Looks like you're getting bigger,' you're hooked.

ELLEN HART-PENA: It was a way to take care of emotional discomfort or some sort of emotional pain. And it was the only way that I came up with living in a culture where I was the perfect little girl.

DAVE SCOTT: I never ever would relax. In my biggest races, I would stop sometimes just for a week, sort of like a self-inflicted punishment. It's like someone you know who is probably a binge eater. It's the same type of thing. I would stop, and I would eat. I'd get out of shape, I'd feel fat. And I'd say, I got to get back on. I wasted a whole week. And I'd come back not with a moderate run or a moderate bike, I'd go ride a hundred miles and run 16 and swim 5000 meters. And I would just go crazy. And I did that repetitive cycle, which is so destructive. And my family knew about it, and very, very close friends they'd say, 'Dave, you're gonna kill yourself someday doing this. Why don't you just go out and exercise just to feel good about yourself?' And I said, 'no, it's all or nothing.'

RICK JONES: If I wasn't able to work out, if I wasn't able to take the anabolic steroids, I'd rather be dead.

IVETTE VISBAL: Diane was perfectly happy with a Power Bar for lunch. She was perfectly happy with a salad for dinner. She felt anything more than that, or anything less than her 3-times-a-day workout, would turn her not only into a person who was not fit or

unhealthy, but ugly. A day when Diane couldn't work out, because she was sick or she had broken her foot or something, and she couldn't work out, she would pace around that house like a mad animal. You could almost hear her (growls). I haven't done this, and I haven't been out, and haven't, and I hate it, and I, and I, and I. And I go, 'Diane, and so what? So what? Relax, one day's not gonna kill you.' No, I'm not lying. She would look at herself and just for one day of missing the workout, she was already fat. She was already ugly. She already had a pimple on her face. Her hair was not looking the right way. Her butt wasn't in the right place. Because of that one day she didn't work out. She grew up with a dad who was very controlling and very ambitious and wanted to make what he made of Diane – one of the best athletes in the world. She grew up with a Mom who is absolutely gorgeous and who admired the beauty in others, but perhaps not in herself. And those two messages combined, growing up with that, is Di.

MAYHEM

DIANE (VO): I stopped eating when I was 12 years old. I fed my dog my food under the table. I needed to control the chaos in my family. I needed to control my controlling father. I felt scared, lost, and angry. I was afraid of being teased, afraid of not being lovable, of not being good enough. I was afraid of being fat and afraid of being stupid. I really liked feeling empty inside because then I could focus on my hunger and not deal with my emotions. The thing about anorexia and exercise bulimia, which I had no idea I had, is that it keeps you from growing up. Growing up meant to me that I would develop breasts like my mom. I would be this womanly woman, and I didn't want that because my mom represented, to me, mental illness and depression.

DIANE: My mom was stunning. And she was miserable inside. And finally she just had to collapse and surrender and put her hands up and say, 'I can't go on because I am in so much pain. You in the world think I'm so beautiful, and I am so beautiful. I look so good. I look so good, but you know what? Inside I am in pain. My heart is broken, and I don't even know who I am. I can't make it.' Then, from the time I was seven years old, my brother and I, we watched my Mom go off to mental hospitals because her insides couldn't contain and couldn't hold the external. It just couldn't do it anymore. And so, she just fell apart.

DIANE (VO): I remember one time my mom went off to the hospital and my grandmother said to me, 'at least your mom is beautiful.' One summer, when my mom was in the hospital, I gained a lot of weight because I was sad and I really missed her. The kids in fourth grade called me tomato on toothpicks because I had skinny legs and a fat stomach. I didn't mention that my oldest brother Johnny was put in a special home when he was 5 years old. When my brother was born my father knew he was brain damaged, but he couldn't in his heart tell me mom. So for a year and a half my mom was basically going

crazy. She thought she was just doing a really bad job of parenting. I don't remember my mom ever visiting Johnny. It was too painful for her.

ROB ISRAEL: In our family, it was never really clear what happened to Johnny. And so, I think for us, when do you get sent away in the Israel house? Is it when you're really dumb or when you're disformed or ugly perhaps? That's a huge issue. Mom and dad had a miscarried boy and a retarded son, then you, I came on board as the last Hail Mary and here I am – this sane, healthy boy. So it didn't even matter what I did. It could be no wrong.

DIANE: So I was totally supposed to be a boy. Every message that was sent to me – preconception, conception, my first few years of life – is the disappointment of not being a boy. And so I tried for the first 30 years of my life to be a boy. And I didn't get my menstrual cycle till I was 30, and I would strap my chest. My dad got interested in aerobic fitness at the Kenneth Cooper Clinic. He had a stopwatch, and he would time us for building up to a mile. And Rob was faster than me. Here I am, eight years old. He's like 6 and a half years old, and he's beating me in the mile. And I'm pissed. I'm frickin, you know, I'm pissed. Cause here's perfect Rob, beautiful Rob, perfect boy Rob beating me in the running.

ROB ISRAEL: So you and I were competing for every little bit of scrap of attention. So when you saw that you got attention by being an athlete, then that's what you wanted to do.

DIANE (VO): I learned when I was older that my mom and I had a secret in common. My mom was raped when she was a young girl by some boys she knew. I was raped at age thirteen by a stranger. We were on a family vacation at the beach.

DIANE: I didn't tell anybody. Kept it all inside. It didn't feel safe. Well, first of all, it didn't feel safe to tell anybody, and it felt too big to tell family. So I did what I knew how to always do, which is to just keep it inside.

DIANE (VO): I don't know when Mom and Dad fell out of love, or if they were ever in love. They were so different and Mom was like an enigma to Dad. Thankfully, Mom found sculpting and painting. Art became her salvation.

DIANE: Mom would come in to make us a sandwich or something and she would be covered in soapstone or alabaster or marble. And chips and dust and particles of the rocks would fall into our food, and we'd be eating and all of the sudden we'd be crunching on rocks. When I talk about my childhood it seems so confusing and so many contradictions: Love and hate, and destruction and kindness, and depression and sadness and anger – just so many polarities. And that's really what my whole childhood was. And

then the sanity for me was the control. It was trying to hold onto the athletics and the food, and the athletics and the food, and the athletics and the food. Because everything around me was just mayhem. I had no idea who I was anymore because everything for the last 20 years that had defined me was ripped away. And it was over. So I was at the bottom emotionally, physically, and spiritually. And when you're sick, when anyone's sick, you don't feel happy. If you don't have your health, you have nothing. If you don't have your health, you have nothing. I didn't want to die at that point, cause I was already dead, you know? I didn't have the energy to kill myself. I was gone.

SEARCHING FOR BEAUTY

DIANE: After recovering from my fatigue, and spending many months in bed reflecting on my life and just how I got to being so exhausted, I decided that I wanted to have a life after my athletics, and that I probably wasn't going to be able to return to my athletics. And I was thinking, what could I be when I grow up? I'm 28 years old. I have a life ahead of me. What could I possibly do? I went off to graduate school for psychology, and it was the first time in my life, at graduate school, that I fell in love. And it happened to be a woman. I started to have these very deep feelings – these love feelings – and these obsessional feelings, and wanting to dress up and wanting to look good and wanting to see this person all the time. And for the first time I really got what this love thing was, what this falling in love thing was – which, you know, I'm just a late bloomer.

DIANE (VO): For the first time, I was infatuated with fashion and looking sexy. But I had trouble creating an image for myself. Having always been a tomboy, I was confused about our culture's limited view of beauty.

IVETTE VISBAL: Before going out to a party, to the movies, to something, we'd look at the clothes to wear.

DIANE: I would go through this crazy torment and this confusion, and she would be just right there with me. She was mystified by how much I hated myself.

IVETTE VISBAL: Because I would look at two or three things and say, 'I think this is what I'm wearing. I think I look good in this.' Great. I'm done. Out the door.

DIANE: I never could see myself as a whole being and a whole human being. It was always, 'my hair's okay, I hate my stomach.' Or 'I wish I had thinner arms.' And she'd be like, 'God, why do you do that to yourself?'

IVETTE VISBAL: If I wear this, my chest is going to look this way and that way. If I wear that, my hands are going to look a certain way. If I wear this, my legs will look... I just

don't know what to wear. Help me out. Okay Di, let's just take a look. You know you look great in this. And no. Imagine that. Imagine that three times a week, four times a week.

DIANE (VO): In my athletic community in Boulder, there were few feminine role models. It was hard to be elegant, sensual, and womanly in a town that seems so overly masculine with athletic mania. It was at this time that I became obsessed with making this film. I knew I had to leave my Boulder bubble to get some perspective. I went to the Big Apple. My first stop was Strategy One, the research group for Dove's Real Beauty campaign. They asked 3000 women in 10 countries how they felt about their bodies.

JENNIFER SCOTT: Women have a lot of difficulty representing their own beauty today. So we asked women what kind of a word would they use to describe themselves. And only 2 percent chose beautiful. Now this is from a list of words that were all positive. We didn't give them any bad words to use, and only 2 percent chose beautiful. Words like gorgeous, I don't think hardly anybody chose gorgeous. And what we began to realize was that women don't like to use these words to talk about themselves, particularly beauty.

PAT MITCHELL: When it comes to subjects like beauty, youth, aging, health, the media is profoundly important – plays a persistent, pervasive, and incredibly significant role – particularly, I think, around the issues of beauty and health and the way we see them. I think, in this country, media has been obsessed with a youthful definition of beauty that exports the mirror image of the women in Baywatch. Because of the popularity of shows like that all over the world, you actually have anorexia appearing in countries like Buton, who didn't even have a name in the language for that disease. So there's no question that we are still exporting images that are not only a disservice to women but are in fact dangerous.

JANE BRODY: One of the problems we have with body image in this country is that someone else is dictating what a body is supposed to look like. And we can't all fit into the same mold. We simply can't. We each have different body structures. We have different genetic tendencies. We have different sizes and shapes and forms. And we've lost sight of the range of normal, on both ends – the people who are too thin and the people who are too heavy.

ESTHER LEVY BAR-SHAI: The process is that when the child is born, up to middle school, it's really the parent's job and responsibility to help to create the child's image. And middle school, it's really the peer group that becomes very important. What I feel is that the culture really becomes a barrier between the people and their quest to find, to discover, what is really the true beauty for them – how they feel comfortable at home in their own skin.

PAUL CAMPOS: It's interesting to consider how when you look at the fitness and the self-help and the counseling and the new age and the public health businesses, they all tend to intersect in a particular sort of fashion. For the most part, we don't know how to make people happy. The underlying belief in all of these cultural discourses in America is that if you play by the rules, and follow the instruction book properly, you will never die, and you will never get old. And so we have this kind of invidious meeting together of all of these apparently disparate discourses that all end up saying everybody should look like the people we see on TV.

PETER HUSTON: In the mannequin world, 80% of all mannequins we make are female. I guess that says something about who we're presenting to. And anytime we're asked to do the male body, the male body – even more than the female – is sort of forced into a very specific, must look a certain way, a very almost aggressive kind of confidence. And then completely sculpted, toned, chiseled abs and arms, and leg muscles that would probably be on less than 1 percent of the total population. Yet it's almost 100 percent of all the male mannequins we're asked to make.

DIANE (VO): In my quest to understand how much we are programmed by our culture, I sought out different role models. Cindy Andrews and her son Zach were severely burned in a fire that nearly took their lives. At the time, Zach was only three.

CINDI ANDREWS: I had acquired everything I was supposed to. I had the American ideal. I had all the right stuff. I had the right car, the right home, the right clothes. I had my beautiful child, my husband, my family. We all looked good, but inside I was dying. I was so miserable and so lost and so alone and so hollow. And I felt like I had been sold a bill of goods.

ZACH ANDREWS: I think that's just part of society. We have this picture perfect image that everyone's supposed to try and be. That's what they're all selling you. It's what sells merchandise, movies, and TV's, and all that stuff. I think it's really sad that they don't emphasize on who a person really is.

CINDI ANDREWS: And I did it to myself. I didn't feel okay about me because I bought the lie: to look like that was okay. Then you'd be good.

ZACH ANDREWS: I didn't know no difference. It's just been the way my life's been since I was growing up, so it's been a lot easier for me. Whereas my mom had to do the transformation, from being a beautiful woman to being disfigured. Society puts a big role on women and their looks and all that kind of stuff. So it's definitely a lot harder for her.

DAWN GALLAGHER: Lots of pressure. Lots of pressure on looking perfect. Young girls, they get caught up in that and I think that's where a lot of the anorexia, the bulimia, feeling very fragile. It's because you're made to feel a little less than human.

NAOMI WOLF: And it really hits younger people harder. It hits younger men and younger women really hard. Young women often feel that they are not allowed to be sexual unless they look like centerfolds. Pornography and pornographic aesthetics have entered kind of fashion iconography. The girls at the mall are influenced by pornographic imagery. But beauty imagery has always been sexualized. It's different. It's less human based. It's more commodified.

DAWN GALLAGHER: Fear sells product. It sells product. If we can frighten women, we'll be able, and it works in the medical industry, it works in the cosmetic industry. It's based on fear.

EVE ENSLER: We spend all of our lives buying products, fixing ourselves, and one day we'll be good enough to have a life.

NAOMI WOLF: I predicted that in five years men would be suffering from the pressures of the beauty myth as it was affecting women at that time – that anorexia and bulimia among men would be on the rise, abusive steroids, and sure enough, that happened.

PAUL CAMPOS: It's a fear of aging. It's a fear of the natural processes of life. It's a fear of the diversity that is produced by having people of all shapes and sizes, of all ages, of all ethnicities, etc, being part of your culture. And instead, every one is supposed to be thin, blonde, and 21 for their entire lives. And they're committing some kind of a crime apparently if they don't make all of their efforts to do that and to dedicate their lives to chasing this ridiculous and frankly insane goal.

RE-IMAGINING BEAUTY

DIANE (VO): My new obsession is to learn from people who have healthy body images, and from people who are trying to redefine what beauty really is. I want to know how I can use my experiences to help others.

DIANE: People are trying really hard to look a certain way, to make it a certain way, to fit into a certain pair of pants, to maybe get breast surgery, to get their ass tucked, to change their nose, so I just want to hear what you guys have to say.

YVETTE BARNES: I don't know how to describe it. I feel beautiful now. That's all.

DIANE: What makes you feel beautiful, Yvette? Because you are beautiful.

YVETTE BARNES: Beautiful, not only the outer, the inner, you know? How I feel inside. Sometimes I don't feel beautiful, and if I don't feel beautiful inside, you can tell on the outside.

DOMINIQUE HATCHER: I think beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Like myself for instance, right? A lot of people, cause of the way I dress and if I have a haircut, they think I'm a boy. But I'm a girl. A lot of people try and discriminate against me cause of my sexual preference or whatever. If that's what I like, then nobody can stop me from doing what I want to do. And that makes me beautiful. Being myself. Being yourself, not putting on a front for nobody, that makes you beautiful. That's good.

JEFFREY BEAN: I'm beautiful. I love my gap. I'm sorry. I love my gap, cause I smile a lot. That's just me. I love my gap. I don't care what nobody says.

LINDA ZIMMERMAN: You have to be able to laugh at yourself. You have to be able to find humor in your cellulite. Somehow. That cottage cheese on your ass needs to have some humor somehow.

IVETTE VISBAL: There is no way I could have been born with this incredible self-confidence. It's got to come from my upbringing, and I have to thank my mom for that in a major way. My mom is the roundest person with the biggest breasts that you have seen. And she loves her body, and she has always told her daughters, 'you are beautiful, and you are great the way you are, and don't ever say you look anything less than, you feel anything less than, because you're not.'

DAWN GALLAGHER: I think when you find that peace, that center, that bliss, that you finally say, I am good enough. I'm okay, damn it. I'm all right. That's where you start feeling healthier as a person. You're happier as a person.

EVE ENSLER: I think these two worlds exist. There's this culture, which exploits women and makes us feel ugly or not thin enough. And then there's emerging culture, where women all over this planet and men are beginning to paint another picture of what we can look like and feel like and be.

PETER HUSTON: Instead of the fashion industry trying to define what beauty is, they're sort of coming closer to their market place and making it a little bit more approachable. We try to appeal a look that is more of the girl next door, as opposed to a look that is – we joke around here and say it's the runway bitch. I think the consumer ultimately should realize and can realize that they hold the power to create that change.

JENNIFER SCOTT: Not only do women feel strongly, but they're on the edge of action. They feel very differently from the way they felt they had to present themselves. And they wanted the world to change. They wanted the world to come around and acknowledge the kind of beauty they saw. And that kind of beauty is a lot broader than the relatively narrow beauty that's very physical, that's very rooted in a limited set of physical attributes.

PAT MITCHELL: The media consumer user is so much more in control of what they get, what they use, what they consume. And therefore, what influences their lives, and their opinions, and their decisions, and their choices, it's so much more in their hands than ever before.

EVE ENSLER: If we would stop the self-absorption, we could spend all the energy, and money, and time, focused on transforming the world. And also, making our lives better lives, and thinking about other people, figuring out how to end poverty and educate people and stop illnesses, and stop violence. And guess what? We're all messes, we're complete wrecks, most of us are totally dysfunctional. And so what? It doesn't mean you can't go and make the world better. Because, as you serve, it actually heals you.

PAUL CAMPOS: There's something deeply mysterious about beauty. But I think the thing about true beauty is that there's always something unique about it. There's always something that has its own special mark that's different from anything else that you've seen – that may be a lot like that but not quite. It's somehow different.

DIANE (VO): In the beginning, I wanted to blame the media for my clients and my own hateful body image. I know it's a lot more complex than that. There are biological, psychological and social reasons that shape who I am. I now see that no single factor or person is to blame. When I'm more accepting of myself, it's easier to go home.

GOING HOME

DIANE (VO): Tomorrow is a big day. We're all getting together at Mom's house in New York, which we don't do very often. Johnny will be there for the first time in many years. Dad will be there too. My parents have been divorced for 20 years, but Dad is still very involved with the family – especially after Mom's stroke.

JUSTIN ISRAEL: It was hard that I had to be the professor and everything and had to be so great at everything academically. And I think some of that went over to my athletics too. You talk about competition. I constantly had to prove myself. I remember once I got a 99 in math, and my father asked me what was the question I missed.

DIANE: You had a really tough childhood, and how have you stayed so optimistic?

JUSTIN ISRAEL: That would be taking more than one interview to discuss, because I have a great ability to put things into compartments, to put them in their own compartment and not keep going back to them. It's a way of avoiding, but it works for me.

DIANE: Mom, can I ask you a couple questions about painting and sculpting? How is that for you? Painting and sculpting?

MOM: It was really my life.

DIANE: Can you say more about it, Mom?

MOM: I was just so into it that I really didn't think about it.

DIANE: Your work is beautiful, Mom.

MOM: Thank you, honey.

DIANE: I'm wanting to say to my mom, I'm crying because of our pain, because of how our life's been. But instead, I have to focus on the art. I just wanted to say, hey Mom, I'm crying because life's been really hard, and I'm really blown away by your courage for sticking around.

DIANE: Hey Mom, what is beauty to you? You know, I'm making this movie on beauty.

MOM: I think it's the inside of a person, and the outside. Not one, without the other. It takes both, takes both, takes both.

DIANE: Over the past 10 years, I've begun to feel more comfortable in my own skin. I don't mind my stomach so much. I'm actually enjoying my workouts and using them as a discipline, instead of letting them rule me like an addiction. But sometimes, when I stop, I feel vulnerable.

LINDA ZIMMERMAN: In many ways, she's changed in the last 10 years, and in many ways she's the same. She's still running. She's still worried about what she eats. She still has a weird sense of her own body and how she looks. I think in the last 10 years, she's come a long way, or she's released a lot of her exercise drive, and I think she's come a long way in her practice. And she's wanted to contribute.

LINDSEY HANSEN-STURM: Diane has been a harsh judge, and she can slip back. I think that's an obstacle that comes up for her – in terms of judging herself. When we first

hooked up, she was much more judgmental of me. And I think, she's been able to shift that because she's more accepting of herself. It was almost like she was kinda running from something. And now, I feel like she can still run, but then she'll walk, she'll sit. There's more of a variety of her rhythms. She kind of gets something like, 'oh, this is like a healthier way for me to go.' And then, tries to go for it and to heal.

DIANE: Do you feel beautiful now, Mom?

MOM: Yes. I feel more beautiful now that I gave up perfection.

DIANE: I thought that in this journey of healing, that I would arrive somewhere. And somehow, everything would be okay. Like, enlightenment is this place that you get to and there's all this light and you're so okay. And what I've realized in this healing journey is it's so a journey. There's no finish line. Everything's a process. Everything's a moment. Everything's being awake and falling asleep. Everything's a light and a dark. Everything is just an evolution. There's no finish line. The finish line is the gift of life.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

- Eating disorders can arise from a variety of physical, emotional, social, and familial issues.
- The peak onset of eating disorders occurs during puberty and the late teen or early adult years.
- Four out of ten Americans have either suffered or known someone who has suffered from an eating disorder.
- There is help available and recovery is possible.

[END]