



# Sherri SHEPHERD

## *a Woman with a Plan*

By Tobi Schwartz-Cassell

With the release of her second book, this famous, funny and very down-to-earth woman is juggling so many projects, the “D” in *Plan D* should stand for “Determination!”

It was November 13, and Sherri and I spoke shortly after she rose from her seat on the set of *The View*. It was Whoopi Goldberg’s birthday, and one of the many fun surprises for her during the broadcast was an appearance by The Rascals. Whoopi sang back-up while Sherri, Barbara Walters and Jenny McCarthy danced onstage from the wings.

**TSC:** So what was it like, bopping out onstage this morning to The Rascals’ “Good Lovin’?” What a great way to start a show!

**SS:** It was great because my dad and mom used to dance to that all the time. I walked out with Barbara and we were dancing backstage. That was really a lot of fun.

**TSC:** Let’s turn to your newest book *Plan D*. The “D” stands for diabetes, but I couldn’t help but think that it also stands for denial. Is denial something that other newly diagnosed diabetics go through?

**SS:** Oh absolutely! Because you’re scared! It’s easier to be in denial because you don’t have to

acknowledge it, and not acknowledging it means you don’t have to make any changes. But denial is deadly. So there are a lot of Ds in there.

**TSC:** Your mom passed away at 41 from complications of diabetes.

**SS:** Yes. She never took care of herself. My family never talked about diabetes. We called it “the sugar.” When you call it that, there’s really no urgency to fix anything because nothing sounds wrong. We just thought it was normal for people to not have a leg or a foot or be blind. My mother never thought about taking her blood sugar. We just knew there were times we needed to take her to the



hospital because she didn’t feel well. When I started to have the symptoms, I figured that if I didn’t talk about it, it would go away. But it never did.

**TSC:** You were diagnosed during the process of interviewing for *The View*. How were you able to put on a professional face?

**SS:** Girl, it was rough! I didn’t want to tell anybody because you don’t want people to think you’re sick. I didn’t know too much about diabetes myself, so I sure didn’t want to tell anybody else that I was sick and couldn’t do the job they hired me to do. Yet I’m sitting at the table and my hands are shaking because my blood sugar was either too low or too high, so it was very stressful, PLUS my coping mechanism is food! It was like a double whammy! I couldn’t eat a cheesecake to make me feel better.

So I had to go through all of those feelings completely raw while at the same time fighting for custody of my son. I was flying back and forth to LA to see my son, go to court and do depositions, and I could not have a cheesecake!

**TSC:** And you couldn’t show how you really felt.

**SS:** And I couldn’t show how I really felt! I didn’t even know how to handle it. I didn’t have a team of doctors, I didn’t know who to turn to, and I kind of learned about diabetes on my own.

**TSC:** Did you consult a team of physicians while putting your book together?

**SS:** Yes I did. I talked to my cardiologist, my primary care physician, my internist, my ophthalmologist and my podiatrist. That is really, really important. When people read my book, it is not Sherri saying, “This is ‘Dr. Shepherd’ making these claims.” You can take my book to a doctor and say, “Look at this. How true is that?” And he or she will say, “Yes, absolutely.”

And what it also is, is part Sherri’s life, and as funny as I can make diabetes because my life is just crazy. I talk about scientific stuff, too, like what the glycemic index and glycemic scale are.

It is definitely doctor-endorsed, but I also add what the doctors didn’t say like: What do you do at 11 o’clock and the Oreos are

calling to you? What do you do when you’re hungry? What do you do when you’re feeling like you’re about to give up? What do you do when you hate exercising? I didn’t need to go to a doctor for that. *That’s Dr. Sherri.*

**TSC:** In *Plan D*, you stress non-perfection. Why is it okay to not stick to your plan 100%?

**SS:** Because I think everybody has to forgive themselves. If you said to your best friend, “You know what? I tried this and it’s not working. I’m such a worthless person. I may as well go back to what I was doing before.” And your best friend would go, “No you’re not worthless! First of all, this is what you did today and yesterday: A, B, C, D, E and F. And hey, you might have had cheesecake but look how much you turned it down the entire week.” And she would build you back up. So I say that we have to be our own best friend.

Like this weekend, chicken was in my face all weekend. And I kept saying no all weekend. Then all of a sudden Whoopi (Goldberg) had to judge a fried chicken contest on *The View*. We had two chefs come on the show with fried chicken, and I just said, “You know what? How’s this going to make me feel?” I’ve learned to self-talk. And I ate two pieces of chicken in two buttery milk biscuits with hot pepper jelly. Now I don’t have to deal with the problem when I see a Popeye’s or a KFC. I had my chicken. Did it raise my blood sugar? Yes. But I immediately ate some fiber afterward and I immediately put my zumba pants on and I found a zumba class.

**TSC:** With the holidays coming up, what will you do to maintain your health while still enjoying yourself?

**SS:** Again, it comes down to choices. For Thanksgiving, I had some banana cream pudding. I love banana pudding. It’s my favorite and my aunt makes it just right. But then I also knew...I can’t have banana pudding, sweet potato pie and macaroni and cheese. Two of them had to go. So I had banana cream pudding, that was my dessert, but I also made greens with turkey and another vegetable.

Instead of the two starches, I had more vegetables. I had some fruit, and I had water instead of juice and the eggnog. And I planned it all two weeks before Thanksgiv-

ing. I think that if you go into the holidays all willy nilly, then your entire eating is going to be willy nilly. And I talked to my protective team, which is my husband and my son. I said, “Jeffrey, if you see Mommy eating this, you come over to me.”

**TSC:** In your book *Permission Slips*, you talk about your personal anthem, “Do it Scared.” What does that mean?

**SS:** Sometimes we get a little tingling in our stomach and there’s a tape that plays in our mind telling us we’re not worth it. With me it’s “Who do I think I am? People are going to see me for the fraud that I am.” We are so scared and the fear paralyzes us. But I gotta get it done anyway so I’m gonna do it scared!

When you do it scared you look up and you say, “At least I did it.” And I found that out on *Dancing with the Stars*. People would not think I have stage fright but literally standing on that floor doing something that is not in my comfort zone, which is dancing, and they say, “Dancing the Jive is Sherri Shepherd and her partner Val Chmerkovskiy!”...well, I forgot every step. But I said to myself, “I’m going to do this.” And I said to my son, “Even though Mommy is scared, she can do something that scares her.” I just kept saying I was dancing for my son. Brooke Burke told me to pretend that this is a bedtime story you’re telling your son, but you’re acting out the bedtime story in dance. And even though I got voted off, I did it scared.

**TSC:** How much preparation do you have to do for your interviews on *The View*?

**SS:** Oh my gosh! We start at 9 o’clock in the morning. We discuss different things and if it makes us passionate, then Barbara will say, “Okay, let’s not talk about it anymore, let’s talk about it at the table.” Because if you talk too much about it, you’ll run out of steam before you get to the table.

And then our research department will pull a couple of articles on each topic we decide to talk about. And I have literally about 15 minutes to read all the articles and figure out what my opinion is about everything.

**TSC:** With three other intelligent women on *The View*, how do you get a word in edgewise? *(continued on page 20)*

## A Few of Sherri’s Favorite Things



### WIGS

**LUXHAIR™ NOW for Sherri Shepherd™:** “Girlfriend-to-Girlfriend...you were born with the hair you’ve got. Now get the hair you want,” she says. [www.wigs.com/sherri-shepherd-wigs.html](http://www.wigs.com/sherri-shepherd-wigs.html)



### TELEVISION

**The View:** On ABC, weekdays at 11AM  
**NickMom Night Out:** On Nickelodeon (check listings)  
**The Newlywed Game:** On the Game Show Network (check listings)



### BOOKS

**Plan D: How to Lose Weight and Beat Diabetes Even If You Don’t Have It** and **Permission Slips: Every Woman’s Guide to Giving Herself a Break**



### WEBSITE

[www.sherrishepherd.com](http://www.sherrishepherd.com)



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**SS:** It's like playing double-dutch. And girl, I'm like the Queen of Double-Dutch! You look for that space where you can run into the rope and you take it. And if you don't take it, you lose your turn. So for me, talking at the table is like jumping double-dutch. Barbara (Walters) taught me that.

**TSC:** Would you rather interview or be interviewed?

**SS:** I'm really curious about people. I love talking to people and figuring out what makes them tick. But being interviewed, to me, is like sitting on the couch with a girlfriend. I like that too, 'cause I'm sitting on the couch with a girlfriend and just running my dag gone mouth.

**TSC:** You are a star in every sense of the word and on *The View*, you interview many, many stars. Are you still starstruck?

**SS:** Every day. I used to be a legal secretary, and to actually meet people who you saw on TV or you read about or saw in a movie, is pretty darn cool. Heck, I get starstruck when I'm sitting next to Barbara or Whoopi! Are you kidding me?

**TSC:** Some of our readers had some questions for you. Our first reader question comes from Angelica Irizarry: Who was

**your favorite interview?**

**SS:** President Obama and Steve Martin. And Bill Clinton, because he's really charismatic.

**TSC:** And why the other two?

**SS:** I wanted to see the person who my grandmother never thought could be in office. Someone who looked like her. She never thought in her lifetime she would see anybody who looked like her being the leader of the free world. And I am incredibly proud of him.

And Steve Martin because I completely idolize him because he is a comedian and a comedic actor, yet he's introverted and I wanted to know what makes him tick.

**TSC:** The first time I saw you and fell in love with your talent was on *Everybody Loves Raymond*. What was that like working on that set?

**SS:** Ohhhh! Sergeant Judy!

**TSC:** I loved when you'd yell at those men who were so much taller than you!

**SS:** Yes! I know. They were great! Brad Garrett is just...they are ALL funny! They're really hysterical! Ray Romano never did the same take twice, Brad Garrett always made me laugh, Patricia Heaton, I keep in touch with her to this day, and Mr. Boyle was just such a true gentleman, and Doris Roberts was the classiest lady. They were all so nice to me and so humble. They appreciated where they were and I loved being on that show every single week.

**TSC:** And you were very funny as "Rhonda the tour guide" on *Friends* way back in 1998.

**SS:** *Friends* was great. That was one of my first guest-starring roles. Jennifer Aniston was one of the nicest women to me in the world. She was great. She was awesome.



**TSC:** You have a very strong relationship with God. What role does God play in your life?

**SS:** He is my everything...my life...my right arm. If you tell me not to talk about God I feel like you're telling me to cut off my left leg. I would not be here if it were not for God. I thank Him every day that I wake up...that I didn't have a stroke—a diabetic complication. I thank Him for the miracle of my son who was born at 25 weeks at a pound and 10 ounces and everybody said he would be... and at the time they said mentally retarded, that's the word they used...and that he would have cerebral palsy and be paralyzed. And he's not. And I thank God for allowing me to wake up every day and do stuff that is just fun. And I thank God that I get a parking space. I thank God that I got a husband who loves my son and who is this darlin' who can take all my bitchiness and he just laughs at me and he makes me laugh. I thank God that from the ugliness of divorce and a custody battle, I got a great guy. I thank God I get to sit between Barbara Walters and Whoopi Goldberg and learn! I thank God that He gave me the gift of laughter to stand on stage and make people laugh at the craziness of my life. But I did ask God why I got voted off *Dancing with the Stars*. And hopefully if I get to heaven, that is one of the questions I'm going to ask because I didn't get to do a samba. I'm going to ask Him, "Why Lord, why did I get voted off when I did?"

**TSC:** Tell us about YAI. What is it and what is its mission?

**SS:** YAI helped my son when he was 2 years old and he could only say 2 words. Everyone told me he wouldn't talk. But at YAI, they loved on my son so much. Their services are free and everyone with a child with special needs is always asking, "What is going to happen to my child if something happens to me?" I love the fact that I'm blessed to be able to put my child in special school, but there are many parents who are at work wondering, "Are they treating my child right? Did they put him in a corner? Do they have patience? Are they loving on him or her?" And I fight to get services for YAI because of what they do for people. They care, they love, they connect and they're compassionate. From birth to death, they got you.

**TSC:** So you want another child?

**SS:** We're doing fertility, hubby and I, and we're doing a gestational carrier. So it's my

egg, his sperm, our embryo and we're going to have somebody carry it because I was on bed rest for most of my pregnancy and I came early and I don't want to go through that again. That's a hard one, having a premature baby. Anyone who's had one knows it's scary.

**TSC:** What does your husband do?

**SS:** My husband's a writer. He writes sitcoms. He wrote for the Rodney Carrington Show but it got cancelled.

**TSC:** So he's looking for another gig?

**SS:** A writer's like an actor. You're ALWAYS looking for another gig! Hell, when you're a talk show host you're always looking for a gig. Nothing is ever permanent.

When they asked me, "Do you want to do the *Newlywed Game*?" I said, "Yes!"

When they asked, "Do you want to do *30 Rock*?" I said, "Yes!"

**TSC:** And my daughter's been watching you on *How I Met Your Mother*...

**SS:** That was another one. "Sherri, do you want to fly out to do..." "Yes!"

**TSC:** Reader question from Cheryl Hanover: How do you keep your busy life in balance?

**SS:** I get on my knees in prayer. That's a priority. It has to not take away from Jeffrey and Sal. So you don't see me on too many red carpets or at parties. To me that's unnecessary because I've got a family. And if it's something that will further the future, I'll do it as long as...Elisabeth Hasselback said, "You have a lot of spinning plates. Make sure your husband and your kids are not one of them."

**TSC:** Reader question from Karrie Hoogerwerff Mammoccio: How many wigs do you own?

**SS:** I have over 100 wigs.

**TSC:** In terms of entertainment, you've done it all! What else do you want to accomplish?

**SS:** I would like to produce. I'm in talks now. I have two shows that I'm in negotiations to executive produce so I'd like to do behind-the-scenes stuff. I'd like to go back on *Dancing with the Stars*. I keep telling them they have to have an edition bringing back everyone who got the least amount of votes. I saw my partner Val yesterday and he said, "Will you let it go?" And I said, "No! I love that show!"

**TSC:** Anything else on your calendar?

**SS:** I got a movie coming out with Chris Rock, Rosario Dawson and Kevin Hart. It's called *Finally Famous* and I play his ex-girlfriend. Chris wrote and directed it. We just finished production so it's coming out next year.

And I'm working on another book about Jeffrey and all his shenanigans. I think that's it. **g**

For the entire interview with Sherri Shepherd go to [www.girlfriendzmag.com/2013/11/sherri-shepherd/](http://www.girlfriendzmag.com/2013/11/sherri-shepherd/)