



Fixing Dad

Son 1

Stop for a moment and look around. If you're as lucky as we are There are people you can't imagine being without.

When you're a kid, your dad's a hero. There's no-one stronger, greater or braver than your dad.

But there are heroes and there are superheroes. As you grow up, there are hundreds of stories you could tell about all the times your dad made you laugh, made you strong, made you feel safe. And that was how it was for us. Dad was always a superhero. But one day we'd learn even a superhero can fall.

In November 2013, Dad was a disaster waiting to happen. Looking back now, we don't know why we didn't see it before. We were mid -30s, with our own lives, and we thought we didn't have time for Dad. He was 20 stone with advanced type 2 diabetes and atrial fibrillation, and an irregular heartbeat. He had dangerously high blood pressure, and took handfuls of pills several times a day. He was nothing like the old Dad, and his only real hobbies now were work and food.

Doctor

Can you open your eyes for me now?

Son 1

There we go. We had no medical background, but we did have a clear choice.

Fix Dad now or lose him for good.

(PHONE RINGING) - Hello? - All right.

- All right, how are you doing? Yeah, I've just been to see Dad and he's just... he's just getting worse. - It's... it's just not good.

Son 2

- Oh, yes, I know. So, we need to get together and do something.

Son 1

But where the hell do you start?

You've got to think about it. And, yeah, what we do, we're working our arses off for big corporations, trying to make money, just to live our own lives. At the same time, the man who made us who we are today is withering away.

So, who was Geoff? Who was this man who got us here, and why did he mean so much?

Simply put, Geoff was a grafter. And beyond that, he was a fixer. It didn't matter how hard life got. When Geoff walked into a room, it all felt better. It felt fixable, even when it might not be. Geoff never knew his own dad, but he would do anything for his mum. Together with his brother, Dave, they grew up in Lewisham, south-east London, with a fierce loyalty and generosity that would come to define him as a man.



All right, he wasn't always the coolest bloke in the world. But he tried. And somehow, in the '70s, he met our mum. Sadly, the marriage wouldn't last. Dad was working long hours and developing bad habits.

He started drinking heavily and eating badly. And at the same time, his two sons were demanding a lot from him. Over time, Dad got himself into debt. We didn't know it then, but we were partly responsible. Dad did all the things a dad's supposed to do. But it took its toll on him. We felt this was our chance to put things right. So, we started meeting up more to piece it together.

Son 2

- I mean, he's tried to sort himself out before and he's tried to do stuff. - Yeah. And it's never worked - never, ever worked.
He's always gone back.

Dad (Geoff)

Does anybody want any cakes?

Son 1

I just really feel like it's... Someone else has got to do something. Making this film is something that, you know, hopefully will benefit him in a lot of ways. But it also documents something I know. I know other people that are going through this exact same thing.

So, I think this project is about giving him something else in - his life and enriching it, really.

- He's a fantastic dad. He's been a brilliant dad and he's a brilliant grandad. If we don't do something about it, no-one else is going to. No, exactly, yeah, yeah...

Geoff, Geoff, Geoff, Geoff, Geoff, Geoff, Geoff, Geoff.

Son 2

- I think that's stuck. - Why are you doing it to that one?

Son 1

Because that one looks better, because it's a big wide of the whole thing. It's like you come up there to report. I can do it to you. If you want to get sick of my face being that close.

Son 2

- Do it to that one. - I'll just stick his feet up. - Tape is for hazard. This is his hazard areas.

Son 1

- Yeah, he is pretty hazardous. We're putting stuff up on the board to see what it is we know and don't know.

One thing we did know is that Dad liked to eat and drink. He wasn't into exercise, and food had become his only real hobby. He wasn't sure about this whole fixing idea yet, either.

Dad (Geoff)

- No, you're not allowed to film this bit.



- No, we are. That's the whole point today.

Dad still ate a lot of fatty, sugary foods. And we didn't think this was helping him. But even more of a challenge for us were his work patterns.

Dad (Geoff)

All right, it's now two o'clock in the morning. I am repeating my chores around the building. I'm slightly out of breath now. I'm up to the third floor where most of my work is.

Son 1

"Shift workers getting too little sleep at the wrong time of the day" they may be increasing their risk of diabetes and obesity. "We know he already is. Surely having diabetes and doing that can't be a good thing.

A news-based and a lab-based study examined how "three weeks of sleep disruption affected people's metabolism and blood sugar levels."

Dad (Geoff)

I don't mind. I don't mind this sort of work. It's... It makes... makes the night go quicker.

Son 1

We've been tossers, in a way, towards him at times. We haven't been particularly selfless, the way he is. He makes us all look like tossers, really. Everybody around him. - He does, yeah. - In the way that he does things for people. But he makes it his problem because he does care. He's the most altruistic person I've ever known.

Dad (Geoff)

It's what the client requires. So that's what we do.

Son 1

Why is he working so hard? This is his money problems, isn't it? - Why is he still having to work nights?

Dad (Geoff)

- I know, don't know. I shouldn't be retired. Any other firm, 65 minimum, and now it's 70 they're expecting you to...

Son 1

You started work at 16 in BT, as an apprentice, and you did 44 years, 44 years of devoted service to that company. And they rewarded you handsomely, really, for it's a good bloody gold-plated pension. That none of us are going to have. We will be working until we're 85. - You are 62 years old and you are doing 15-and-a-half-hour night shifts.

Dad (Geoff)

- 15 and a half... Hold on. No, no, no. I've got to say, that is purely my own choice.
- I don't have to do that.



Son 1

- We know that!

Dad (Geoff)

- Yeah, but, no. I could be doing three and a half hour shifts, going all the way to bloody Maidstone and back - three and half hours. And then doing a 12-hour shift. I don't want to do that.

Son 1

- We know that... we know he's stubborn.

Son 2

- Yeah, he's very stubborn. - We know he's... - He is set in his ways.

Son 1

- Yeah. - We know he's not easy to deal with by a long shot. - He's a nightmare.

Son 2

- Once... once he digs his heels in, that's it. - Dia.....
betes - Now, what is type 2 diabetes?

- Um... - It's the second type of diabetes. - Yeah. We had so much to find out.
But right now, Dad's diabetes had led to two dangerous foot conditions linked to the disease

- Charcot's foot and diabetic ulcers. Dad had recently discovered that amputation was a serious risk for him.

Dad (Geoff)

I was having plaster put on my leg to keep it from getting worse and I was next to a guy who was also having a plaster removed. And he had had his foot removed. And I looked at it and I thought, "That can't be because of diabetes, it can't be." That was my first realisation that what can happen, what diabetes can do to you.

Son 1

The problem obviously is here, these are the problem. - These feet. - Yeah.
Because if we don't get this right, then these are going to be coming off.

Son 2

- OK, so what's causing the feet, then?

Son 1

- Come on, Dad. This is ridiculous. Charcot's foot. OK, so this is the bone... the arch of his foot has just collapsed.

As we began to open up on that board, the size of the task of fixing Dad was beginning to sink in.

- Right, what is the problem with his heart?



Son 2

He's got a kind heart.

Son 1

- What?

Son 2

- He's got a kind heart.

Son 1

- Kind. Yeah, OK, let's put some notes down. Irrrrrr... reg...ular.

Son 2

- Oh, shit.

Son 1

- What have you done?

Son 2

- That's bad.

Son 1

- "Heart" with an A?

Son 2

- Yeah.

Son 1

- What... English degree? Hang on.

How are you going to get around that one?

Son 2

- My E's fallen over.

Son 1

- Yes, so...

Son 2

- "Hurt".

Heartbeat. Right, so irregular heartbeat. - Because it's irregular, I meant to do it.

- Cholesterol. - Stroke risk.

- OK. - Heart attack.



- Ah, his blood pressure. As well as having an irregular heartbeat, it beats with ferocity. Yeah, we're talking, like, high, aren't we? - So, you know, originally, a top number of over 200.

Son 1

- Yeah. Proper high.

Like a dead man walking. The nurse pretty much said. Death, high. So, risk. - And for that he's on...drug, isn't he?

- Warfarin. - Warfarin. - What has he got in the prostrate? - Uh...

Son 2

- It's swollen.

Son 1

- It's swollen, yeah. Tamsulosin, metformin, gliclazide, warfarin, statins, atenolol.

- Yeah. - The problem is when all these things come together, isn't it? Who is looking at the whole picture?

Dad (Geoff)

I'd like to get off the metformin, which is the sugar-lowering drug. Obviously, blood pressure. I don't want to be on blood pressure pills, but then with my atrial fibrillation that I've got with the heart, I don't know how that's going to affect that. Apparently, it is quite a big thing in people who are overweight, a lot of people have that. You're only worried about blood clotting in the top chamber of your heart.

Son 1

When the diabetes thing came in and hit him, that then just took him down another notch. And you just basically thought, "Well, what's the point anymore? "May as well enjoy my food" - food is his only comfort.

I think if we get him in for a full private, medical, to make sure, you know, independent of the NHS and what he's been told there, we just get the all clear on him across the board, so that we're happy we're not putting him into any danger.

Dad (Geoff)

When you're diagnosed, you're diagnosed a diabetic, you're told it's manageable, but you're told it's progressive and long-term.

Son 1

- Yeah.

Dad (Geoff)

- You're not told this is something that you could do something about in yourself. But would you bother making changes with your healthy eating and your diet and your lifestyle and all that entails just because you can keep it the same? You probably wouldn't.



Son 1

No, that's true, yeah. Unless you can make a big difference.

I think... You've got to tell people you can fix it. Whatever it is. You've got to aim. However deluded that is, you've got to have that aim. That, you know, I'm going to be the first one that does.

Dad (Geoff)

Perhaps I was thinking of downsizing a little bit later on and having - a bit more money.

Son 1

- It's not later on, it's a line in the sand,

Son 2

- it's now.

Dad (Geoff)

- Yeah...

Son 1

- There is no later on. That's the problem, isn't it? You know, you'll just keep going and keep going and keep going until suddenly it's not doable anymore.

'But sometimes, while the people closest to us can see all the problems we're facing, we're so buried in it that we need them to show us the way. '

We felt the key to motivating Dad was in his past. Never knowing his own dad, and the sudden death of his mum were things that Dad never spoke about. And yet somehow the camera brought all this stuff to the fore.

Dad (Geoff)

Everybody had been talking about it, leaving and leaving, both saying they're going to leave. I came home and there was nobody at home. I went round the back of the house, I was probably - I can't remember - must have been about seven. And went round the back of the house and nobody there.

All the doors were shut at the back and there's always somebody in the house, always. And I just started bashing on the window and crying my eyes out because I thought everybody had just gone and left me, I thought that was it. You know. And a neighbour came round and took me in, and a little bit later, my mum came home. And it was all suddenly explained to me at night. So, I can honestly say, I never, ever knew my dad. I never, never did. My brother, Dave, he basically became - he was my father. He did everything for me.

Son 1

It wasn't expected or comfortable for any us, but in the saddest moments of Dad's life, he found the key to his own fight for his health, for his family.

Dad (Geoff)



Several years after that, my mum passed away and that was due to poor medical help. She could have been saved, she didn't need to die. She... she was trying to be brave, she was trying to tell everybody there was nothing wrong with her. [SOBS]

Son 1

- She was a really strong person, wasn't she? She never wanted to put on anybody.

Dad (Geoff)

- No, that was it. Nobody. Nobody would listen to what... what was really wrong with her, and I know that now.

And at the time, I didn't realise, but... bloody medical profession at that time was absolutely useless. When I look back, I realise there could have been so much more, and I just so regret not doing more.

Son 1

You don't want the same thing to happen to us, really.

Dad (Geoff)

Exactly not. Exactly, that's the whole... the whole point. And you've got to be on top of everything. Everybody has... You've got to be responsible for yourselves.

If I could get through this and prove that it can be done and prove that all these medical problems have gone away and I haven't got to worry about them any more, and then people can see that and see that it works, that would be absolutely fantastic for me.

Son 1

We made a pact that day that would make fixing Dad possible.

Dad would do whatever we asked, without question, for the next 12 months.

Dad (Geoff)

Is that a speaker on top? [LAUGHING]

It's already comedy gold, isn't it?

[LAUGHING]

Son 1

We dug out Dad's old bike. It turned out cycling was ideal for Dad because it didn't drive - too much weight through his feet.

Dad (Geoff)

- I must be completely stark raving...

Son 1

- He's agreed, he's agreed to it.

Dad (Geoff)

- OK.



Son 1

So that was how it started. Me running, Ian with the camera and Dad on the bike. But as we set off on our journey that day, we didn't know what a rough ride we were in for. This would mean giving up our own family time, our own hobbies. But most of all, it would mean arguments, lots and lots of arguments. Day in, day out.

Dad (Geoff)

- All that house has ever been for you is a burden.

Son 1

- No, it hasn't.

Dad (Geoff)

- Yeah, it has.

Son 1

- No.

Dad (Geoff)

- It has. All it's ever done has caused grief.

Son 1

- No, it hasn't.

Dad (Geoff)

- It has.

Son 1

- It hasn't.

Dad (Geoff)

- It has.

Son 1

- It hasn't.

Dad (Geoff)

- It has.

Son 1

- It hasn't.

Dad (Geoff)

- It has.

Son 1

- It has not caused grief!



Dad (Geoff)

- It has.

Son 1

- It's been... What.. What you strive for is a roof over your head. It is not grief, is it? You've got it. I've got that place.

Dad (Geoff)

- You haven't, you still...

Son 1

- No, I could have had it by now if I hadn't had done all the pissing it up the wall over the years.

Dad (Geoff)

- You've got to get a grip, young man. You've got to get a grip! Because I've had too much of this from you! I've had three of these instances now and I'm not having it anymore! I will jump out of this at any time! I've really had enough of it!

Son 1

We were never going to agree on everything. But we all wanted his health back.

Somehow, through what we've done so far, he's seeing a way out. Since we sort of started just mentioning it to him about doing the film, he's become a different person.

- He's changing, isn't he?

- We're seeing the old Geoff.

Son 2

- Yeah, this is it.

Son 1

And as Dad got out more, his fitness improved. And we started to see the old Geoff again.

Dad (Geoff)

[HE BLEATS] [HE BLEATS] Lots of lambs. [LAUGHS]

Son 1

I mean, type 2 diabetes is practically an epidemic at the moment.

Part of fixing Dad we are just giving him faith in the medical profession again. This meant changing his GP to one who fully supported our project and who could explain in real terms what was happening to Dad.

Doctor Bill

Type 1 and type 2 diabetes do tend to be lumped in the diabetes service thing, when in fact they're quite different conditions.



And what drives them is quite different. Type 2 diabetes is much more complicated, in the sense that it's a... Initially, it's a problem where the body is producing too much insulin, but the cells don't respond correctly. And because the body cells aren't responding correctly, it keeps on rising and you end up with chronically raised levels of insulin.

And those high levels of insulin have all sorts of effects on blood pressure, on uric acid, on fat metabolism. And...

Son 1

We knew Dad had responded to the threat of amputation," so we asked Bill to explain to him the systemic worst-case if he didn't stick with the pact.

Doctor Bill

The worst thing is somebody gets told you've got to touch your sugar. "Don't worry, we'll give you some pills." Because nobody wants to tell you it's bad, to scare you. It's kind of nice, it's kind, nobody wants to frighten you.

Everything from cancer to heart attacks to strokes to dementia to amputation to kidney failure to blindness, impotence - it's all going to be much more likely. The real issue is, we need to try and just take the pressure off that system. So that the cells can resensitise.

Son 1

Bill went on to explain the problem in terms that Dad will fully understand.

Doctor Bill

.... kind of an analogy I tend to use when I'm explaining this to patients is that of whispering and shouting. If I walk in and start shouting in your ears, I mean one of the things you're going to do is you're going to put your fingers in your ears because that shouting is rather unpleasant. Which means I have to shout louder to get to get your attention and eventually I'll just go hoarse, at which point the whole system's fallen down. So, eventually the pancreas will strain itself to the point of failure and at that point you've then got advanced type 2 diabetes where you may be deficient of insulin. And you may need to have injections of insulin because the insulin producing cells have exhausted themselves. If somebody's not listening to you look at their fingers in their ears and you're shouting how do you how do you change the game? Well, you start whispering and if you whisper very quietly, then people start listening "sorry what was that?"

In nutritional terms, this means you basically cut your refined carbohydrate and foods that digest to sugar to as low as you can tolerate. As quickly as you can. And you try and resensitise the insulin-responding enzymes so that they can begin to work properly.

And to me, this is common sense, there is no rocket science in that. Amazingly, there are a few nutritionists who regard that as complete heresy. They say, "That's absolutely wrong." You know, We know that diabetes is a condition that has a high risk of heart disease. Therefore, cutting fat is the most important thing we can do. And, sugar is necessary for you to live, "therefore, you must maintain your sugar.

And I think... I can see the logic, but the logic is circular and the biochemistry, I think, is very straightforward.

Son 1

We were keen to know how we could apply what Bill was saying to Dad's diet on a practical, day-to-day level.



Doctor Bill

Your breakfast is going to be eggs and avocados, you're going to have a nice tuna salad for lunch. Supper's going to be steamed veg, green veg, surface-growing veg. Avoid anything starchy, anything sweet and either fish or lamb chops, whatever you like. And just do that and see what happens.

Son 1

Bill had given us so much more information. And his most important words still rang in our ears.

Doctor Bill

Unless we fix this, you are driving right next to the cliff. Where previously you were in the middle of the lane, you've now got a wheel half over the ditch and it doesn't take much to push you.

Son 1

We wanted to know how close Dad was to that ditch. So we took him for a full private medical.

Dad (Geoff)

Do you wear boxers?

Son 1

Do I wear boxers?

Dad (Geoff)

-Yeah.

Son 1

Why?

Dad (Geoff)

-Well, just to be comfortable.

Son 1

I've always worn briefs. I've got some new boxers on.

Dad (Geoff)

Have you?

Son 1

- Yeah, first time I've ever worn boxers.

Dad (Geoff)

- Are they tight?

Son 1

- No, no, no.

Dad (Geoff)



- You had briefs before.

Son 1

- I always wear briefs, always.

Dad (Geoff)

Yeah, always. You're sure? -[Inaudible]

Well, why can't you just organize where you might be places on time? You're have only one little thing to go wrong and [Inaudible]. You can't say that. It needs to be more spontaneous. What's the point of being spontaneous if it doesn't work? If you're not gonna be on time.

Son 1

-There's more to life than being on time.

Dad (Geoff)

what if isn't [Inaudible]. You lost all that money. Absolutely. But we were early...

Son 1

But You just wanted to be here and camp overnight...

Dad (Geoff)

Pure luck. That was pure luck.

Dr Twort

I'm Dr Twort. I've just been hearing a bit about you, all sorts of exciting things on your... medical...

Son 1

Definitely not a boring case.

Dr Twort

Definitely not boring. Far from it...

Son 1

Of all Dad's problems, most experts seemed to agree that type 2 diabetes couldn't be fixed.

- The thing is, we just want to get rid of it, don't we?

Dr Twort

- I know.

Son 1

We used Dad's medical as an opportunity to quiz the doctor further.

I just wanted to get your thoughts on diabetes, really, and how far it's fixable and how far... Is it curable?



Dr Twort

That's a very interesting question. I don't think anybody knows, but there is evidence which...- offers a glimmer of hope there.

Son 1

- Yeah.

And a glimmer of hope was all we needed. We felt Dad needed goals, so we set them in three areas - fitness, nutrition and mind.

There's always danger, but I think there's a certain amount we've got to take. If you don't take it, you'll end up just dying anyway.

Son 2

Yeah, exactly, I know.

Son 1

- So, fitness, we're going for this Prudential 100, then.

Son 2

Yeah.

Son 1

Agreed?

Son 2

- Yeah.

Son 1

- Definite?

Son 2

- Yeah.

Son 1

Once it's up here, he's got to do it.

Son 2

I'm not thinking as I say that, to be honest with you, I'm just saying yes. I always find it's best just to say yes...

Son 1

Ian and I knew Prudential Ride London was a major challenge. Cycling 100 miles over some of the most testing Surrey Hills this was something massive to strive for. A 10K was never going to cut it.

- Food, it's food.

**Son 2**

- All right.

Son 1

His nutrition is shit, isn't it? He really hasn't got a clue when it comes to nutrition.

But I think part of it is because, for so long, like a lot of us, he's not been eating with the family, has he? - He eats at work or he eats in a pub. How often does he actually sit down and have a proper meal with the family?

Son 2

- Yeah.

Son 1

So, nutrition. What would be a good goal there?

Son 2

Well, just to be able to cook for the family and cook for the people around him.

Son 1

We needed real mental focus from Dad and to get his mind in the right place.

With the goals set, one of the most important steps we took were to get Dad out of his current environment, to take him away from the habits of home. But we were about to take on the uncomfortable role of parent to our own father.

Son 1

Repeat after me...

A very important sentiment here. We are not just on a lads' holiday...

Dad (Geoff)

What? We're not on a lads' holiday... .

Fixing a stubborn, overweight diabetic.

Dad (Geoff)

Fixing a stubborn, overweight diabetic.

Son 1

- It's about more than just diet...

Dad (Geoff)

- More than just diet.

Son 1

It's also about changing the life....

**Dad (Geoff)**

It's also about changing the life...

Son 1

That made him that way.

Dad (Geoff)

That made him that way.

Son 1

The next morning, we set off for Spain 'on a road trip where we would set the rules. It started with the basics. France is approximately 5,000 miles long. Thank you, thank you.

Dad (Geoff)

If you go all the way round it.

Son 1

No, it's not the perimeter, it isn't,

- it's definitely that much longer.

Dad (Geoff)

- France is not 5,000 miles.

- You go to Turkey in 3,000.

Dad (Geoff)

- You've only got to look at the weather map

- and you can see that. - What are you looking at? What site?

Son 1

I am looking on Ask.com.

Dad (Geoff)

- It's definitely not 5,000 miles long, is it?

Son 1

- Read the bloody thing!

The world's 5,000 miles long!

Dad (Geoff)

If you look at the silly map, it's like the weather map, they always makes England look bigger cause we ruled the Empire. We were the Empire.



So that would make us look equivalent size to other [Inaudible] countries. [Inaudible]

Son 1

Now we had Dad on this boat and he couldn't go anywhere, we could really drill down on his eating habits.

When did you last go out for a meal?

Dad (Geoff)

Last time we went out for a meal was the other day.

Son 1

How many days ago?

Dad (Geoff)

How many days ago? Yesterday.

Son 1

We'd brought reinforcements. Our stepbrother Kerry and my son Angus had joined the project to help.

You little liar. It's important, you need total honesty in this.

Dad (Geoff)

All right, it was really bad, I had cod and chips.

Son 2

It does make me feel quite emotional, that. Bupa medical on Monday and he still goes and has fish and chips yesterday.

We were upset for more than one reason. We were giving up time and money now and we were feeling the setbacks more deeply.

- Our credibility as documentary film -makers in fixing you... - Yeah. If we don't fix you, we fail and everyone laughs at our documentary.

Dad (Geoff)

You've got me so stressed out now. You should have seen me yesterday when I was running around like an idiot trying to get all this stuff together.

Son 2

You're always 100 miles an hour, you've just got to calm down.

Dad (Geoff)

- Hark who's talking!

Son 2

- I'm going to help you.

**Son 1**

It wasn't long before we faced Dad's first wall of tantrums. And not surprisingly, they were about food.

Dad (Geoff)

I will not eat octopus.

Son 1

- If you had it with some prawns...

Dad (Geoff)

- I will not eat octopus, I will not eat whelks, there are certain things I would not... Snails, definitely not. - Frogs' legs, no.

Son 1

- Once you're fixed, you will.

Dad (Geoff)

- No, I won't.

Son 1

- Once you're mentally fixed...

Dad (Geoff)

- I won't eat it. - You can buy it, but I won't eat it.

Son 1

- Have you ever tried it?

Dad (Geoff)

No, I'm not going to try it. I will not eat that thing.

Son 1

While Dad had made a lot of improvements on his diet, he was now heavily reliant on our step-mum, Marilyn.

Dad (Geoff)

- Marilyn does the cooking.

Son 1

- Dad, that is ridiculous. You've got to understand, in order to come take control - of your health, you need to understand it...

Dad (Geoff)

She'll cook what I need to have cooked. But I won't be doing the cooking.

**Son 1**

- But that's ridic... Why?

Dad (Geoff)

- Because I don't enjoy cooking.

Son 1

- You do, though.

Dad (Geoff)

- I don't enjoy it!

Son 1

- You do...

Dad (Geoff)

- I don't enjoy cooking. It's no good telling me I do, because I don't. You do, I've seen you do it and you enjoy it. I don't. It's the sort of thing I wouldn't want to spend time on. - I spend my time eating it.

Son 1

- Exactly, that's the problem. - That's your entire issue.

Dad (Geoff)

- Yes, OK, then. That's not going to change, I'm not going to start cooking something. That ain't going to happen. -[Inaudible] That's not what I want to do. It's not what I want to do. I'll make sure I eat the right stuff, Yes. Because I know I've got to do that.

Son 1

Are you sure you won't just buy fast food because you want somebody else to do that? [Inaudible].

Dad (Geoff)

Marilyn enjoys cooking, she'll cook for me. I'm not doing all the cooking. It's not my... I work all day. I go out and work and Marilyn does the cooking. Cooking is something that you do to achieve what you need to eat and that's all there is to it. Some people enjoy doing that, cooks enjoy doing that, I don't.

Son 1

You love food.

Dad (Geoff)

Yes, I like food. I like some food, yes. But it's not the case where I've got to make it all by myself.

Son 1

- That is ridiculous... You love food. Why not learn to make it by yourself?

Dad (Geoff)



- You can argue as much as you like, but I'm never going to be cooking regularly.

Son 1

You can't rely on other people to cook your meals.

Dad (Geoff)

Marilyn relies on me to go to work and earn the money. I rely on her to cook me a meal. She'll cook me whatever I need to have cooked. I'm not saying that as a chauvinist pig or anything, it's what it boils down to, that's our functions in life.

I will do what I do already.

Son 1

- Which is what?

Dad (Geoff)

- Which is work. Get the money in, do what I have to do. All right, I understand it, I do understand it, I understand what I need, but I'm not going to be doing it, so what's the problem? I would never become passionate about cooking. It will never happen, I'm not that sort of person.

Son 1

But this was about more than just cooking. If Dad was going to get better, this was a battle we couldn't lose.

Dad (Geoff)

Why do they not put, like they used to put, a bloody sign on telling you what does what? That's one, two, three, four, five. There's only four things. All right, we've got raw frittata for dinner because nobody can turn the cooker on. What have I done? Help, help! It's gone off. Turn that one, I defy you to turn that one on.

Hang on, hang on, dizzy. Dizzy, dizzy.

Son 1

Are you all right?

Dad (Geoff)

Oh, my back is killing me!

Son 1

It looks solid on the... That top one. - Let's go, Dad.

Dad (Geoff)

- It feels I should have candles on it. Once you've tried this, you will not want anything else for the rest of the day because you'll probably be being sick. Right, I need something to serve it up with.

Son 1

Despite the challenges, sometimes it's funny how just a change of scene can change a situation... And open up a whole world of new possibilities.

**Dad (Geoff)**

This looks brilliant, I can't wait. You're thinking of going away... You bugger. What have you got me into?

Massage therapist

For the legs, OK?

Dad (Geoff)

Get in there, you...!

- That was brilliant.

- Oh, dear!

Son 1

This was a world where fixing Dad was possible. It was a world where anything was possible. Where the can'ts and won'ts and impossibles of home seemed a long way away.

Dad (Geoff)

This is absolutely glorious. It really is... . The most fantastic day.

Yoga teacher

The mind is busy. Set the thoughts just to one side. And turn the focus to the breath.

Son 1

The trip had brought us closer to understanding Dad's problems. It had brought us closer together. But more than that, it had given Dad the sense of adventure he'd long ago forgotten.

Dad (Geoff)

Whay! Yes!

Son 1

And this was what he'd needed all along. It was that sense of identity, of family, of belonging, that had brought Dad back to us. We couldn't have done it if you hadn't played ball.

Dad (Geoff)

Well, yeah, it's only for me, isn't it? It's not for anybody else.

Son 1

At the end of the day, it's what it's all about, really. You've done it for me and, you know...We love you.

Dad (Geoff)

And I love you... I can't thank you enough.

Son 1



At Dad's medical, Dr. Twort had talked about a glimmer of hope for diabetes. The evidence he'd mentioned was a study being carried out by Professor Roy Taylor in Newcastle.

Here we had a distinguished professor who was successfully reversing type 2 diabetes in many patients.

We were in luck. Outside of his controlled study, Professor Taylor had agreed to assess Dad.

All ready for him to go. Get that scan running.

'Under our supervision, and Dr. Warrilow's guidance, 'Dad had lost a lot of weight and reduced his medications. But we wanted to fix him, and today we'd find out how close we were to doing just that.

Goodbye, type 2 Oh, it's time to go Ba -boo -bi -da -boo... You do ba -boo -bi -da -boo
It's goodbye, type 2, yeah It's time to go...
Goodbye... No, it's ba -boo -bi -da -boo.

Dad (Geoff)

I'm going to miss my appointment. I'm going to miss my appointment I'm going to miss me scan. It's costing millions of pounds to arrange this for me today and we're going to miss it. Now what's he doing? He's only got to pick up some poxy batteries. - Both shops are out of AAs.

Son 1

- You're joking me! So, it's the opening at the back, isn't it? - Yes, - Oh, there's one there - no, it's shut.

Dad (Geoff)

- You want a petrol station. A petrol station will rip you off. Well, it doesn't matter, you've left it too late, like always.

- If you'd organised it... - Oh, please ... off! If you'd said to me yesterday, I'd have picked up as many batteries as you'd wanted.

Son 1

- I said I needed batteries.

Dad (Geoff)

- You didn't. I asked you. I said, do you need batteries? You said, no, no, no.

Son 2

He did say he needed batteries.

Dad (Geoff)

- Not while I was at the... - You're the runner. - Left at the roundabout. - I've got to be in the scanner at 8.30.



Son 2

- That's fine, Dad. - What time did they tell us to get there? They said don't bring that cantankerous bastard before 8.30.

Son 1

Who's saving your life? Me and Ian. Saving your life. Let's just get this in perspective. How do you repay us? With all this bullshit.

Dad (Geoff)

You'd have me running up and down stairs - with my heart going 20 to the dozen. –

Son 1

That's part of saving you, isn't it? Otherwise, you'd be lying on your back eating Wotsits.

More relaxed, though. We were all in good spirits about meeting Professor Taylor. The mere idea that this disease could somehow be reversed was driving us forward.

Dad (Geoff)

- Pleased to meet you.

Prof Taylor

- Glad to meet you, Geoff. Hello. Hello.

Son 1

From the moment Professor Taylor began to talk, we were encouraged. It was as if we were talking about a totally new disease.

Prof Taylor

Type 2 diabetes is not a disease of obesity per se - type 2 diabetes is a disease of carrying around just a few extra pounds of fat.

Dad (Geoff)

- Can I shut the door? I've got people looking at me.

Son 1

- Not really, Dad.

Prof Taylor

To have achieved the weight that you've achieved, it was almost nothing to do with exercise. Certainly moving down from 20 stone, that's all in food consumption. If people want to lose weight, having become overweight, they can't exercise it away.

Healthcare professional – in CT scanner

- How's that? Are they in the right place? - Yeah.

Son 1

- Yeah?



Prof Taylor

Quite a few of my patients come along and say, "I hate my diabetes." "What can I do to get rid of it?" And this is how they can get rid of it.

Healthcare professional – in CT scanner

OK, here we go, so, can you breathe in? And out.

Breathe in. And out. Breathe in again.

Breathe right out. - And stop there just a moment.

Son 1

- OK.

We'd put Dad through that scanner to measure how much fat was left on his liver and pancreas and to what extent he was diabetes free. Nothing could have prepared us for what happened next.

Healthcare professional – in CT scanner

Can we switch this off for a second, please?

Son 1

Yes, it's fine.

When your whole world hangs on fixing Dad, there's one word you can't afford to hear. And we'd just heard it.

We got to find...we've got to find the positives in here. There is no definitely useful information which can be given just now. The possibility is there that it's a renal cell carcinoma. Around 72 out of every 100 people with kidney cancer live for at least a year after they are diagnosed. 56 out of every 100 people live for at least five years, and about half live for at least ten years after they are diagnosed.

Dad being diagnosed with kidney cancer was horrible for all of us. But Dad took it harder than anyone.

We got the whole family together in Scotland. But even surrounded by the people that loved him, Dad seemed lonely and scared.

Dad (Geoff)

One day, as I say, I'm feeling elated, and then suddenly it just goes, and I think, it's just I'm starting - to think about all the things that, you know...

Son 1

- What?

Dad (Geoff)

That you're going to leave behind.

Son 1



- No. You don't need to think about that yet. You don't need to think... You are not there. You're just not there, Dad. All right? I know you're going to start feeling like that, but you must not start. You're not there.

You've got our support.

In the face of cancer, we all felt lost. If we ever had a moment of doubt, it was now. We put a brave face on for Dad, but after everything we'd done with him over the last year, we knew we could lose him just as fast. And he knew it too.

BAGPIPES PLAY Auld Lang Syne

Dad (Geoff)

There's too many people out there with this problem. And there doesn't need to be. I just hope and pray that I can do something to help anybody else to get through this, and to fight it. Just don't give in, keep on trying.

Son 1

Well, life went on, but the project almost came to a stop. Suddenly we found we had a very different battle on our hands. Dad threw himself back into the night shifts, but the dark thoughts of what might happen kept creeping in.

Dad (Geoff)

I am just absolutely petrified of this. I'm really, really scared silly.

Son 1

But in the midst of all this, there were positives. The diabetes scan meant we'd found the cancer early, and Dr. Warrilow had referred Dad to Ben Challacombe - one of the best urological surgeons in the world.

Dr Challacombe

Geoff, the operation is going to take about two to three hours - it depends a little bit on how easy it is to line things up. You've got a small tumour on the sort of outer part of the right kidney. The plan today is to remove this small mass - it's about the size of a 50p piece - it's sort of mainly in, and a little bit sticking out of the kidney using the da Vinci robot.

Dad (Geoff)

Living my life as I did, with all that weight and all the drink and everything else, wasn't going to do any good, was it? You think it's just diet, you think it's just fat, you think it's just putting on weight, you think it's diabetes, but it could do anything.

It is the whole lifestyle which affects your life. That's it, isn't it? You are what you eat.

You're not arguing for once!

Son 1

So fixing Dad hung in the balance for four long hours. Until finally we got the news we'd hoped for.



Dr Challacombe

It went really well. Um, it was difficult - one of the more difficult ones that we do, that I've done. Because the tumour was entirely inside the kidney, wasn't really sticking out to any great extent. I thought it would be a little bit more. But it's all come out cleanly, we used the ultrasound machine to localise it. I think it probably is, um, a cancerous type of tumour - but, in a way, that means it was worth doing.

- Absolutely.

And it wasn't done unnecessarily. And in that situation, it's almost always all that he needs done.

Son 1

At this difficult time, we were overwhelmed by the messages of support from the diabetic community.

As Dad recovered, Ian and I used the time to find out more about the wider problem, from some of the most eminent names in UK health, who really devoted their lives to one thing the health and wellbeing of people across the UK.

Prof Susan Jebb – Prof of Diet and Population Health

It's not just a few people who have succumbed, if you like. It's the whole population. So, you either have to say, there's been a national collapse in willpower, or you say, wait a second, the world has changed.

Dr Aseem Malhotra – Consultant Cardiologist

The current dietary guidelines actually increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and obesity because there is too much carbohydrate in that guideline.

And we know that carbohydrate drives insulin more than protein, more than fat.

Insulin is a fat -storing hormone, and is also the hormone that drives the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Prof Kevin Fenton – Director of Health and Wellbeing Public Health England

The reality is that the science has now evolved, we now have a better understanding of the relationship between what we eat and its relationship to poorer health outcomes. And when armed with that knowledge, we have a moral imperative to act.

Prof Graham MacGregor – Chairman, Action on Sugar

We're used to action, as doctors, you know, we have to act. When you've got someone, something's going on, we get on with it, and it's very frustrating when politicians and civil servants don't seem to have that sense of urgency.

Dr Aseem Malhotra – Consultant Cardiologist

It's the duty of our politicians to protect its citizens and children from the manipulations and excesses of the food industry.

This could be regulated, and no politician in a democracy wants to do this. It cuts off the funding from the food industry, it cuts off the voters from them - very potently. This is not a popular thing,



and it's one of the ways in which democracy is not a terribly effective form of society to get things done.

Son 1

Dad took a while to get properly back on his feet. He was shaken up by the cancer and became withdrawn again.

The only way to bring him back was to give him a problem much bigger than his own. This meant throwing Dad right into the heart of it. It meant training for the benefit of others and speaking out on their behalf. And this took a change in tone from our side.

You've got this idea in your head that you're not good enough to get anything better. Who is in a better position than you to deliver the diabetic's perspective?

3.5 million diabetics.

Speaking is something that you can learn. And speaking up and talking to people.

Dad (Geoff)

I must admit, it is something I never, ever thought I could do, ever, because I'm terrible at it.

Son 1

Just imagine, how many other things there are that you think you can't do, that you can do. We need you to step up to this now, we need you to say, right, - I can bloody do this.

Dad (Geoff)

- Do what?

Son 1

I can stand up, I can be the diabetics' champion, I can do this.

Dad (Geoff)

- The diabetes is one thing, but...

Son 1

- But you can make a choice, can't you? And all those beliefs that have held... There may be tightly held beliefs from the past that creep back in sometimes, but you can say to yourself, "That was the old me." The new me is taking it forward on that stage and is going to tell people what they need to do to conquer type 2 diabetes.

We had no doubt now that Dad could do this. Type 2 diabetes was in his sights.

I want you to get to a point where you say, Actually, my boys put me here, but I'm the one they want to see, I'm the one that should be proud of this because I've got here, I've done everything they've asked, and I'm bloody well here, and now it's me that gets the opportunity to change the world.



Public announcement

In the unlikely event of an emergency, follow the instructions broadcast over the public address system.

Dad (Geoff)

How many millions of pounds do we spend on this thing? And at the end of the day it's because I'm eating the wrong stuff, I'm drinking the wrong stuff, I'm doing everything wrong myself.

Son 1

Exactly. More than 90% of diabetes sufferers have type 2. And if there is a way of fixing that, then surely it's something we need to look into and we need to challenge.

Dad (Geoff)

I had to scare myself by seeing what was going on and then realising that you lose your limb and then shortly after that all your organs start to collapse. That terrifies you.

Son 1

We booked Dad as a speaker at conferences around the world. But this would be a journey of discovery, and first we needed to ask some questions. The most common discussion on this disease was who's to blame.

For us, this wasn't about blaming anyone. For us, it was about finding out what could be done.

The title of our documentary is Fixing Dad, so we're trying to fix as much about him as we can. The diabetes type 2 is probably the hardest one for us to fix.

Conference delegate

- Yes.

Son 1

But what do you think about that?

Conference delegate

Maybe in the future, maybe in the future. Now, the big discussion is about, er, surgery, bariatric surgery.

Son 1

Should we not be trying to encourage people to not get to that state, - where you need surgery?

Conference delegate

- Yes, yes.

Dad (Geoff)

It wasn't until I saw people having their feet amputated. When in my case I got Charcot foot and suddenly I started to realize that this is really real, this is going to happen to me and that frightened me. That scared me to death.



Son 1

One of the biggest problems we've had with my dad was trying to get him up off the sofa in the first place.

Conference delegate

People who have depression, who have a severe form of depression, called major depression, their risk of developing diabetes is increased by about 70%.

The funny thing is, if you have diabetes but you don't know it, - then you're not more likely to be depressed.

- OK.

So, our perception of ourselves and our own state of health is important.

This is a disease which does not make your life impossible, and it affects people in their 30s, 40s, 50s, who just live with that, but you have to do something in your life, something we do not have a pill for.

Son 1

Over the course of those few weeks, we had opened Dad's eyes to the scale of the problem. We had learned about attitudes to type 2 diabetes all over the world.

So on our return to the UK, we knew our challenge would be to put this to good use. But we got back to a cautionary message from Dad's cardiologist. As Dad prepared for his 100-mile bike ride, he had been getting some breathing problems.

We were almost relieved that a health professional had uttered a word of caution on this. Because stopping dad from riding will be like stopping a steam train,

I got letter here for dad, when he gets here, from the cardiologist. It's pretty serious.

Dad (Geoff)

This is all about me finishing... You fall off and hurt yourself, it's your fault.

Son 1

Right, OK, I'll read you this, then, what the cardiologist... Mainly the last page of this because he talks about the fact you felt a bit dizzy, all that sort of stuff, the fact you're losing weight, it's all been good. But what do you think about dizziness? Me and Ian have been talking about it and we are worried about

- you doing this ride on Sunday. - Yeah, but it's not your decision, is it? - Well, it's our project, Fixing Dad.

Dad (Geoff)

- It's your project, well, shut the project, then. I haven't just trained for the last seven months to do this, to turn round and say "I'm not going to do it because some doctor's covering his arse".

Son 1



But dad's defiance.. wasn't without doubt. The first hurricane of the Atlantic storm season, Hurricane Bertha, had been upgraded and was heading for the UK. It was August, and Dad was watching his luck dive all over again. Particularly on Sunday, where we could see some disruptive wind and rain.

If there is one bit of your body you haven't properly warmed up, you just feel it on the bike the whole way.

Dad (Geoff)

[Inaudible] it goes?

-No.

why not? -[Inaudible] You better do it.

Son 1

What's up? What's up?

Dad (Geoff)

[Inaudible] Is this going around my waist now? No, no. Well, you can put it wherever you want to put it... around your waist, yeah.

Son 1

How are you feeling?

Dad (Geoff)

Er, well, stressed. It's the time to kind of stretch and warm up his joints.

Son 1

- Have you done your warm -up?

Dad (Geoff)

- Don't give me ... warm-up, after I've been running around trying to get you two ... sorted out.

Son 1

- You look like you're ready, Dad.

Dad (Geoff)

- Ready? Ready for nothing. - I feel crap. - Lean forward on the bike. On the bike, on the bike.

Son 1

There were thousands of people in London for the event. But we couldn't help wondering whether they were ready for the diabetics' champion.

[MUSIC]

Dad (Geoff)

This is madness. I really shouldn't be doing this. - I really, really shouldn't.



Son 1

- Don't say that.

Dad (Geoff)

- It's getting... Everything has been... absolute manic. Now, looking at the weather outside, we are going to get a bit wet at some time. There is no question about that.

[MUSIC]

Dad (Geoff)

- Where's the arms? All right, just so we don't get soaked at the very start. Looks like it might only be a little shower. That look good? Cool?

Interviewer

Geoff, you are the picture of health.

Dad (Geoff)

-Thank you very much.

Interviewer

You are Kent's answer to George Clooney.

Dad (Geoff)

I like to think so!

Interviewer

What a transformation. Geoff, I mean, you're just exuding energy now.

You're a picture of health.

And all this training is all for one thing the Prudential RideLondon. You're going to do a 100 miler.

Dad (Geoff)

-Absolutely.

Interviewer

- Could you have imagined that this time last year?

Dad (Geoff)

- No way. When it was first mentioned it was, I just laughed, it had to be a joke. But, no, he was adamant we were going to do it.

[MUSIC]

Dad (Geoff)



Yeah.. I can hear you now, -yeah. We're stuck in Richmond Park, everybody's stuck, the whole thing's come to a halt. Because a flood's going through it.

Middle of the road, there is too much water.

RAIN LASHES

We're heading off, we're about, what, 25 miles in?

Yes, 25 miles in.

- What park are we in?

- Hampton Court now. This is Hampton Court.

Not so much that time.

Son 1

It was a relief when Dad got to the top of Newlands Hill.
But when he stopped, he was having trouble.

Dad (Geoff)

I've got my breathing...

Son 1

- Have you? Now?

Dad (Geoff)

- It's always when I stop.

Son 1

- That was a hard hill. A little bit worried about Dad because he's stubborn, but he's not breathing properly. We are at the top of Newlands Hill, a really hard climb, I felt like my face was going to explode.

Dad (Geoff)

Yeah... Yeah. At the moment I'm having trouble breathing...

Son 1

It was a scary moment, but as the storms got stronger, so did Dad's resolve. We knew him all too well. He just kept battling and battling. I'm sure he'll have something nice to say to me. I am fixing him, after all. You never know with Dad. Sometimes he'll hit you right where it hurts.

You keep on, I'm going to stop. Just shut up! I am talking to someone that's seen the show and wants to talk to me. Do you want me to ignore him to talk to YOU, you stubborn old git?

Then as the sun came out, so did the crowds. And the end was finally in sight.



CHEERING AND APPLAUSE

Dad (Geoff)

Talk about fixing Dad, I'm trying to catch my sons!

[MUSIC]

Son 1

There is so much you can do actually just by being a family together, eating well together, exercising together

- things that are difficult to build in to our modern lives. I am inspired by you, and I'm sure you can inspire lots of other people.

[MUSIC]

We made it, Dad. Absolutely brilliant!
Unbelievable.

[MUSIC]

Dad (Geoff)

I would say to anybody, anybody - especially diabetics out there - don't give up. Nobody was in worse condition than me. There's always a chance out there. All you've got to do is get out, do something like this, get on a bike, build yourself up, build your self confidence, and you can get through it.

Woman

Have these two boys of yours saved your life?

Dad (Geoff)

They literally have. I can't thank them enough.

I'll be upset if I don't get my goody bag, you know. Do you know what's supposed to be in it?

Son 1

Sometimes our kids overestimate our abilities. Maybe they see things that just aren't they are. But fixing Dad was a lesson in not taking no for an answer, and the importance of finding the positives however small. There are times when everything seems to be lost. But often there are people around us who just won't give up on us because they don't want to see a future without us. Of course, there are barriers to fixing our health, but the barrier should never be ourselves. There are changes we can all make for the better wherever we are in our lives.

We didn't think we had time for Dad. But the more we put into this, the better life got for all of us.

Dad (Geoff)

Sometimes in life, the person you were meant to be hides in the corner, under a pile of life's debris. It takes a courage to find that person, a courage we might not know we have. But there



are people around us who know our courage, who know 'exactly what we are made because they are made of same stuff.

Dad's not perfect now, but he is much better. We are closer now, too.

Dad (Geoff)

My family could have resigned themselves to my ill health, just as I had. They could have said it was a lifestyle disease, and it was my fault. I am standing here today, without crutches, on both my feet, because they didn't say that. So many of the people in this country and across the world are in poor health, when they don't need to be.

However negative the messages around you, and whatever the outcomes, attempting to help someone you care about could well be the most important journey you will ever take.

Together we have the power to strengthen each other. To make the change we want to see in the world. Thank you so much for listening.

[APPLAUSE]

Son 1

After a full 18 months of fixing Dad, we got the news we'd always hoped for. We were told a minor miracle had taken place in Dad's body. His type 2 diabetes was resolved.

As he stood there on that stage, we saw a spark of the man we thought we'd lost. The dad that fell rose to his feet and brought the crowd with him.

When you're a kid, your dad's a hero. As you get older, your belief in superheroes fade, but at last, at least for that moment, our dad, our superhero, believed in himself.

Who will I miss when they're gone? And could I help fix them now?

Fixing Dad is dedicated to all those dads who couldn't be fixed

[MUSIC]

