



Frank Tortorici describes himself as a renaissance man and it is an accurate description of this 30-year-old personal trainer, holistic life coach, actor, model, rapper and health food entrepreneur. Frank invites kids and teens with TS interested in his super healthy lifestyle ideas to e-mail their questions about diet and exercise to him directly at: rebirth028@hotmail.com.

and know that it is now my lily pad to the joyous and abundant! I wasn't able to speak about TS. I wasn't able to embrace it. People in my life are surprised that I speak about it now. I was tight about it then, but not now.

TSA: What was life like for you when you were growing up?

Frank: My parents were very supportive and they did their best. They are some of the best parents in the world! They took me to doctors and to a TSA gathering, but it didn't resonate with me. I wished I had somebody to talk to who was younger and not a pot bellied doctor with glasses in my face. There were everyday people at that meeting; people who lived with TS. But I wanted a heroic figure. I wanted a role model, people who were successful in the world and dealing with TS.

TSA: Does anyone else in your family have TS?

Frank: No. Ironically, I know there was one other kid in my class in high school on Long Island with TS and at least two others in my town and the next one over. I still keep in touch with two of them. One does nothing about it (TS) and it hinders his life in dating and work. The other bombards himself with medications. I give them pointers, but many people are afraid to address the core. TS is physical, but it's also spiritual and

emotional. TS was the 'cancer in my soul.' It was feelings of being unworthy. I had to heal my soul and give back to people. Bruce Lee said, "I'm here not to teach you, but to help you explore yourself."

TSA: You experienced some dramatic changes in your life, from an introverted kid to a very high-energy extrovert. Was there a time when things began to change?

Frank: In 2000 I bombed at an audition. I could not focus and I broke down. It was a turning point for me; a breakthrough. I just kept hiding my TS and masking it for so long. Having TS was a block and I was never able to tap into my true creativity. In school I'd been a great student, but I couldn't take tests. I was afraid of who was looking at me. And this fear of twitching was rolling over into my audition process. That audition was the breakthrough. I realized I had to let go and find a solution to my problem.

There's been a progression to where I want to be. I began researching nutrition and holistic approaches, raw foods and healthy animal products. Food allergies are definitely a trigger for me. Nutrition, exercise and spirituality are a healthy combination. 'You are what you eat' is my slogan!

My spiritual practice is what has helped me. I've read the writings of a lot of great teachers and

identified my self-worth. I didn't know my life calling; I didn't know my destiny. Nothing made sense in life. We are just a leaf blowing in the wind until we find out why we are here.

TSA: As an actor and rapper, what do you think of the way people with TS are portrayed in the media?

Frank: The media is the media. It's one-sided. It's always the person with outbursts. It's the person who is disruptive. It's the nerd or the eyesore. It's unfair. My drive is to change that. I've done modeling and I've been featured in exercise magazines. It's what I do. I would love to shine a light on it, we're not just nerdy and insecure. The media hasn't portrayed us well at all.

TSA: Do you have any advice for kids with TS?

Frank: Most people walk through life asleep. A disorder makes you stand out and look in the mirror. It's an opportunity to find a solution, not be a victim. Focus on the good and the ladder is there for you to climb out of the hole.

Eat for nutrition not just for taste. I've gone into high schools in LA with hip hop stars and actors to talk about pure foods. My dream is to hit that MTV audience. I plan on shaking the world with my message. ●

TSA: When were you diagnosed?

Frank: When I was in third grade I was the star pitcher on my baseball team. I was called on to pitch in high-pressure situations. My coach noticed a nervous twitch and told my mom. I started to develop facial twitches and I was sniffing my hand. By fourth grade I was diagnosed with TS.

TSA: What kind of impact has TS had on your life and work?

Frank: It's funny, growing up as a child with TS, I was an introvert. Working out is what saved me. I joined a gym in 7th grade. Being an introvert, and dealing with my inner demons from TS, pushed me to where I am right now — in front of the camera and speaking out.

TS pushed me to where I am now because I had to overcome adversity. It pushed me to do what I do. It's amazing to be an adult and look back at something that drove me to the brink, to very dark suicidal thoughts, rock bottom

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