



PAULA ZAHN NOW

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ZAHN: We continue to follow two teenagers this summer as they both go through a vary dramatic chapter in their lives. They're both overweight, both determined to change their lives by going to a weight-loss camp where they go through the culture shock of mandatory exercise and rigidly limited meals. Seana tells us she's been comforted by being around other overweight kids for the very first time in her life. And then, we've also seen Nathan, the other teen we're following, struggle with homesickness.

Tonight, as you'll see, Nathan's next challenge is literally climbing up a mountain. Here's medical correspondent Elizabeth Cohen.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You have your climbing buddy's life in your hands. So, this is serious stuff. OK?

ELIZABETH COHEN, CNN MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): A little too serious for Nathan Ruffin (ph). Just two weeks ago almost overwhelmed by home sickness, Nathan was on the verge of leaving camp. Despite all his pleas, his mother forced him to stay and now they want him to do this?

NATHAN RUFFIN, WEIGHT-LOSS CAMP MEMBER: I'm not going to go.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'm going to try it.

COHEN: His friends try to convince him.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Once you get up past this little bit, it's easy. You fly up like I did.

COHEN: But it doesn't work.

RUFFIN: I don't know. I'm nervous. I'm going to let Neal go first.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Why has that been go ahead, Neal? Why not go ahead, Nathan?

RUFFIN: I don't know. I've got to think about it some more.

COHEN: So, what does all of this have to do with losing weight? Everything. Kids like Nathan got heavy in the first place because they used food as a crutch; as a coping mechanism.

When the going gets tough, they eat. The lesson here for Nathan at Well Spring Adventure Camp in the rugged mountains of North Carolina: How to be scared out of your mind and deal with it without relying on food.

RUFFIN: It's OK.

COHEN: So, will Nathan conquer his fears? Will he scale this mountain?

Seana Rubeck (ph), the other camper we're following this summer, has climbed her own mountain.

(on camera): Did you ever think about leaving? SEANA RUBECK, WEIGHT-LOSS CAMP MEMBER: I thought about it all the time. You know, like I wanted to leave, but I wasn't -- I didn't want to at the same time, because this is where I want to be. You know, I'm doing this for myself.

COHEN (voice-over): She started out determined, but after about a week, Seana began to miss her parents terribly. They've been writing her letters.

RUBECK: I'm so proud of you Seana, I can't believe what you're doing for yourself at such a young age. You're almost halfway through your experience, Seana. I'm very proud of you.

COHEN: But they weren't right here to help her and her usual comfort foods ice cream, pizza, French fries, also not available.

COHEN (on camera): If you were at home and having a really bad day, how would you deal with that really bad day?

RUBECK: I would gorge and I would just go to the fridge and start eating or I'd just sit on my butt and do nothing.

COHEN: And now how do you deal with a really bad day?

RUBECK: I talk to people about it and you know, they cheer you up like that. It's really amazing, because we're all here for the same reason and they know what you're going through.

COHEN: It's been tough, but talking instead of eating has paid off. At the camp's weekly ceremony, Seana reaches the next level.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Are you willing to commit to the responsibilities of being a hunter?

RUBECK: Yes, I am.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Congratulations.

RUBECK: Thanks.

COHEN: In 14 days, Seana's lost 13 pounds.

(on camera): Two hundred and thirty-nine.

RUBECK: Two hundred and thirty-nine.

COHEN: To 226

RUBECK: Yes.

COHEN: In two weeks?

RUBECK: Yes.

COHEN: And how do you feel?

RUBECK: I feel great, because my pants are getting looser and my shirts are getting looser.

COHEN (voice-over): Seana has done more than just lose weight, she's gained confidence.

RUBECK: Before, I really didn't like mirrors. I didn't like what was looking back at me and now, I love to look in the mirror now, because I really think I'm pretty.

COHEN: Meanwhile, back at the base of the mountain, Nathan still doesn't know what to do.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Before I knew it, I was already up at the top.

COHEN: Nathan decides he can't make it to the top like his friend David, but he does resolve to try to go up at least part of the way.

RUFFIN: You see where that rock is with the green like, mold stuff sticking out right there, that's my goal for right now. I think I can do it. Actually, I know I can do it. I have to do it.

COHEN: At first.

RUFFIN: Whoa.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You have to use all the your power to walk backward.

RUFFIN: Can you make it tighter?

COHEN: Then he gets it. But then...

RUFFIN: I'm about to get down. Really.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Nathan, where did you set your goal to get to?

COHEN: The camp director reminds him that he'd set a goal for himself and he's not even close. So, Nathan who never thought he could do it climbs and he climbs. He ends up going past his original goal and making it to the top.

RUFFIN: Am I doing all right? OK.

COHEN: Quite a journey for a young man who's only desire two weeks ago, was to go back home.

RUFFIN: Hey, I may do this again.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

ZAHN: And I bet he will. Elizabeth Cohen reporting for us.