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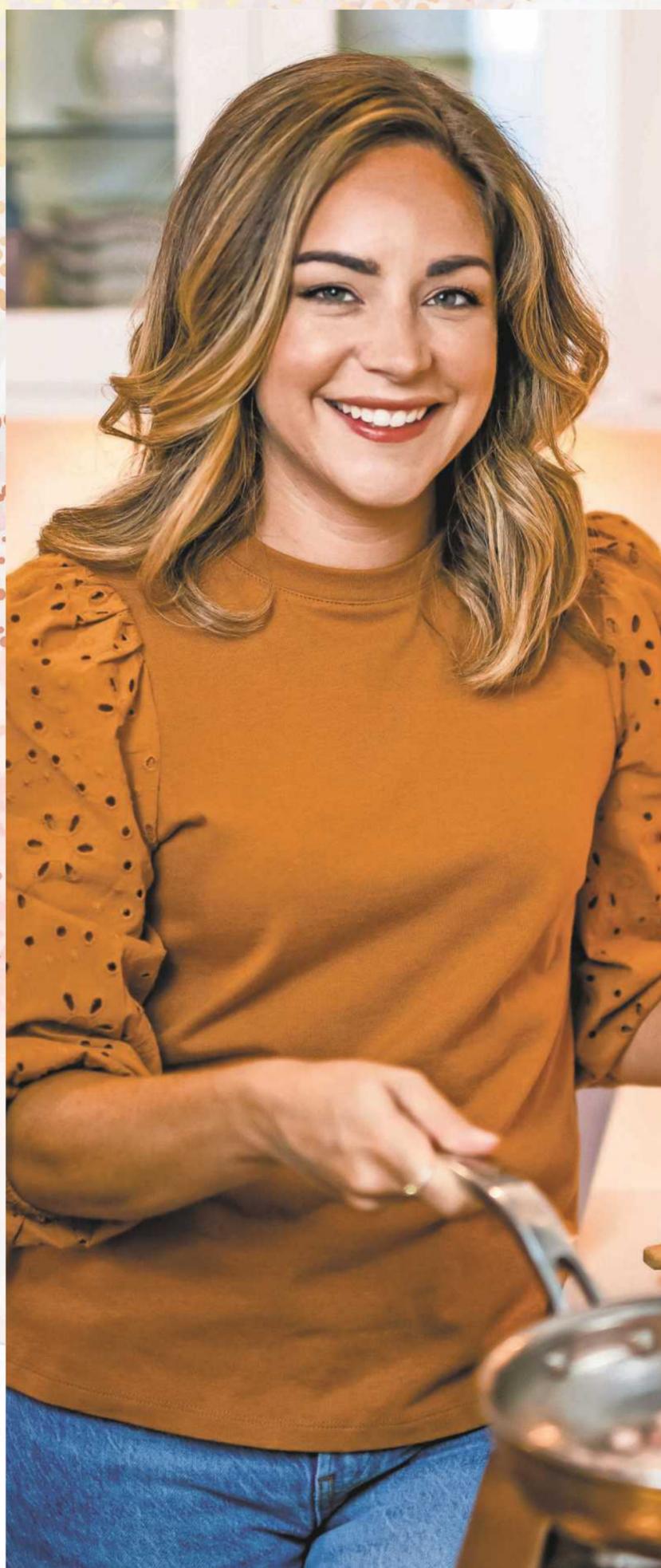


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LIFE



Home COOKING

Family recipes, onscreen and off

Joram Mushinske
NorthJersey.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

For Dina Deleasa-Gonsar, family life always revolved around the kitchen and the importance of coming together. “Family meals are built-in ‘facetime,’” she said. “Everyone needs to eat, and if you can do it together, it helps count towards the ever-challenging family time.”

Deleasa-Gonsar is the creator of the popular food blog DishItGirl.com, was named Best Home Cook by the Hallmark Channel in 2016, and appeared on E!’s *Married To Jonas* alongside her sister, Danielle, and Danielle’s husband, Kevin Jonas of the pop-rock band The Jonas Brothers.

On her site, she shares her family’s traditions and recipes as well as modern-day twists on food and entertaining. She loves cooking with her daughter, Siena, and hopes to inspire other home cooks to venture out and create meals that become the centerpiece for family time.

“All the work my parents put into Sunday dinners, holidays, and other gatherings inspired me,” she said. “Now all of my siblings and I do our best to make sure we are together as often as possible.”

How did you get into cooking?

“I started when I was very young. My mom and grandmother were always in the kitchen, and I was always climbing up to the counter. My dad also brought me along on his many foodie adventures on

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Dina Deleasa-Gonsar — of dishitgirl.com — prepares family recipes, on-screen and off COURTESY OF LAUREL CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

Valerie Bertinelli on Eddie Van Halen, ‘cathartic’ book

Erin Jensen
USA TODAY

Valerie Bertinelli is learning to ignore her inner critic.

Her journey to self-acceptance inspired her new book, “Enough Already: Learning to Love the Way I Am Today” (available now). Throughout the collection of essays giving insight into her

self-doubt, relationship with rocker Eddie Van Halen and the troubles plaguing her second marriage, the actress and Food Network star also documents her preoccupation with her size. At 13, she started weighing herself twice daily “without ever being happy or satisfied with the number I see.” Dieting began at 15, her age when her show “One Day at a Time” premiered.

Bertinelli, 61, tells USA TODAY that shedding her old ways of thinking is a process, as a connection between weight and worth was formed early on.

“I learned at a very, very young age that gaining weight made me unlovable,” she says. “I watched my dad not love my mother as much when she gained weight. I had an elementary school teacher point at my belly and say

‘You’d better watch that.’ Before that, I wasn’t even aware of my body. I’m doing my best to get that and scrape it all out of me. But it takes time.”

“Enough Already” also served as a vessel for Bertinelli’s anguish after the death of her first husband, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame member Van Halen. Bertinelli

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