



CASE STUDY #22: CASEY (Anexoria)

Actually I worked with Casey while I was counseling at the high school level. She was an athlete and extremely intelligent. Among her many friends were the leaders of the school, whom she encouraged to volunteer in community events. Casey even started a district-wide elementary school track and field competition attracting many young people and their adult coaches. She was comfortable with both students and adult advisors, joking and keeping everyone comfortable, while downplaying the competition aspect and emphasizing the individual achievement over the “team identity” which motivates some coaches. All the awards and snacks were donated through her community connections.

Knowing my background as a track/field athlete and coach she enlisted me as the starter and judge for the field events. Throughout the planning and execution she impressed me to no end! After the event she conducted a thorough evaluation with suggestions for improvements for next year. How many seventeen year-olds are capable of that? (For that matter how many adults are that well organized ?) I learned so much from her that the rest of this case study is going to seem impossible.

Naturally with glowing recommendations from her teachers, community leaders and coaches she was offered full rides to numerous universities throughout the nation.

While excelling in basketball she preferred volleyball and chose a school that was close to the beach so she could play indoors and beach volleyball during the off season.

Since her personality type was “pleaser” it was always her primary goal to do exactly what her coaches wanted. As bad luck would have it her college coach was demanding beyond what any normal coach would consider reasonable. Towards the end of practice during the first week of training the “coach” yelled “Casey, can’t you jump any higher than that? Get that big butt off the ground!” **That tactless comment changed her life forever!**

Being the pleaser she ran out after practice to the nearest drugstore to buy some epafatac (a drug which induces vomiting). She spent the entire weekend in the bathroom “losing weight” not to mention critical body fluids.

To make matters worse when she entered the gym her teammates said how great she looked and even the ogre coach chimed in “Ok now let’s see if you can block some shots... that’s what your scholarship is for you know?”

She did “get a little more air” for that practice but the reason was probably due to adrenaline rather than the eight pound weight loss. As the practice week went on Casey began suffering from her new diet of pills and celery. When forced to drink Gatorade during workouts she became nauseous. She would take a little sip then run into the bathroom and barf. When she would stumble back to practice the “coach” would yell: “OK...that’s what it takes to win championships! I want to see that kind of

commitment from the rest of you slackers!"

Casey had become obsessed with her weight. She confided in me several years later how she hated looking in the mirror because even at 90 pounds on her 6'2" frame she saw "a fat worthless excuse for a volleyball player that was letting her team down." She would go to the drug store and steal copious amounts of epahatac and spend hours punching the little pills out of the plastic bubbles. Her fingers would get sore and blister so she would have to use a screwdriver or some other tool to collect the hundreds of pills she took daily. (We are now talking a serious addiction which most certainly causes major health issues; and it did)

Her first major injury lost a full-ride scholarship. The simple act of stepping off a tiny curb shattered her ankle. Doctors were flabbergasted at how much damage could result from such a simple act. When results of various tests were obtained it was obvious that her entire system was out of balance. She had virtually zero calcium in her emaciated body. Pituitary system dysfunction was another result of her obsession.

She didn't even finish a freshman season that many thought would lead to a national championship and then on to the US Olympic team.

That was just the beginning of her health issues. A few years later she was diagnosed with a brain tumor which required major surgery. Since her immune system was compromised recovery was much longer than normal plus the skull section became infected and had to be replaced with a ceramic plate. She almost died on several occasions.

During this period of her life Casey enrolled in college and graduated with honors with a Clinical Psychology major. After that she earned a masters degree in psychotherapy with a (you guessed it) speciality in eating disorders.

Her connection to the "I CARE" program involved counselling young women in our group about Anorexia and Bulimia. Her creative approach included a life-sized cardboard cutout of a Barbie doll. It was six feet tall and was the exact proportions of the doll. You can imagine how freakish that tiny waist line looked. Her presentation pointed out how our society encourages girls to try to look like some unreachable body image. No wonder our culture has so many troubled teen girls.

I hear from Casey every few years. She has a thriving counseling practice and speaks at conferences addressing her personal battle with eating disorders.

Note: On the few occasions that we have dined together I feel that she still doesn't eat as much as a normal person. It's not my business but I still feel for her.