



Extreme Weight Loss

Name: Juliana Macht

Grade: Sophomore

Pounds Lost So Far: 63

Lesson: Physical transformation brings a new mental mindset and emotional changes.

STORY BY HAYLEY MUSTIN & AMY HUANG

PHOTO BY GABE RODRIGUEZ

At 4:30 a.m., most students are still in bed, but this is when sophomore Juliana Macht wakes up every day. Half-an-hour later she is at Crossfit working out for the next two hours. This workout regime, amongst other things, is how she has lost 63 pounds in the last five months.

Macht is on the TV show “Extreme Weight Loss” on ABC. With the help of hosts, Chris and Heidi Powell and her trainer Elyse Pearson, Macht and her father hope to reach their own individual weight-loss goals. The father-daughter duo will air in their own two-hour-long episode sometime next summer.

“Extreme Weight Loss” helps people physically, but Macht said it patches relationships, too. “My dad and I used to have a horrible relationship,” she said. “I didn’t want to be his daughter, to say the least. I’ve learned not jump to conclusions with my dad, how to be patient and be a daughter. I learned to be understanding because he’s going through this process the same way I am.”

The process is long and difficult but rewarding at the same time Macht said. Her overall goal from the show is to lose 105 pounds to weigh in at 160 pounds, which is a reasonable weight for her height and age. Once she reaches 160, however, she does not plan to stop. “I want to have a toned body,” Macht said. “I want to have defined arm muscles. I want to work towards abs after I lose the fat.”

Her personal goal is to be a size eight and a medium in clothing. Macht said she hopes to achieve this goal by following her early workout routine. After school, she walks a mile to the King Soopers. Following homework and a carb-free dinner, Macht typically runs for 45 minutes. Through this journey she has found she really enjoys running and is hoping to join track and field in the spring.

To reach her final goal, Macht must undergo the four phases of the TV show.

Phase One is essentially bootcamp: the contestants can not have any communication with family or friends.

“Phase Two is the hardest goal because you come home from boot camp and you’re on your own. They check up on you a couple of times,” Macht said.

In Phase Three, contestants should have almost reached their weight loss goals.

After, in Phase Four, contestants who “qualify,” meaning they have a lot of extra skin, will have skin removal surgery. Other contestants will use the three-month phase as recovery time. Eating right is an equally important part of the weight loss process according to “Extreme Weight Loss.” The show requires girls eat 1,500 calories through five meals a day.

Macht said the hardest part of dieting for her is craving things she can’t have. “I think about [unhealthy foods] and even though I really want it, in the long run it’ll hinder me because I can’t just stop at one,” she said. “It’s like with cigarettes. If you have one cigarette, it’s hard to stop at just one cigarette.”

Macht said she could not have made it this far in her journey without the help of her loved ones. She looks up to Heidi Powell, the wife of show host Chris Powell. “She always says ‘Keep your promises’ and we will talk about it,” Macht said. “Our biggest motto is ‘Recommit.’” So, you say ‘OK, I did this,’ and you go back to your set schedule. You don’t think about what you did wrong because that is just gonna make you have more bad days.”

Through “Extreme Weight Loss,” Macht has experienced significant mental changes. “I used to be a very reserved girl,” she said. “I didn’t talk to very many people. I was severely depressed. I cut myself almost every week and I tried killing myself last March. I was in a very dark place that no one should be, especially as a teenager.”

Through her weight loss experience and therapy, Macht has almost completely recovered from that tragic stage of her life. “The show forced me into counseling,” she said. “I don’t care what you say, therapy helps.”

Macht sees a therapist every Thursday at 3 p.m. “That’s my time,” she said. “That’s how I get through the week because I know I can talk about my problem, on Thursday at 3:00. That’s the time where I can let all my problems out and to talk to someone who I know is there.”

Macht advises students to not give up. “You don’t have to be as extreme as I am, but you can. Start off little. On your first day of working out don’t try to run a marathon. Just keep going. It’s hard to wake up and tell yourself, ‘OK, you have to wake up and go do this.’ But think about your end goal and think about where you want to be. If you want that bad enough, the middle part is easy because you know this is what you gotta do to get where you wanna be.”