

‘Ordinary Joe’ could rise above ordinary

Kelly Lawler
USA TODAY

Life is full of endless possibilities. Each of our paths could go one way or another with every decision we make. Television, too, has no limit on the stories it can tell. So NBC decided to give you three for the price of one this fall.

New drama “Ordinary Joe” (Mondays, 10 EDT/PDT, ★★☆☆) is a high-concept series that imagines the three lives one man (James Wolk) might lead. In one, he is a single cop; in another, a childless rock star married to political strategist Amy (Natalie Martinez); and in a third, he’s a nurse with a son, married to paralegal Jenny (Elizabeth Lail, “You”), but their relationship is on the rocks.

With a lesser star and lesser scripts, “Joe” would be a train wreck of convoluted storytelling and plot clichés. But the ambition of “Joe” is admirable: It’s the kind of show you want to root for, creatively and commercially, in part because Wolk is just so darn likable. Future episodes may collapse under the weight of their own timeline shenanigans, but at least in the first two made

available for review, “Joe” feels like it could be something special.

The writers illustrate each of Joe’s lives by frequently jumping among them. On the same night in the three versions, for instance, Joe is a cop saving a congressman from an assassination attempt, or he’s the nurse saving the same congressman at the hospital, or he’s a rock star who knows the congressman, and so the congressman was never in danger because his rally was pushed back to accommodate Joe’s concert.

It can be a lot for the casual viewer to keep straight, and as the story progresses, the technique complicates things further. In each timeline our sort-of ordinary Joe is going through his own trials and tribulations, whether it’s grief, divorce, or infertility. And the people in Joe’s life take on different roles, too. Each of his love interests appears in all three timelines, as do his mother (Anne Ramsay), uncle (David Warshofsky) and best friend (Charlie Barnett). All of their lives are irrevocably affected by Joe’s. Permeating all three storylines is a mystery about who tried to kill that

congressman, Bobby Diaz (Adam Rodriguez).

It’s a testament to the sheer magnetism and talent of Wolk, best known for CBS’ wild sci-fi series “Zoo” and a stint on “Mad Men,” that the series works at all. The scripts may zig and zag frequently among timelines, but Wolk is confident enough in each of his personas (styled slightly differently with hair, clothes and glasses) that it is often instantly identifiable which Joe he is playing. His co-stars are not quite as adept at the frequent changes, but it matters less.

It’s also helpful that the writing is sound: It’s clear creators Garrett Lerner and Russel Friend are doing everything they can to keep the audience in the loop. Two episodes in, it’s successful enough to be coherent and engaging.

“Joe” is instantly evocative of Gwyneth Paltrow’s 1998 film “Sliding Doors,” in which her protagonist lives out two different lives based on whether she made a subway train before the doors closed one day.

“Joe” is even more ambitious, offering three alternate realities over the course of many episodes

(well, if it doesn’t get canceled) instead of a tight two-hour film.

“Doors” has a “be careful what you wish for” message embedded in its plot, but “Joe” doesn’t appear to be moralizing in any particular way. The show is a thought experiment come to life, and so far it’s interesting enough to keep thinking about.

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Tickets

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left. But it’s fall, not the middle of July, so hopefully the rain will stay away.

Formed in Chicago in 1969 by Maurice White (who died in 2016), Earth, Wind & Fire is one of the most successful and innovative bands ever.

The band recorded numerous hits in the 1970s and ‘80s, including “Sep-

tember,” “Fantasy,” “Shining Star,” “After The Love Has Gone,” “That’s The Way Of The World,” “Let’s Groove,” “Boogie Wonderland” and “Get-away.”

Earth, Wind & Fire has won numerous Grammys and has been recognized in recent years, including induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and receiving the prestigious Kennedy Center Honor in 2019.

If you miss the October show, don’t sweat it:

EWF’s tour swings through the Sunshine State next summer, with concerts paired with Santana set for Aug. 26, at iThink Financial Amphitheatre in West Palm Beach and Aug. 27, at MIDFLORIDA Credit Union Amphitheatre in Tampa.

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A longevity diet is more than what you eat

by Sebastien Saitta

When deciding what diet will help us live longer, happier, and healthier, we tend to follow the same rules. Eat your fruits, whole grains, nuts and greens. Is that it? All we have to do is eat things that come from a tree or a vine and we are covered? Well, the answer is not quite that simple.

Despite hearing the random story of a friend’s brother’s cousin who had an Uncle Joe that always ate unhealthy foods, smoked and drank until the age of 92, we know that nutrition plays a big role in health and longevity. But, it’s only part of the story. How we eat and the activities that surround it, combined with what we eat is the secret sauce for a healthy diet.

Seventeenth century writer François de La Rochefoucau said, “To eat is a necessity, but to eat intelligently is an art.” Many of the longest-lived people in the world demonstrate this art by including these 5 principles with the foods they eat.

Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dinner like a pauper

Fans of big, hearty breakfasts rejoice! This conventional wisdom that teaches us to eat less with each meal throughout the day has stood the test of time, and is backed by research. A [study](#) in Obesity, a Research Journal, compared two groups on a weight loss diet. One group had a high caloric intake during breakfast while the other had a high caloric intake during dinner (with similar caloric values as the breakfast group). The breakfast group showed greater weight loss and waist circumference reduction showing that a high-calorie breakfast with reduced intake at dinner can be beneficial for managing obesity. Note: This does not mean you have free rein to load up the biscuits and gravy, fried potatoes and a

side of bacon each morning. Instead, choose nutrient dense foods that include fruits, nuts and whole grains.

Take a Passeggiata

Take a Passe-what? This Italian word pronounced pa-se-ja-ta means to go for an easy walk or a stroll around town. Many Italians, especially those in small towns take part in this time-honored tradition, most often after dinner. This has many benefits that include time for socialization with other “passeggiatta” participants, and improved physical health. In fact, [a study](#) published in Diabetes Care found that older adults at risk for type-2 diabetes had smaller spikes in blood sugar after walking for at least 15 minutes following a meal, especially after dinner. Another [study](#) suggests that walking after a meal helps with digestion.

As tired as you may be after a long day, avoid the temptation of unwinding on the couch after dinner to watch your latest Netflix series or gameshow. Instead, lace up those walking shoes and take a short walk around your neighborhood. Your body and mind will thank you for it.

Eat an early diner

With hectic work schedules and managing after-school activities for kids, this can be easier said than done for many families. Don’t lose hope. Remember the “eat dinner like a pauper” rule? If you follow it, this means that dinner doesn’t have to be that big or even that complicated. Find ways to prep dinner in the morning so that all you have to do is eat it when you get home. A great way to do this is with a crockpot. Many simple and good-for-you [crockpot recipes](#) can be found online.

Eating dinner early is associated with [better sleep](#), [weight loss](#), and [better heart health](#).

Connect over meals

Ruth Anderson, 103-year-old resident at Arlington of Naples (Blue Zones Project Worksite and Organization), makes this a daily practice. In fact, she has a special way of doing it. “At dinner time, I make it a point to eat at a different table every night,” she says. “That way, I am not speaking with the same people and can have different conversations with different people throughout the week.” Ruth’s social strategy around meals pays off in many ways that include increased connection, maintaining social contacts, more independence, and better mood.

Studies show that families who connect frequently during mealtime have more healthful dietary intake. This can help with prevention of many chronic diseases and control obesity.

Follow the 80% Rule

This principle encourages us to stop eating when feeling 80% full. Since it typically takes 20 minutes for our brain to receive the signal from our stomach that we’re full, it usually turns out that when you think you’re 80% full, you’re actually full. This goes a long way in the prevention of overeating and unnecessary weight gain.

Brought to Southwest Florida by NCH Healthcare System, in collaboration with Sharecare, Inc., Blue Zones Project is part of Southwest Florida’s well-being improvement initiative that encourages changes in the community that lead to healthier options. For more information, visit [southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com](#).