

De Rossi's Journey to Self-Acceptance

Portia de Rossi counts herself lucky to be alive, said Julie Jordan in *People*. The actress, 37, spent years starving herself, convinced that she was too fat and ugly to compete in Hollywood. At the height of her problems with anorexia, de Rossi was limiting herself to 300 calories a day, and recalls "bingeing" on sugarless gum and wondering how many calories she could burn by sobbing. "If I didn't eat, I felt invincible," she says. Complicating matters, she was gay and deeply in the closet. After being offered a role on the TV series *Ally McBeal*, she worried that her career would be ruined if she were outed. "I knew being openly gay wasn't an option," she says. "What if the press found out?" Eventually she dropped to 82 pounds, prompting her brother to convince her to seek treatment for eating disorders. After a decade of treatment, she's healthy and in love, married to talk-show host Ellen DeGeneres. "I met Ellen when I was 168 pounds and she loved me. She saw only the person inside." Love helped her accept herself. "My two greatest fears, being fat and being gay, when realized, led to my greatest joy."

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