

Inside the Minds of MTV's "True Life" Stars

(Part 2 of 2)

*By Judy Connor
Hometown Weekly Staff*

In last week's edition you read about MTV's newest reality series project, entitled "True Life: I want a Perfect Body" which is currently being filmed at CORE Fitness here in Walpole.

Readers became acquainted with the personalities involved in the production of the show, including Rebecca Swimmer, a Harvard University neuroscience PhD student, who wants to take her fitness "to the next level".

You also met Cathy Savage, fitness coach to competitors all across the country, who will be training and coaching Swimmer to ready her for the South Beach National Fitness Pageant held in Florida this April. For Part One, log on to www.hometown-weekly.com and click on "archives".

Can an individual achieve significant change in his or her life, over a short period of time, without the use of drugs, cosmetic surgery, or fad diets? Is it possible to achieve "the perfect body" without an extreme makeover? Cathy Savage, CORE Fitness, MTV and Rebecca Swimmer think so. Most women you ask might answer "thin" as one of their defining characteristics of the perfect body. Some may point out problem areas, such as legs, hips, arms, or stomach. Men may think the perfect body involves more height, broader shoulders, or bigger muscles. But is the perfect body about appearance, or something more? Read on to learn what the show's stars believe the perfect body to be:

Rebecca Swimmer is the person whom all eyes will be watching from the start of the series to the finish, to see if the ambitious endeavor she is undertaking can actually be done. Swimmer describes her definition of the "perfect" body as, "Healthy, fit, and well-toned. It's a body that receives proper nutrition and proper sleep. I wanted to get in really great shape. I had been reading "Oxygen" (a fitness competitors' magazine), and became interested in that level of fitness, which is why I contacted Cathy (Savage)."

In order for Swimmer to progress from an occasional exerciser to an athlete, over a short period of time (less than 16 weeks), her regimen requires consistency and preparation. She now plans and prepares her meals at least a day ahead to avoid the need for fast food or unhealthy choices. She eats a "clean" diet of proteins, vegetables, and fruits, keeps her carbohydrate and sugar intakes moderate, and avoids processed foods.

Swimmer eats five to six small meals a day. She actually needs to consume more calories than before she began training to sustain her level of activity. She drinks a gallon of water a day. She rises early each day to fit in some cardio, and then completes either an upper or lower body workout. Swimmer goes to the gym to meet with Savage four times a week, for about two hours, where she trains and works on her choreography for her stage routine at the April pageant.

Swimmer's performance promises to be amazing. Savage explained that when Swimmer first started working with her in December, she could barely do a single push-up. Two short months later, Swimmer is not only doing push-ups, but can accomplish acrobatics while supporting her body with one hand. Her competition performance uses a re-mix of great songs, including "She Blinded Me with Science", an eighties favorite and a fitting theme for a neuroscientist-turned-alluring-athlete. Swimmer claims to have "two left feet" while rehearsing her choreography, but has nothing but praise for her coaches. Savage and her assistant coach, Paula Harvey, are "motivational and inspirational. The whole experience has just been full of positivity."

So what's it like shooting a reality show? "Definitely not a normal experience," Swimmer laughs. "It's exciting, but low-key. The producer put me at ease right away, which helped allay my nerves. The most surprising thing about it all has been seeing my body transforming, and having my journey, my "before and

after” chronicled on TV.” Her message to women everywhere? É “Surround yourself with positive people and experiences. Don’t limit yourself.”

Cathy Savage, nationally renowned fitness coach, is an incredibly enthusiastic and positive woman who has a passion for every single detail her sport requires. A former competitor herself, she’s as dedicated to building her clients’ self-esteem and self-image as she is to preparing them physically for the demands of their sport. And, she maintains, it is just that- a sport. None of the women she coaches compete professionally. “This is a hobby. These (competitors) are women who love to work out and want to take it beyond the gym. I coach teachers, attorneys, chemical engineers. They all have different backgrounds.”

Savage’s definition of the “perfect” body is simple and sensible. “The perfect body goes beyond mainstream fitness. It involves better muscle toning. It is not the physique you see, for example, on someone in the public eye, like Jennifer Aniston or Halle Berry. We think they’re too skinny.” Savage defines “mainstream” fitness as a limiting approach that often involves a person working only on “problem areas”, or one who may just be going through the motions of their workout, without challenging themselves.

Savage and CORE believe in a more holistic approach. “We don’t train specifically with weights. We do some, but a lot of our work is geared toward functional training. It’s not just this,” she says, while miming arm curls. “Strengthen core muscles, prevent injury- this method of training is great for everyone.”

“We (Savage and CORE) believe in staying feminine, but achieving a more muscular frame and being healthy at the same time. One of the reasons women are prone to diseases like osteoporosis is because we go on bad diets, many of which eliminate food groups. We don’t eat healthy, our bones become brittle, and we’re asking for further health problems down the road. Women need extra muscle to support bones and joints.” Savage further explains, “The perfect body goes beyond the mainstream level of fitness- it’s taking your body further, to build muscle not only to perform and compete in fitness shows, but to have a healthier lifestyle, and to prevent injuries in the future.”

Brian Kablik, CEO of CORE, agrees. “Our approach to fitness, the way our trainers train with our members, is to build core strength and stability. CORE has a dedicated functional training area designed to do those two things. Because in life, you don’t lay on a bench and press up 60 lb. dumbbells,” he says with a laugh. “But if you’re reaching for a kid, you need to have that core training, to avoid injury”

He explains, “Our philosophy is based upon lifestyle enhancement- a belief that everyone’s training program should be designed around making him or her better at whatever they do in life. We take a functional approach to fitness- a method that originated in collegiate and professional sports training. Functional training does not focus on building big, bulky muscles. Instead, it seeks to create a lean and sculptured body that is well coordinated, beautifully symmetrical and capable of responding to every demand performed by a healthy person. The goal is to make the “whole” of the body stronger than the “sum” of its parts. This approach to fitness delivers amazing result whether you are a mother, student athlete, 50-something professional or national fitness competitor.”

Looks like the perfect body is within reach for all of us, regardless of age or fitness level. So how about it? Are you ready for the change? Better strength, better health, calm mind, strong body? MTV knew Cathy Savage and CORE were the team for the job. So what are you waiting for?

The “True Life: I Want a Perfect Body” series is scheduled to air on MTV in June.

For more information about CORE, contact Rick Falzone at 508-850-0006 or visit them online at www.corefitness.us. For more information about Cathy Savage, please visit www.savagechoreography.com.