

FRAN DRESCHER

HOW THE NANNY CHANGED MY PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE

by G. James Daichendt

Fran Drescher, the Queens native known for her iconic laugh and strong disposition spent a day with the Beverly Hills Lifestyle crew and challenged our perspective on life. An energy buzzed through the room as Fran was whisked back and forth by our fashion editor and photography crew to test what proved to be a great set. Fran embraced the classic Hollywood theme of the photo shoot which seemed to perfectly represent her persona that was different than the Fran I had known from watching TV.

Best known for her role as Fran Fine on the hit series *The Nanny*, Drescher actually created, directed, and wrote the show with her then husband, Peter Marc Jacobson. Since *The Nanny*, Fran has become a fierce activist while balancing a career as an actress, producer, and author. She has come a long way from the woman who got her big break in *Saturday Night Fever*, when she delivered line, "So, are you as good in bed as you are on the dance floor?" to John Travolta.

Fran's most recent project on the small screen is *Happily Divorced*. In the series, Fran plays an LA based florist whose husband of 18 years comes out of the closet. But with the economy so poor they must continue to live together and navigate their new relationship within close proximity. It's a premise that writer Mark A. Perigard called a "middle aged *Will & Grace* that is kinder and funnier." The show is inspired by Fran's real life marriage to the co-creator and ex-husband, Peter Marc Jacobson. Drescher and Jacobson have a long and successful history of creating hilarious television shows together, and this one is no different.

While Fran is currently anticipating her second season of *Happily Divorced* on TV Land, she is also embroiled in educating and creating awareness for living a preventative and healthy lifestyle. Fran fought a well-documented battle with cancer and it was this struggle, miss-diagnosis, and an overall failure by the medical community that led her to start the Cancer Schmancer Movement. Fran says, "folks don't realize that 90 percent of cancer is lifestyle and environment related." Headed by Drescher, this organization empowers consumers to take control of their bodies. It aims to influence legislators while changing the way we think.

Black strapless gown and printed coat by Mark Zunino Couture, price upon request, markzunino.com, necklace by Tivon, tivonjewels.com, ring by DeMarco, demarcojewels.

Photography: JSquared
Makeup by John Stapleton for AIM Artists
Hair by Judd Minter for AIM Artists
Styling by Toni Ferrara
Assisted by Stephanie Berke



Red feather shrug by Mark Zunino
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As she spoke, Fran's genuine concern for this growing problem was evident. The next generation's lifespan is predicted to be shorter than previous generations because of unhealthy habits. She says, "We need to take control of our bodies, become greater partners with our physicians, and galvanize as one to let our legislators know that the collective female vote is louder and more powerful than that of the richest corporate lobbyists."

Fran envisions an organization that was "educational and glamorous." Something that would encourage a "shift from a solution based understanding of cancer to a preventative lifestyle." The average American home is loaded with toxins. We wear those toxins on our clothes and put them in our bodies through our food. "Folks need to wake up and smell the coffee," Fran declared. As she continued, a welling of passion grew inside of me. The energy in her voice and the fervor displayed was inspiring. But my skeptical mind brought me back by thinking about this impossible task. How can this almost universal mentality about cancer be reversed?

Fran compares the obstacle of educating America to turning a giant cruise ship around. "We need to let go of old 20th century ideas about medicine and embrace a new lifestyle in the 21st century. It's unacceptable that many diseases have their source in environmental toxins." The solution is education and specifically combating it on a local level.

This is why Fran is launching and advocating for individuals to host "Trash Cancer" parties around the country. It's a simple way that people can create awareness and change. The purpose is to detox your home in fun and encouraging ways, focusing on cleaning products, food, and skin products. Fran thinks this program is exactly what we need to wake up and realize what we are doing to our bodies. But her concerns go beyond the home and into ecology.

Fran continues, "It's frustrating that food doesn't have the nutrition that we need. The way we farm needs to change and instead we need to farm more like the prairie." Growing the same foods over and over, the way modern farming has developed, destroys the minerals that are needed to grow healthy food. Fran's interest in ecology is connected to her worldview on this topic. Part of this education would include smarter farming that will enrich the earth so we are better stewards and grow healthier food.

The United States is ranked 25th in world health. Fran is discouraged that we are a follower, not the leader in this field. She is also still disheartened by the fact that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 2 men will have cancer in their lifetime. Yet I am incredibly encouraged that someone like Fran has taken this host of issues to heart.

Fran's efforts are working. The early detection and awareness she and her movement are sharing gives hope and seem like the logical way to go. A magic pill is not available and if cancer is detected early, over 90 percent of its victims survive. That is cause for celebration and reveals why Fran is so passionate. Her laugh mixed with a conglomerate of facts about my well being had me convinced.

Later that night I quickly recited much of the information I had learned to my wife. I scoured my notes and I tried to relay facts and statistics Fran had shared. I spoke passionately about the chemicals and toxins present in American homes as I pointed judgingly at the cabinet under the sink. I had gotten the memo.

We all know and love Fran for her uniqueness and her roles as a film and television star. Her accent alone, that represents one of New York City's unlikely boroughs, is constantly present in her demeanor and part of what makes her relatable to the everyday person. Yet after hearing her story and her passion for civil liberties, gay rights, art in education, ecology, and sustainable living along with activism for preventive cancer, who she is as a person seemed much more important. Her new children's book entitled "Being Whimsy" adequately captures my feelings about her. In Fran's own words the book "celebrates uniqueness and individuality and how to feel good about yourself." For many people, this is a notion that is needed and rangs true on several levels.



Sequin gown by Theia, theiacouture.com,
bangles by LeVian, LeVian.com.