

Weight Loss: A Quick Reference Guide

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ISBN

Softcover

978-1-4257-7996-2

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Acknowledgments

To Michael Bellomy, M.S., “The Strength Finder” Business Coach and friend, for pushing me to get the first draft finished and for reviewing the manuscript from a coach’s perspective.

To Terri Loe, R.N., a fabulous nurse and friend, for agreeing to review the manuscript and for providing powerful suggestions to make the book even better.

To Lynn Dewey, Performance Consultant and friend, for being a beautiful and slender role model for me.

To Nordic Track, the makers of the fabulous Elliptical machine, my best weight loss friend.

Introduction

WOW! I just typed in “diet books” in the Yahoo search engine and it came up with 41,800,000 hits, and a search on Amazon.com came up with almost 6000 books on dieting! The shelves of bookstores are filled with every diet imaginable, and the magazines on the racks at grocery stores have at least one article each on weight loss. With all this information available to us in this country, why is it we are still among the most obese? And why are we getting fatter every year? There is only one answer to this question: DIETS DON’T WORK! The more we diet, the more weight we ultimately gain back, assuming we ever lost the weight to begin with!

Our country is riddled with heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes. We are spending billions on the search for cures, but practically nothing on prevention. However, there is one cure that is most often overlooked! Weight loss! Weight loss is probably the number one greatest cure, the number one miracle cure, for much of what ails us in this country, but few folks want that prescription! Why? Because overeating is very often related to our emotional issues, those issues that are far too painful for us to explore. It’s so much easier to remain victims to our habits even if it means a miserable life and early death.

For me, I would rather spend a few weeks or months, or whatever it takes, exploring the painful emotional issues surrounding my use of food for emotional comfort than spend the remainder of my life, albeit much shorter and most likely

disease ridden, stuffing my pain with excessive amounts of food. And exploring my painful issues is exactly what I did! Now I can deal with those issues differently rather than unconsciously reaching for comfort food. That's not to say that I don't still love my French fries, but the time spent mindlessly eating them is over!

Thinking back during the time when I believed that magazine articles and diet books would be my salvation, and ruminating over how much money I spent on them, I now see that it was the headlines and book titles that grabbed my attention. Who wouldn't be emotionally affected by the following?

- **Are you tired of settling for a body that doesn't reflect who you are inside?**
- **Are you frustrated that you are unable to fit into clothes that you love?**
- **Are you fed up with not having the energy you desire to be able to do all of the things that you want to do?**
- **Do you want to attract the love of your life with your new sexy body?**

Do you ever get tired of reading statements like these? I know I did. I got tired of feeling bad about myself. These emotionally charged statements are in practically every magazine, as well as in ads on TV every day, and yet we continue to wonder why we stay so overweight in this country in spite of all the attention paid to being overweight. Something just isn't working! For most of us, diets don't work, diet pills don't work, diet centers don't work, and they don't work because food is NOT the culprit. Virtually every weight loss program on the market has a dismal failure rate. Only those folks that stick with it are successful. The drop out rate is very high, but I doubt those statistics are kept. Would you subscribe to a weight loss program with a success rate of 10%?

The culprit is our programming, our core beliefs about food, and the underlying emotional pain we carry with us.

Those headlines are meant for one purpose and one purpose only: to stir up our emotions and our shame surrounding our weight issue. That is, to get our attention, so that we will buy the magazine or book. It's about marketing, but it's not the marketing that will help us shed those pounds: it's a commitment to ourselves and to our future. It's not as complicated as we seem to think, but to think of losing weight as a complicated and difficult issue is merely one way to excuse ourselves from doing so. It's a way of avoiding what it is we really need to address: *our emotional pain and how we've chosen to deal with it.*

If you've tried dieting, bought gym memberships, read weight loss books and even attended weekly meetings with a popular weight loss program, and you were still unable or unmotivated to stick with your eating and exercise plan, it may not be your body that is holding you back. The best diet in the world won't work until you have the right mindset.

The bottom line is this: You must be fully 100% responsible for your weight loss. To depend on someone else to motivate you or to encourage you is setting yourself up for failure! The minute you feel that that person is not supportive, what do you think you're going to do? EAT! That's what. But if you take 100% responsibility for your emotional issues and for what you eat, you will never be held hostage to another person's actions or inactions.

This book doesn't provide diets or recipes. It does provide condensed and thought provoking statements to help **you** break free from your denial as to why you overeat. As you read this material, pay attention to what offends you, as that may provide the clue to your particular issues surrounding food. On the pages within this book, I show YOU how to be self-motivating, self-encouraging and self-supportive.

This book is your quick reference guide, something that you can read every day as a reminder that your health is a top priority! It is your reminder mechanism. It is your pocket weight loss coach!

Part I

How Did I Get Here?

Core Beliefs

Core beliefs are long, unending ruts in life. The automatic habits and behaviors that we no longer pay attention to are like deep grooves in a vinyl record. Every time we play that record, the needle slips into that groove, and the same old, same old plays again. We are usually not aware of these beliefs. Nor are we aware of how they sabotage our lives, until we take the time to reflect on our behaviors. One core belief usually learned from childhood is that food is a reward; that is, our parents may have used food as a bribe to leave them alone or to get us to do something. Think back for a few minutes to your childhood. Were you given candy to be quiet? Were you rewarded with an extra dessert at dinner if you were good that day? Or perhaps food was withheld from you when you were bad. “No dinner for you tonight, Johnny! Go to your room and think about the bad thing you did today!” Food should be used to nourish the body, never as a reward or punishment!

Other core beliefs may include the following:

- Don't waste food! (So you eat everything on your plate even if you are full.)
- Your mother took the time to cook this meal, and if you don't eat it all, she won't feel that you love her or respect her. (So, if you don't finish your meals, you feel guilty.)

- This buffet costs me a bundle, so I have to eat a lot to get value for what I paid! (If you don't stuff yourself, you'll feel cheated because you paid for all this food!)
- My Mom shows her love by cooking for me. I feel loved when I eat. (Food has been linked to feeling loved.)
- I have to starve myself and exercise three hours a day to lose weight. (This belief would scare off the bravest of us.)

So, how do we change a core belief? Step one; first and foremost, is to shed light on it, to recognize it for what it is: an erroneous line of programming in our brains, a mere perception, not reality. The second step is simply to do something differently long enough for the old programming to fade. Memories of habits are stored in our brain, and they will begin to fade when we no longer access them or act on them. The difficulty in this lies in the fact that our core beliefs are acted upon automatically. This means that those memories are accessed without our even thinking about them. As long as they get accessed, they get strengthened. Noticing our sabotaging behavior, shedding light on the core belief behind that behavior and changing the automatic behavior will heal us from the old ways.

The more emotionally charged a memory is, the more difficult it is to remove the power it has over us. Remove the emotional attachment, and the power dissipates. Remove the emotional attachment you have to eating everything on your plate, and you will be able to stop eating when you are full.

What are YOUR core beliefs and how do they serve you?

What Lies Do We Tell Ourselves About Our Weight?

“Big is Beautiful.” ~ “I’m really not overweight.” ~ “I come from a long line of fat people.” ~ “Well, yeah, I’m overweight, but I’m healthy.” ~ “Man, this is all muscle!” ~ If you are truly comfortable with your weight, you are to be commended, but if you truly are okay with your weight, you wouldn’t be reading this book. However, if you secretly long to be slender or you get mad, upset or defensive when comments are made about fat people, then you are simply and inextricably lying to yourself! If you find this to be true for you, stand in front of your mirror, look yourself in the eyes and confess: *I am lying to myself about my weight. I really do desire to be rid of all the excuses and protections I’ve surrounded myself with. I am loved! I am perfect! And I can and will shed these extra pounds as they are nothing but lies!* And if you don’t feel like crying after doing this, please rethink your sincerity.

What lies are YOU telling yourself?

What Are The Payoffs For Being Fat?

The pain of being overweight has to be less than the pain of being thin, otherwise you would be thin. Why? When the pain associated with being overweight exceeds the pain of being attractive, slender and healthy, then, and only then will you take better care of yourself. Think about the payoffs you've had all these years. What rewards has your weight brought you? Does it keep you safe from intimate relationships? Do you use it to keep people at a distance? Do you use it as an excuse to remain a victim? How does your weight work for you? Some say, "I just love the taste of food." But if you watch them eat, they eat way too fast. How can they possibly enjoy their food? I would think that if you want to enjoy something, you would want to make it last, don't you? Other payoffs include avoidance of conflict, whether that conflict is real or a figment of our imagination does not matter. It took me years to be able to leave food on my plate because of the way my parents dealt with me when I left food on my plate. It was easier to eat it than to argue that I was full. Their voices ran through my mind for years, and it wasn't until I looked at my behavior did I discover the source of my inability to leave food on my plate.

What are YOUR payoffs for being overweight?

Take a Moral Inventory of Your Emotional Pain

Most overweight people use food as an opiate to cope with repressed emotional pain, such as anger, anxiety, depression, guilt and shame. Take some time to dig down deep into that pain, shed some light on it, and let it heal. Once that pain is released, the insatiable appetite for food WILL go away, and your weight will return to a healthy state. Yes, digging deep will be painful. If you need professional help, get it! The pain will set you free. Do it now. Dieting and exercise will not help until you get to the root of the overeating.

What hurts?

People Who Eat Too Much May Live In a World of Lack

What are your beliefs about food? Were you constantly bombarded with comments of lack during your childhood? Did you hear statements like “think of all the starving children in China?” Well, I sure did! Like the leftover food on my plate was going to help them! Or perhaps you heard this one: “money does not grow on trees.” Any statement that had an underlying belief that indicates lack could have set you up for overeating, as deep in your subconscious you may feel that your next meal may be hard to get.

What don't you have enough of in your life?

**Losing Weight Is Much Harder Than
Quitting Smoking Or Quitting Drinking
Because You Still Have To Eat:
BULL CRAP!**

I've heard that excuse way too many times, and it's just NOT true. You can give up refined sugars, you can give up fast food, you can give up sugary sodas, and you can give up second helpings. It's all in the way you think about food.

What excuse have you used in the past?

Examine and Resolve Old Issues

If you've been up and down the road to weight loss over and over, you are most likely not going to be able to get where you want to go until you've looked at how you got where you are. For starters, you'll want to ask yourself the following questions:

1. What was going on in my life when my weight became excessive?
2. Am I trying to protect myself from something or someone by putting on an armor of fat? If so, who or what?
3. Do I use my weight to avoid something, like intimate relationships?

What questions are you afraid to ask?

Why Do YOU Think You Are Overweight?

Take some time to ponder this question. If you're like most folks, the answer could change daily! If "knowing" the answer has not helped you lose weight, then try changing your answer to "I just don't know."

Why would you want to **NOT** know? I'll tell you why. If the reason you think you are overweight cannot be changed, then you will never, ever be able to lose your excess weight. If you can't change your story, your reason, or you can call it what it is—your excuse—you will never be able to change the behavior that led to the overeating.

Let's say, for example, that your excuse for overeating is because of stress at work. If you can't change the level of stress at work, you won't be able to change your reaction to that stress, the overeating. The stress at work is **NOT** the cause of your overeating; the cause of your overeating is the resistance to the stress. If you stop resisting, which is solely in your power to do so, you will stop overeating.

How has your story prevented you from making positive changes in your life?

Part II

The Cravings & Triggers

Know Your Triggers

Triggers are those events which create a reaction for us, and they are usually not positive events, although they can be. Reactions come in all forms, but for our purpose here, we will focus on our reactions regarding food.

A reaction usually triggered by social events is social anxiety, for example. When we are around people we don't know very well, or don't know at all, and we don't know what to say, we start eating. Isn't that just the greatest excuse not to talk? We can't talk with our mouths full, can we? Of course not! It would be rude. So, what do we do? We "punish" ourselves for being inept at starting conversations. Guess what? We don't have to talk, and we don't need an excuse for not doing so. For me, I'd much rather be seen as slender and quiet rather than someone who has food in her mouth all the time.

The next time you might be tempted to over eat in a social setting, be prepared beforehand. Take time to read about some topics of interest. The weather is always safe, politics and religion are usually not, but you can't go wrong by asking about other people's kids or pets. Heck, just take this book along and have it be the conversation starter!

Your homework here is to remember the last time you had a food craving. Look at the event just before craving food. What

happened? What was said? What memory did you have? Reacting to it is not the answer. Understanding why you need to comfort yourself with food is the answer. Find someone who can help with reframing the event, so that it no longer has the power over you to sabotage your health. Reframing is simply looking at and thinking about something differently. It's all about our perceptions.

What are your triggers?

Don't Get Too Hungry!

Getting too hungry or too tired or too angry will cause set backs in your progress toward a healthier, more slender life style. Remember, it takes about 20 minutes from the time you begin to eat for your brain to switch from hungry to not hungry. You can do a lot of damage in 20 minutes! If you get too hungry, you will eat too fast. If you are angry while you eat, you will be focused on what made you angry, and you will miss the message from the brain that says, "Okay, I'm satisfied." And being too tired when you eat may result in wanting comfort food as a reward for working too hard.

How do you take care of yourself?

Don't get too cold!

When the body gets cold, it could very well begin to crave fuel; much like a fire needs wood or other combustibles to burn. When we eat, the digestion process begins, and that process is one of the biggest body warmers of all! Perhaps the body wants to eat simply to warm itself! I'd rather give it a hot cup of tea.

How do you warm yourself up?

Find the Lack You Are Trying to Fill

What's really missing in your life? Nature abhors a vacuum. If you don't fill the hole in your heart with what's truly missing, you will use food to fill it up. Look beyond your behaviors and into the emptiness that fuels them. The greatest way to do this is to make a list of those things that are the hardest for you to change. Where are your resistances? What is really making you eat like this? What lack is this behavior trying to fill? Remember: Food is NO more a source of love or any other emotion than the ATM is the source of your money.

What's really missing?

That Which You Resist, Persists

If you resist all sweets (if that is your comfort food of choice), you will begin to resist your lifestyle change. Allow yourself to eat one very small portion of comfort food a day. But right before you eat it, drink at least 10-12 ounces of pure water. Then eat whatever you've chosen very, very slowly, savoring every bite. Ironically, one school of thought says that the reason we are so overweight in this country is because we DON'T enjoy our food. We gulp it down so fast we don't even taste it, and of course this leads to eating three or four times what we should before our brains register a level of satisfaction. Slow down, enjoy your food, and put your fork or spoon down between bites.

Think about this. How do you define enjoy? To savor, to make last? If we truly enjoyed our food, we would eat very slowly, enjoying each bite. But those of us who are overweight, eat way too fast! So fast, in fact, that our brains don't have time to tell us we are full! If you eat too much because you say you love food, but you also eat too fast, it's NOT that you enjoy your food; it's that you want to reduce emotional pain.

What do you resist?

Eating When We're Not Hungry is Like Taking a Bat to Smash a Fire Alarm Rather Than Searching For the Fire

When we eat to distract ourselves from whatever is bothering us, we are practicing denial, pure and simple. We do not want to deal with the problem. If a fire alarm wakes us up, what should we do? Find the fire or silence the alarm and go back to sleep? The answer is obvious to me. Find the fire and put it out before it kills us. With emotional eating, acknowledging the source of the upset, even if we can't do anything about it, will help us at least stop the automatic behavior, and perhaps this acknowledgment will help us make that first step in changing the situation.

What causes your alarm to sound?

Watch Out For Mindless Eating!

Are you used to eating in front of the TV? If so, that's one habit that has to STOP! Right now! No exceptions. There is a direct and positive correlation between the hours spent in front of the television set and weight gain.

How long can you sit in front of the TV without eating?

Cravings Could Indicate a Food Sensitivity or Allergy

The major culprits in food sensitivities seem to be wheat (gluten), corn, soy, peanuts, dairy products, and shellfish. Severe food allergies are pretty obvious, but food sensitivities are not as easy to determine. Try keeping a food journal, and note any changes in moods, skin color, sinus congestion, puffiness in the face, or swelling in the feet or hands. One sure clue to watch for is cravings: cravings are usually present with these offending foods, especially as the offending food is eliminated from the body. Cravings are most likely withdrawal symptoms. If you find that you are sensitive to some foods, and you eliminate them from your diet, you will most likely see a five to ten pound weight loss within a couple of weeks, due mostly to the elimination of excess mucus and water. Think about it this way: if the food causes irritation or inflammation within the body, your body will want to retain fluid in an attempt to protect the cells. Once you remove the offending irritation, the body can release the excess fluids. Take time to notice what your body is trying to tell you and notice how it responds to an elimination of suspected food sensitivity.

What do you crave?

Part III

Dealing with Cravings & Triggers

Wait Out the Craving

Our cravings work much like an incoming wave on the seashore. It comes upon us strong and practically knocks us down. All we need to do is **WAIT** for it to reach its peak without acting on that craving, and it will recede. It always will. Always! What can we do in the meantime? We can breathe deeply and repeat a mantra. A mantra is a word, phrase or sound that we make to pull us into the present, something that will displace the thought of the craving. You may want your word or phrase to be something that you desire, such as “peace and harmony,” or “slender and health,” or it could simply be a sound, such as “ahhhhh” or “ohmmm.” Again, the key is taking control over the craving until it gives up, or recedes. And it will!

Can you wait? Will you wait?

Deep Breathing Has No Calories

The next time you feel stressed out and find yourself reaching for that donut to calm your nerves, STOP, take a few deep breaths and wait for the craving to subside. IT WILL! Not only will the craving subside, but your stress level will decrease substantially. For most of us, when we get stressed, our breath become shallow, which creates more tension in the body, which causes us to breath even more shallow . . . well, you get the picture. Improper breathing reduces mental ability, and proper breathing not only increases our mental ability but it eliminates toxins from our body. In fact, an article in the Journal of the Royal Society suggested that fatigue, anxiety, gas, muscle cramps, and myriad other symptoms can be the result of fast, shallow breathing. When stress levels go up, the body will produce cortisol, a stress hormone linked to increased insulin in the body. And increased insulin is linked to obesity.

Take a deep breath right now. How do you feel?

Use A Rubber Band!

Aversion therapy, popularized many years ago, holds as its premise that if the pain associated with a certain action is greater than the pleasure associated with that same action, we will stop doing that action. So, try this: place a rubber band, large enough to fit loosely so as not to cut off circulation, around your wrist. Each and every time you experience a craving for a food item or beverage that you wish to give up, simply snap that rubber band hard enough to hurt, but not hard enough to bruise or otherwise damage your skin. The craving will stop immediately!

You can use this technique to curb overeating. As soon as you finish eating a small portion (only enough to maintain your desired weight), snap the rubber band the second you crave more food. The secret here is to put no more on your plate or in your glass that you wish to consume for that meal. If you are dining out, ask for a carry out container, and then move the excess off your plate. However, if you don't desire any more food or beverage after eating an "old-fashion" normal portion, mentally pat yourself on the back and feel proud!

You can also use this technique when looking at the menu or while shopping in the grocery store. If while looking at the menu you experience a strong desire for a hamburger and French fries, snap, snap that rubber band! If you start drooling over the ice cream while grocery shopping, snap, snap that rubber band! See that fresh salad? No pain!

How much does a rubber band cost?

Emotional Freedom Technique

EFT, a tapping technique that uses the finger tips on the energy meridians of the body, is an excellent tool to help reduce the anxieties associated with overeating. EFT has been likened to psychological acupressure, or acupuncture without the needles. Overeating usually results from our attempts to provide relief from emotional discomfort or even physical discomfort. Regardless of the trigger, overeating almost always has an emotional excuse; that is, it's never about being hungry. Although the following explanation of how to use EFT is an over simplification, I believe the key here is distraction, as much or even more so as balancing the energy meridians in our body. The underlying premise of EFT is that the cause of all negative emotions is a disruption in the body's energy system.

The two key elements of EFT are tapping on the proper meridian points and the verbalization of affirmations while tapping. The tapping is done with the fingertips, not the finger pads, of your first two fingers, and the tapping locations in order are: 1) the top of the head, 2) the beginning of the eyebrow, 3) the side of the eye, 4) under the eye, 5) under the nose, 6) on the chin, and 7) just under the collarbone, about three inches to the right or left of the middle of your chest. Tap firmly about seven times on each meridian point while repeating an affirmation over and over, such as "Although I am overweight, I deeply love, appreciate and accept myself exactly as I am." If you are experiencing

anxiety, you could say, “Although I am experiencing anxiety at this moment, I deeply love, accept and appreciate myself exactly as I am.” Do this before every meal, and repeat this as often as necessary until you feel calm or until the craving subsides.

How can you distract yourself from overeating?

Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy has been used for years as a relaxation therapy. Lavender scent is said to be relaxing and calming. Peppermint scent perks us up, and citrus scent boosts our moods. Folks who eat to help with anxious feelings may want to try putting a couple of drops of lavender oil on a small sponge or cloth and just breathe it in. A few deep breaths of a lavender scent may be just the thing needed to calm down, to forget about food.

Watch out for scents that might trigger food cravings though, like coconut oil and vanilla. These scents are known for stimulating appetites.

What can you do to relax?

Just Say STOP!

The next time you have a craving that you want to stop, simply say out loud, “STOP!” This serves the same purpose as the rubber band; it breaks the thought process. It really is that simple. You can do this technique the next time someone puts too much food on your plate. Just say out loud, “STOP!” And you need no further explanation. If you feel guilty, then follow up “STOP” with “I love you.” That’s all.

Would the word “STOP” stop you?

Feed the Emotion, Not the Stomach

When the urge to eat too much overcomes you, it's your ego mind saying: "You're fat. You have to maintain the fat. EAT." Listen to the other voice, the skinny voice, the calm, soothing one that is trying to tell you: "I'm not starving. I will not die if you don't eat that piece of cake or that hamburger or that order of French fries. I will be just fine, and I will not make you feel bad if you don't eat it." It's the emotion that is starving; feed it, not the stomach.

What does your ego mind tell you?

Chat Amongst Your Three Selves

Sometime back in the 70's, separation therapy became popular. The foundation of this therapy was to separate ourselves into our adult self, our feeling self and our acting out self. The adult self's role is to monitor the feeling self and the acting out self, so that feelings could be fully felt, but not acted upon, except in cases where it was appropriate. All feelings are appropriate, but not all feelings should be acted out. What gets most of us stuck in immature behaviors is that we act out feelings before even understanding those feelings. That is, our feeling self never really gets to fully feel, because we act on stuffing those feelings before we've had a chance to allow our feelings their due process. It's like taking a cake out of the oven before it's done. It's going to be messy. When we act out our feelings before allowing ourselves time to process them, it gets equally as messy, only psychologically so.

Here's an example of a separation therapy dialogue with respect to acting out behaviors with food. Adult is the adult self, Feeling is the feeling self, and Actor is the acting out self. Keep the following in mind: Adult only moderates. Feeling only feels and Actor only acts out.

Here is the event: I have been invited to a party at work, and I am a new employee. I am 40 pounds overweight, and everyone else is slender (or at least that's what my brain tells me).

Adult: I'm going to try to meet as many new people as I can. I'm going to make this new job fun.

Feeling: I feel really uncomfortable. I feel like everyone is looking at me. I feel very afraid that no one will like me.

Actor: Whoa, I see the food! Let's go eat. I can take care of those feelings. Let's just stuff them right now!

Adult: Actor, what Feeling needs to do is simply process these feelings until she realizes that they're just feelings and are in no way based on fact. If you always try to sooth her feelings, she will never be able to mature. She will never be able to gain confidence in her ability to meet new people and to feel comfortable around them. Stop trying to protect her. You're only making it worse.

Feeling: I feel so awkward. I feel like nobody likes me. Can you let Actor make it better? I don't want to grow up! It hurts to feel this way.

Adult: Feeling, I realize that, but emotional growth sometimes comes with pain. If I allow Actor to stop these feelings, you will never be mature enough to be with other people without over eating. Just feel the feelings. I will, however, allow Actor to go to the bathroom so we can sit and process these feelings, but I will not allow Actor to do anything that will sabotage our progress.

After a few moments of just feeling and recognizing that the feelings are not based on fact, Feeling begins to relax. Her anxiety begins to lessen, and she feels stronger. I go back to the party, I stay away from the food, but I do drink water! Simply having a glass of water in my hand really helps.

Acting out behaviors, also known as reactions, can be thought of as knee-jerk behaviors that result from emotional unawareness.

The key is to allow your feelings to get fully processed BEFORE initiating responsive behavior, and to know the difference between feelings and acting out behavior. **Awareness is the FIRST step.**

What feelings are you suppressing?

Part IV

The Power of the Mind and How it Affects Our Self-Worth

Get Comfortable With Your Body

If you are not comfortable with your present body, you will have a hard time with your new one. Take some time to really look at yourself. It's important to be able to look at yourself with nothing but love. You are loved, and you are perfect exactly the way you are. You simply have a few layers of padding to shed, but the real you is slender, healthy and very attractive.

Here are a few suggestions for getting past the critical feelings you may have about yourself. You will feel uncomfortable at first, but keep doing these until they become a comfortable daily ritual.

1. Look at your body in the mirror, naked. Look at every inch of yourself. Look yourself deeply in your eyes, even if it makes you cry. Crying is an excellent way to release toxic emotions.
2. Forgive yourself for hurting yourself through excess food
3. Say "I love you" in the mirror until you really feel it. Change the words to "I love me" then change the words to "I love (say your name)"

Visualize your real body underneath the protection you've built up over the years. Look at your excess weight as simply an overcoat that you are ready to take off.

What does the person in the mirror say to you?

Visualize the Inner, Healthy, Slender You

At least once per day, take about five minutes to sit quietly and close your eyes. After getting comfortable, take several deep breaths. Count down from 10 to 1 while continuing to breathe deeply, paying close attention to your breath. While your eyes are closed, visualize what you really look like without all the protective layers of excess weight. Visualize yourself sitting at a table with friends or family, all of them slender and healthy. You are laughing with them and feeling very comfortable and loved. There is NO food on the table, only water. The glasses that hold the water are the most beautiful you've ever seen. Pick up your glass and admire its beauty, take a sip of the water. It's delicious, the best tasting water you've ever had. Place the glass back on the table and continue the conversation with your friends. There is no discussion of food or weight.

People who visualize the end result rather than the process are the most successful at their endeavors. Visualize your new body in your mind as often as you can. Losing weight is a process that will happen automatically, once we make the necessary adjustments to our lifestyle and keep our mind on the "real" us inside. As Albert Einstein said: "When imagination is pitted against willpower, willpower always loses."

How can you use your imagination to benefit you?

Replace Comfort Foods with Comfort Thoughts

Pick one statement to say everyday, preferably first thing in the morning while looking in the mirror. You will want your statement to be positive and affirming. The following are some comfort thoughts you might want to use:

1. I live in a world of abundance. I do not need to eat my next four meals in one setting. There is an abundance of food out there for me.
2. I am a skinny person temporarily hiding in a padded body.
3. I am loved, because I love myself!
4. I am a strong and capable person.
5. I have the courage to shed my protective layer.

Whatever your comfort thought is, let it be something that creates a positive feeling for you. It might be difficult to garner any feelings at first, but keep trying until the statement speaks directly to you in a powerful and positive way!

What thoughts bring you comfort?

The Subconscious Mind Cannot Tell the Difference between Reality and Imagination

Have you ever had a dream that seemed so real that you were upset for days? As have many of us. The subconscious mind cannot discern the difference between what is real and what we create in our minds. Life is what we believe it is, and our subconscious mind helps to create those beliefs. So, the next time you are craving, say, chocolate cake, simply close your eyes and visualize yourself eating it. See it in your mind, taste it in your mouth and chew it slowly, then swallow it. Then be done with it! Now this is one time where you can have your proverbial cake and eat it, too!

If this exercise backfires on you when you do it, that is, you crave the item even more, then try this technique: Close your eyes and visualize the cake or pizza or whatever it is you are craving at the moment. Wait until the craving is strong, then visualize a mangy, dirty dog standing over the plate of food eating it and drooling all over it. That should end that craving pretty quick! This visual exercise is another form of aversion therapy, so make sure you don't do this for a food item you don't want to give up for a long time. Repeated visualizations will stop the craving for that food for a long time.

How can YOU use your imagination to break a bad eating habit?

My Body is Thoroughbred Racehorse

Let's say you just purchased a thoroughbred racehorse. What would you feed it? A Big Mac? French Fries? A chocolate shake? Or would you purchase the finest feed available? This horse could make you a millionaire! Think about how you would take care of it. Your body is NO different. It could make you a millionaire, too. The nutrients you feed your body will affect the functioning of your brain, which affects your everyday life! Take good care of it!

Okay, now for you car buffs, think about it this way: My body is a Ferrari! Would you take your brand new Ferrari down to the local mechanic for 10W/30 oil change and would you fill it up with low octane gas? I DON'T THINK SO! Your body will make or break the quality of your life. Treat it as you would your Ferrari!

How would you take care of something upon which your life depended?

Create a Vision Board

A vision board is simply a poster board with a collage of pictures pasted on it. The pictures will represent what you want your body to look like. Also include pictures of very healthy foods and calorie burning activities as constant reminders of what you want. Purchase magazines such as **Health & Fitness** or **Shape** and perhaps **Cooking Light** or even a vegetable seed catalog that has pictures of delicious veggies. As you look at the pictures in each magazine, cut out what “speaks” to you. Did you find a picture of a woman on a treadmill that perhaps sparked a bit of motivation? Did you see a picture of a man riding a bicycle on a mountain trail? How about that cup of strawberries in that seed catalogue? Did it make your mouth water? What about that hamburger in that flyer from Burger King? Oops! Snap that rubber band (see Part III—Dealing with Cravings and Triggers) a couple of times and throw that picture away! After you finish your vision board, place it somewhere where it will be the first things you see in the morning and the last thing you see at night. Keep the pictures of your future self in your mind as much as possible.

What does your vision board look like?

Create Power Word Cards

A power word is a word that speaks to you. Some of my power words are slender, beautiful, wealthy, healthy, peace, harmony, and happy. Any words that create a positive feeling for you can be your power words. Gather some old business cards or small index cards and print one power word on each card in BIG BOLD letters. Place these cards where you can see them several times a day, but focus on only one power word per day, or for several days if you need to. But focus on no more than one per day. I placed my power cards in a plastic name card holder that hangs from my rear-view mirror, so I can see it each time I enter my car. The idea here is to focus on our future self, not our past self. And by doing so, our future self will quickly become our present self.

What word really resonates with you?

Focus On What You CAN Have

Focus on what you CAN eat, what you CAN do in the way of exercise. Focus on the positive. None of us likes to be told we can't do something or that we can't have something. We will resist; it's human nature. If you know you must to give up something like the Big Mac at McDonald's, focus on what you can have at the grocery store. The healthy choices you have at a grocery store far outweigh what you have to give up at McDonald's.

How differently do you feel when you think about what you CAN have?

How to Give Up Donuts Forever

Want to give up donuts forever? Here's a neat idea that should do the trick. Get a box of four donuts. Have some greasy, dirty dishwater in the sink. Also have a bowl of thawed spinach sitting on the counter. While eating a donut, hold another donut in your hand and dunk it in the dirty dishwater. Bring it up and watch it disintegrate in your hand. Dunk it several times while continuing to eat your donut. Keep your focus on the disintegrating donut. Now while eating the second donut, dunk the last one in the bowl of spinach until it too disintegrates. The idea here is to reframe the attraction of the donut, so that the next time you think about a donut, you will remember the one in the dirty dishwater and the one in the bowl of spinach.

With a little creativity, we can do this trick with any food or drink that we want to eliminate from our diets: dinner rolls, ice cream, candy bars, cake or even sugary sodas! Let's say you'd like to give up sugary sodas. Try this for a creative twist on the above technique. Get two glasses. Fill one with the soda. Half fill the other with a very unappetizing concoction, like mustard, milk, dog food and spinach. Pour some of your soda in the glass with the nasty mixture, and then take a sip from the glass reserved for just your soda. Watch how the soda mixes with the concoction, watch it fizz, and think about how it would taste. Take another sip of the pure soda, and I would almost bet that the taste changed for you. Again, the key here is to connect the

soda with the nasty mixture, so that each time you think about drinking a sugary soda, you visualize and taste in your mind that unappetizing recipe.

You may have to do this a few times, but eventually you will link the food you wish to eliminate from your diet with the unappetizing experiment.

Downsize (Normalize) Your Flatware, Dinner Plate, and Food Portions

Have you noticed that everything seems super-sized these days, including our table ware and glasses? A serving size of liquid used to be 8 ounces! But not anymore! Our tendency is to fill our plates and glasses, but if the plates and glasses are too big, our minds will resist smaller (normal) portion sizes.

Since having a normal portion of food on a regular size plate looks funny and frankly makes me feel way too deprived, I will use a salad plate instead. Smaller plates, small glasses, salad forks and teaspoons instead of regular utensils, goes a long way to helping me feel more satisfied. Think about this: Downsize your portions! Downsize your waistline!

What can you downsize today?

If You Argue For Your Limitations, You Will Have Them!

What are your excuses? What do you tell yourself each time you overeat? Do you say that you hate food to go to waste, and that you simply cannot throw it out? Do you say that you have to cook for your family and that it's hard to eat very little? Do you allow others to tell you what to eat or how much? Is food used as a form of love in your household? Does your mother measure your love for her on how much of her cooking you eat?

Your past should not dictate your present or your future. One small change per day will make an extraordinary shift in a matter of months. You do not need your mother's permission to eat less. Ask her how you can show your love for her in other ways. You do not need permission to throw out food. If you can't do that, simply cook less. How much of the excess food do you cook, just so that you can use the excuse to eat leftovers?

What limitations do you place upon yourself?

The End Result

Successful people see the end result in their mind, and they stay focused on what they want until they get it. Unsuccessful people focus more on what it's going to take to get what they want, and they are much more likely to become overwhelmed and give up. "See" what you want as if you already have it. "See" your slim, healthy body as if you already have it. "See" what it is you need to eat to be healthy and to maintain your ideal weight. Visualize the end result always.

What do you see as your "end result"?

Part V

The Physiology of Food

The Many Faces of Diets

Low fat; low carbohydrate; low calorie; high protein? Cabbage soup; grapefruit? You name it: there's a diet for it. There are so many diet books on the market today that each and every one of us should be skinny, skinny, skinny! But we're not. Why? Diets don't work? Lifestyle changes do! Find a permanent nutrition plan and stick to it. Period! Work with a nutritionist if necessary, but don't follow a diet intended for weight loss only. You'll never stick to it, and the weight loss will only be temporary. And stay away from pre-processed foods as much as possible! The sodium content is usually very high, and the nutrition level is usually very low. Focus on nutrition and balance, not just calories. The best overall nutrition plan I've seen that can be followed with ease and permanence is The Zone Diet by Dr. Barry Sears. In a nutshell: 40% carbohydrates; 30 % fat and 30% protein. Keep those carbohydrates low on the glycemic index, and you will feel differently in a matter of days. It really is about balance and nutrition!

How many diets have you been on?

You're Not Getting Enough Nutrition!

Frankly, one of the reasons our nation's obesity rate has climbed may simply be that we are eating more to get enough nutrition! Look at the types of food people tend to overeat. The food is almost always high calorie, high fat and low nutrition. If our body needs a certain amount of vitamins and minerals to remain healthy, and the food we eat is low in those nutrients, we will crave more food to get those needed nutrients! You could eat 1500 calories from a fast-food restaurant to get your minimum daily requirement of, say vitamin A and C (which is highly doubtful that you get any nutrients at all, much less a minimum daily requirement), or you could eat a one cup serving of cantaloupe with less than 100 calories!

If you were to begin a daily regime of vitamins and minerals, your cravings would most likely decrease, assuming you are overeating for nutrients. If you are overeating for emotional reasons, a regime of vitamins and minerals, although extremely helpful in any event, would probably not help with the cravings. However, bear in mind, some emotional eating may very well be the result of a vitamin or mineral deficiency. The neurotransmitters in our brain depend upon certain amino acids in order to function properly. Find a good holistic doctor and get checked. You may find that remedying a deficiency is the only action needed between you and that slender, healthy person hiding inside.

How nutritious is your food?

Eat More AND Lose Weight

The foods you eat really do make a difference in your weight. For example, a huge portion of broccoli is not the same as a huge portion of potato chips, although they're both carbohydrates. Broccoli has a much lower conversion rate on the glycemic index, and as such will not affect our blood glucose levels as do potato chips. Why does the level of our blood glucose matter? Well, it's because consistently high levels of glucose in the blood, which is known as diabetes, will cause damage to our body. Those of us who are not diabetic produce our own supply of insulin, the hormone released by our pancreas that removes the excess blood sugar and eventually stores it as adipose tissue. And guess what adipose tissue is! FAT!

The glycemic index is about the quality of the carbohydrates we eat. Carbohydrates low on this index convert to glucose during the digestive process much more slowly than carbohydrates which rate high on this index. The slower blood glucose levels rise, the less insulin is released into our blood stream. The pancreas wants to keep our blood sugars steady and at a level that will not cause damage to our arteries and organs. If we eat foods that keep our blood sugars in a healthy range, the pancreas won't secrete much insulin. Without insulin, blood sugars won't be converted to glucose, and ultimately to body fat. This is one of the reasons a low carbohydrate diet causes such quick weight loss: little insulin is produced to store glucose, so the body

begins to use fat as fuel. BUT, like all diets, it must be a lifestyle change, as a low carbohydrate diet could create an even greater sensitivity to carbohydrate consumption. Meaning, it could take even fewer carbohydrates to cause a release of insulin once you stop the diet. A quick weight loss usually leads to an even quicker and greater weight gain!!

You can find a good glycemic index for foods either on the internet or in your local bookstore.

Do you know the difference between a carbohydrate, a protein and a fat?

Neurotransmitters and Their Primary Functions

A neurotransmitter is a chemical messenger in our brain that is absolutely necessary to transmit messages from one neuron to the next. Without them, the message to move the hand away from a hot stove would never get to the hand. The message to move the foot from the accelerator to the brake pedal in our cars would never get to the foot. And our feelings would never get felt, as neurotransmitters are responsible for those as well. When a neurotransmitter is either producing too little or producing too much, our behaviors are affected. For example, deficiencies in the intake of the neurotransmitter Serotonin may result in lack of rational emotion, feelings of irritability, sudden unexplained tears, or sleep problems. Anti-depressant medication is known to work by affecting the levels of serotonin. A deficiency in the levels of GABA results in free floating anxiety, fearful or insecure feelings, and unexplained panic attacks, and higher than normal levels of dopamine have been linked to schizophrenia.

Food, vitamins, minerals and amino acids all play a large part in the regulation of these neurotransmitters, as does coffee and other natural substances! Serotonin's primary function, for example, is emotional stability. The supplements which have been indicated to help in healthy levels of this neurotransmitter include calcium, magnesium, chromium and vitamin A. The foods in which these nutrients are found include turkey, ham,

milk and cheese. The primary function of GABA is staying calm. The supplements which have been indicated to help in healthy levels of GABA include the amino acid L-Glutamine and vitamin B-6. The foods in which these are found include fish, especially mackerel, and wheat bran.

Our daily nutrition plan should not only be packed with nutritious foods, but also with foods that have a positive impact on our moods.

What changes do you notice in your mood after consuming a particular food?

OTC Help with Cravings

Taking over-the-counter (OTC) diet pills is a short term fix that will eventually backfire. There are, however, several amino acids that really help with the carbohydrate cravings. The amino acids L-Glutamine and L-Phenylalanine taken together have been proven helpful for many people in the reduction of carbohydrate cravings and for cravings for alcohol! Both of these together help to regulate the neurotransmitter responsible for emotional stability. Other supplements that help in this regard are calcium, magnesium, chromium, vitamin A, vitamin B6 and folic acid. Check your local health food store for any of these supplements.

As with any free form amino acid, however, Glutamine should always be taken with pyridoxal-5-phosphate (B-6) which regulates the absorption, metabolism and conversion of all amino acids. Talk to your doctor or do your research before beginning any supplements!

What has helped reduce your cravings?

Leave the Wheat in the Fields

For many folks, one of the most common food allergens and a major cause of false fat is wheat. Wheat contains a protein called gluten. It is difficult to digest and absorb, and for many folks it causes bloating, intestinal gas, fatigue, and could be a major cause of depression. If you have bloating and intestinal gas, pay very close attention to what you are eating. If wheat is a problem for you, it could take several days to clear your system. Try eliminating all wheat for one week to see how you feel. You could lose up to five pounds in excess water weight during this time. Remember, wheat is in practically everything: pasta, soups, cornbread, cereal and even veggie burgers. And, yes, white flour is made from wheat.

Do you crave bread or pasta?

Part VI

The Math behind the Numbers and the Necessity of Exercise

How Do We Burn Calories?

The three major ways we burn calories are the resting metabolic rate—RMR, the thermic effect of eating food, and physical activity. The RMR defines the number of calories we burn by doing the virtually nothing but breathing, digesting, and moving blood through the body; that is, those activities that are vital to keeping us alive. The RMR accounts for about 65% of our daily calories expended. The thermic effect of our digestive processes accounts for about 10% of the daily calories burned. The rest is up to us. If the amount of calories consumed is greater than the sum of calories burned by these three activities, the excess will ultimately get stored as fat.

What physical activities do you enjoy?

Calculate Your Hunger Level

It's important to have an idea of how we feel after eating. Think back on those feelings from past meals. Since it takes about 20 minutes for the brain to register an adequate food intake, we need to be able to monitor how much and how quickly we eat. On a scale of 1 to 5, calculate your hunger level five minutes after you begin a meal, then again 10 minutes after you began, and once again after you've finished the meal. The key is to consciously monitor your satiety.

1. I haven't eaten anything for at least five hours.
2. I've eaten enough to maintain my desired level of weight.
3. I've eaten enough to maintain my current weight.
4. Looks like the scales will be unkind to me in the morning.
5. I'm so miserable, I can't move.

Before you begin to eat, think about filling your car with gas, but remember your "tank" only needs to hold enough fuel for about 3-4 hours. Assuming the gas tank of your car only hold 3 gallons of gas (about 500 calories), and you put in 5 gallons, the extra two gallons will spill out on the ground, which with today's gas prices would be horrible. Excess food is wasted as well. The body cannot use it, so it stores it ultimately as fat, which is not like saving for a rainy day. It is simply wasted. So, the next time

someone says something about the starving children in another country, remember that throwing food down the disposal is NO different than throwing it down your throat! It's still a waste of food. Don't overcook, don't overbuy meals in a restaurant, and don't overeat.

How often do you find yourself overfilling your "tank"?

Body Mass Index

The body mass index is an estimate of body fat. It is a calculation based on a ratio of a person's height to his or her weight. If the BMI is less than 18.5, that person is considered to be underweight. Normal runs between 18.5-24.9; overweight runs from 25-29.9; and a person is considered to be obese if his or her BMI is 30 or more.

To calculate your BMI, simply take your weight divided by your height divided by your height again times 703. For example, a person who weighs 159 lbs and is 5'8" (68 inches) tall would have a BMI of $159/68/68 * 703 = 24.17$

How did the math work for you?

Basal Metabolic Rate

Your basal metabolic rate is the amount of calories your body requires to complete its basic functions, like keeping your heart beating and regulating your internal temperature. Knowing this rate is the key to calculating the number of calories you need to consume daily in order to maintain your desired weight. It is estimated that the body burns about 10 calories per day per pound. For example, a 150 lb person will burn 1500 calories just to keep alive. The next step is to approximate the number of calories burned in normal daily exercise. A person who sits all day is said to be sedentary, so the amount of calories burned would be about 20% of the BMR or 300 calories. A moderately active person would burn about 30% of the BMR and an active person would burn about 40%. The final step is to add in the amount of calories burned by the digestive process, which is estimated to be about 10% for the general population. The amount of calories burned by a 150 lb person through the digestive process is 150. Adding the calculations together, we find that a 150 lb person requires 1950 calories per day to maintain that weight. Factors that can affect this calculation include age, gender, low calorie diets and medical conditions, such as those affecting the thyroid. However, the above calculation is a good start for most of us.

What is your BMR?

What Should My Calorie Intake Be?

Once you've calculated your Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR), you are now ready to determine what you need to consume in order to get to and maintain your goal weight. I will use as an example a 195 pound female who is 5'7" (67 inches) and who is moderately active.

First, let's determine her body mass index to see if she should lose weight:

$$\text{BMI} = 195/67/67*703 = 30.54$$

It appears that she is considered obese.

Now let's calculate her BMR: $195 \times 10 = 1950$

Add daily activity: $1950 \times 30\% = 585$

Add digestive process $1950 \times 10\% = 195$

Add them together for the number of calories it takes for her body's basic functions: $1950 + 585 + 195 = 2,730$ calories

What should her weight be for her BMI to be in the normal range? Assuming she wants a BMI in the middle of the normal range because of her medium sized bone structure, around 22, the calculation would be as follow: (If she were large boned, she would choose a BMI closer to the high end.)

$22 * 67 * 67 / 703 = 140.5$ pounds. Looks like she needs to lose 54.5 pounds.

So, how many calories should she eat to lose 2 pounds per week?

Since a pound of fat has about 3500 calories, she needs to burn or reduce her calories intake by 7000 calories. She could do this one of two ways or a combination of the two. Either reduce her caloric intake by 7000 calories, about 1000 calories per day, or burn off 7000 calories.

Let's see what it would take to burn off 7000 calories.

A 190 pound person can burn off about 500 calories with about an hour of general aerobics. So, two hours per day for seven days should do the trick. Working out on a stationary bike very vigorously for an hour could burn off over 1000 calories, so one hour per day for seven days would also do the trick.

Or, she can be a bit more reasonable and try doing both moderately. Let's assume that she can do only 45 minutes of exercise, three days per week, and that she wants to start out with something she can handle. She decides on an aerobic activity for 30 minutes at a low impact, which will burn off about 220 calories and she is willing to do the stationary bike for 15 minutes with moderate effort, which will burn off about 175 calories. One workout then will burn 395 calories times three equals 1,185 calories burned per week. That leaves 5,815 calories that need to be cut from her diet.

One more thing to keep in mind that will help her is that if she eats five or six small meals per day, and she eats foods low on the glycemic index and foods that are high in fiber, she will keep her insulin levels down, and she will most likely increase the amount of calories burned just by eating.

How many calories should you consume per day to achieve your desire weight?

People Who Exercise 90 Minutes per Day Are Most Likely To Maintain Their Ideal Weight

A survey by the National Weight Control Registry found that people who exercise 90 minutes per day were most likely to keep the weight off. “WHAT!” you exclaim. “I don’t have 90 minutes per day to exercise.” But wait! You probably do. We don’t have to do 90 minutes all at once, and we need to give ourselves credit for some of the activities we do that we’ve never thought of as exercise. Some examples of exercise that most folks don’t think of as exercise are housecleaning (vacuuming, mopping, unloading the dishwasher), walking up and down stairs, washing the dog, walking to and from the parking lot at the grocery store or at your workplace, walking while shopping, and properly lifting moderately heavy objects. Take a few minutes to think about what all you do in the way of movement during the day. It adds up! But if you are overweight, you still need to do more and for longer periods.

What time wasting behavior will you replace with exercise?

Weight Bearing Exercise

Weight bearing exercise is an absolute must for several reasons. First and foremost, weight bearing exercise builds muscle, and muscle burns more calories, generates more heat to keep us warm, and frankly makes us look better. Weight bearing exercise does not require an expensive gym membership, nor does it require expensive equipment for your home. A little creativity can go a long way to sculpting a well-toned, slim body. Using exercise bands instead of free weights can do wonders for biceps, triceps, shoulders, back, and legs, and there are a number of exercise videos that will show you exactly how to use them. Exercise videos can be done in the privacy of your own home, and they are very affordable. Ankle weights are another useful and inexpensive tool for building muscle. For us girls, using ankle weights with leg exercises can strengthen and tighten both the inner and outer thighs as well as the buttocks. And guys might want to spring for 8 lb and 15 lb pairs of dumbbells for starters.

Did you know that a gallon of water weighs eight pounds?

Your Body Is Smarter Than You Are

If you haven't figure it out yet, a low calorie diet, or any diet that is not part of a permanent lifestyle change, will not only NOT work, but your body will simply adjust to it by slowing down your metabolism. If it thinks it won't get fed enough to sustain itself, it will go into survival mode and simply slow down the calorie burning process. Feed it often, and feed it high nutritious food, and you will have a much happier body. If you've already done the damage, and your metabolism is slow, exercise is the only healthy way to get your fat burning system back on track.

What exercise plan can you put in place today that will serve you well?

Energy to Exercise

How do you feel after eating a heavy meal? Pretty sleepy? Sluggish? The thought of exercising after a meal like that is out of the question, isn't it? Digestion takes a great deal of energy. Proteins take the greatest amount of energy and simple sugars take the least. For a quick boost of energy, eat a piece of fruit right before a workout.

How does what and when you eat sabotage your exercise?

Part VII

Getting Started

Set Easily Attainable Goals to Start

The bottom line to losing weight is to eat less and exercise more. There's no healthy way around it. But if you set a goal to exercise for an hour a day when you've hardly exercised a day in your life, you're setting yourself up for failure. Start slow and build up. A great way to set goals is to do so gradually, so gradually in fact that you'll hardly notice that you've created a habit. For example, set a goal to exercise for 5 minutes, three times per day. The exercise should be somewhat difficult, but not so much so you won't try. How about a 5 minute walk at a fairly brisk pace? Do this three times per day every day for the first week. Up the time to 8 minutes, three times per day, every day. Then increase the time to 10 minutes three times per day, every day, and so on until you are exercising for a total of an hour a day, every day. Later, add some weight bearing exercise. Start out slow and build up to at least 30 minutes of weight bearing exercise every other day.

Create a simple chart to help you track your progress. An abbreviated example is shown below. Place an X in each box to indicate completion!

Monday Week #1	Monday Week #2	Monday Week #3	Monday Week #4
Brisk 5 min walk <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Brisk 8 min walk <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Brisk 10 min walk <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Brisk 15 min walk <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday Week #1	Tuesday Week #2	Tuesday Week #3	Tuesday Week #4
Brisk 5 min walk <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Brisk 8 min walk <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Brisk 10 min walk <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Brisk 15 min walk <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

What else can you think of to increase your daily exercise?

Commit to Changing Only One Behavior per Day

Commit to changing only one behavior per day, or per week if that would be easier. When you look back in a few weeks, you will see a tremendous change in your daily habits!

1. Drink more water: commit to drink at least 64 ounces of pure water throughout the day, each day.
2. Give up sodas: the sugar in soda is way too high, and the diet ones are not healthy.
3. Eat five small meals per day, instead of three large ones: the body burns more calories in the digestion process than most any other activity. Eat small meals and burn more calories!
4. Stop eating after 6:00 pm
5. Eat one or more pieces of fruit each day
6. Focus on high fiber foods
7. Focus on fresh fruits and vegetables
8. Stay away from fast food restaurants and buffets

What other behavior changes will you commit to?

Keep a Mood Journal

Most diets tell us to keep a food journal so we know just how much we eat, but I believe we should keep a mood journal instead. In a mood journal, you will not only keep tabs on what you eat, but how you feel before and after you eat it. For example, what is your eating habit if you don't get enough sleep? Do you crave certain foods when you are tired? What about after you have a disagreement with a loved one? Do you crave ice cream, alcohol, or perhaps chocolate? You could be on the best diet in the world, but if you don't find a better way to deal with the changes in moods, you will revert back to the same old eating habits as soon as the triggering event happens again. If you can tame the beast (the triggers) you will never need to hide from them again. You will be FREE!

Also pay attention to mood changes after you eat. A rather abrupt change in your moods after eating a certain food may very well indicate an allergy or sensitivity. Pay attention to swelling of the feet, ankles, hands or fingers. Swelling indicates that the body is retaining water, which could mean that it is trying to protect itself from an irritant. Or perhaps your nose begins to run or your eyes water. A change in moods or physiology is evidence that your body is trying to tell you something. Go see an allergist.

What mood changes have you noticed about yourself and when?

Create Your Affirmation Statement

Your affirmation statement is a one or two sentence statement that you will want to say out loud many, many times throughout each and every day. (And yes, it must said be out loud.) Your affirmation statement will serve as a reminder of your journey, as daily encouragement, and as a source of strength. This statement can take just about any form; you can use prose or poetry, or it can take the form of a song: rock, rap, or blues, whatever you'd like to sing to yourself daily. Whatever empowers YOU!

An example of a statement in prose could be one of the following:

I am a slim human being who eats only nutritious food and drinks at least 64 ounces of water daily. I eat to live. I am now and forever more in full control.

Bear in mind, whatever you choose to create for yourself, your statement may feel phony for a few days. Give it time to become true for you. The programming you have in your memory has to be replaced, and it takes time and a lot of self love. Once you've created your affirmation statement, write it down on a card, so that you can carry it with you at all times. With a dry erase marker or lipstick, write your statement on your bathroom mirror. (Don't use permanent markers on your mirror—it may not come off, and you may want to change your affirmation after a few weeks.)

What will your affirmation say?

Try Backward Goals

Backward goals start with the ideal in mind, and then work backward to see how to get to the goal. Let's say your goal is to weigh 125 pounds. What is the very last thing you need to do to obtain that goal? Lose one pound, right? So, the next step back would be to weigh 126 pounds. What would be the very last step needed to obtain this goal? Yep, lose one pound. I think you get the picture. So, let's look at it another way. The backward goal is to lose one pound. So, what is it I need to do to lose one pound? What would be the very last step to losing one pound? If one pound is equivalent to 3500 calories, then I would need to reduce my food intake by 3500 calories or burn off 3500 calories or, better yet, a combination of the two. So, what would it take to do that? Now we have to make some assumptions. Assume that your daily calorie intake is 2500 per day and you do not exercise. Okay, now let's reduce our daily intake of calories by 500 per day. That would get us to 3500 fewer calories in one week, and that would get us where we want to go: lose one pound. What if we do that AND add some exercise? If walking for 30 minutes burns off 120 calories (this will vary wildly by person), and I walk for 30 minutes per day at 3 mph for seven days, I've burned off 840 calories. I would need to do this for four weeks to burn off 3500 calories. But here's the great part about exercising! It raises our metabolic rate for a short time after exercising, which means we continue to burn more calories after exercising than we did before.

How can working backwards help you obtain the end result?

Find or Develop a Support Structure

Ask a trusted friend to be your support structure at least initially. This friend must have the emotional courage to tell you the truth, to point out where you might be lying to yourself, and to remind you of your goals. Sometimes our eating habits are so ingrained, that it's not until after we've eaten something that we remember that we shouldn't have. Until you develop a conscious awareness of what you eat, don't eat alone. Always have a witness, even if this witness is not aware of your goals. Just having the witness is a reminder in and of itself.

How can having a witness help you?

Get a Weight Loss Coach!

Professional Life Coaches are trained to help you attain your goals and keep you accountable. Those folks at weight loss centers are most likely NOT professionally trained ICF member coaches. Look at college sports programs. Who gets the most results? The teams with the best coaches, of course! Those coaches KNOW how to get results, and they know that the game winners are the players on the team. Coaches work with those players to help them achieve their goals of winning. A coach will bring out the best in you! Look on the Resources page for more information on coaches.

What would you hope a coach would do for you?

Part VIII

Daily Routines

Make a Daily Menu

If you fail to plan, you plan to fail! Plan your meals ahead of time. Write down what you intend to eat for the day, and make allowances for snacks, too. Don't be stingy with your food planning, but don't plan to eat it all either.

Meal Frequency and Timing

Eating five to six smaller meals per day will help to bust the binge cycle. Eating low glycemic index foods at those meals will lower insulin levels, and lower insulin levels usually mean weight loss, or at least no weight gain!

Not convinced about eating five to six small meals per day? This should convince you: a recent study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* determined that people who ate six, small regular meals a day had increased thermo-genesis, a faster, hotter metabolism. When you eat regularly throughout the day, you get a slow steady burn effect from your digestion. However, when you eat erratically, you are sending mixed signals to your body, and your metabolism will slow down.

Timing makes a difference, too. Other studies have shown that eating breakfast and not eating late (within three hours of bedtime) both led to reductions in weight. These studies also showed that eating protein for breakfast is also very helpful for two reasons: the digestion of protein takes longer—that is, it takes more energy to digest and hence burns more calories, and the digestion of protein burns hotter, which requires more energy and hence burns more calories. But remember to stay balanced: this is a lifestyle change, not a quick fix!

What would smaller, more frequent meals look like?

Eat Breakfast!

Eating a good healthy breakfast is an absolute must. Eat foods that are digested slowly and are low on the glycemic index. Foods such as steel-cut oats are high in fiber and are digested slowly. Simple carbohydrates, such as sugary cereals will raise your blood sugar, which will trigger a release of insulin. Remember, insulin is a storage hormone. Its job is to pull the sugar out of the blood and store it for later use. Often, it is stored as fat. Cottage cheese with fresh fruit is a good choice, as are yogurt and multi-grain toast with butter. Stay away from donuts, pastries and jelly. They're not worth it.

What other food items can you think of that would get your day off to a great start?

Make Water Your Closest Friend

Often times we think we are hungry when in reality we are just thirsty. Since water has no calories, let's assume that's the case first, before we eat. Just in case, drink a full glass of water before each meal. If you hate tap water, like I do, either buy a very good filter to attach to your faucet, or buy purified water from the grocery store. Investing in a filter system is an investment in your health. Check out the reverse osmosis systems. I have one, and I wash and refill those 16 ounce water bottles almost every day. I usually grab one or two every day before I walk out the door. Drinking water flushes impurities from the body, including FAT! Drink at least 64 ounces daily. For a little flavor, add a touch of lemon juice to the water or even a drop of vanilla extract. Lemon is a natural diuretic!

How can you make drinking water more fun?

Make Fast Food Restaurants Your Worst Enemy

Fast food restaurants and buffets are OUT! Fast food restaurants have little to offer us in the way of nutrition. The food is usually high in fat and calories and is just too easy to get. Buffet tables are even worse. Have you ever gone into a restaurant that offers a buffet and ate only a normal portion of food? Have you ever gone to a fast food restaurant and ate healthy food? No more explanation is necessary. Neither of these options can exist in our world anymore. They're not worth the misery they cause.

What choices do you have that will replace fast food restaurants?

Keep a Few Close Friends

Do you have a few close friends that you want to keep forever? Think of a few food items that are as good for you as those friends and stick with them. Eat them everyday, and eventually you won't want to go a day without them. Foods such as low fat yogurt, raisins, carrots, unsalted raw nuts, steel-cut oats, fresh fruits, green vegetables, V-8 juice and other high nutrition, low calorie foods will keep you on the right track, just like a good friend. Too great a variety of foods leads to overeating. Limit your core meals to simple, healthy foods and stick with them. Boring? Probably, but not being bored with food may be the reason so many of us are fat.

How many "close food friends" can you put on your list?

Carry Healthy Snacks with You at All Times

A small box of raisins, a couple of ounces of unsalted raw nuts, an apple, an orange, a single serving size of low sodium V-8 or another high nutrition, low calorie juice, or even a piece of beef jerky can go a long way in curbing hunger before a meal. Plan on a small snack about an hour before your meal, and remember to drink at least 10-12 ounces of water before each snack and before each meal.

What healthy snacks do you like?

Part IX

Final Thoughts

Diet Is A Four Letter Word!

Diets don't work! Period! Only permanent life-style changes do. And the bottom-line is that there are only two ways to lose weight: Eat less (and eliminate non-nutritious, junk food) and exercise (get up and move) more. That's it folks. We spend billions, yes billions, on weight loss products and diet books, and we still have a major weight problem in this country. Why? Because we are all looking for that magic pill, that perfect diet, or that one exercise that will allow us to lose all the weight we want and to do it overnight. Ain't gonna happen, and you know it. Now, let's focus on how to make it happen, one day, one step, and one ah-ha moment at a time. Let's focus on you.

Can you do this one day at a time?

Lose Weight—Not Your Money

We've all done it: spent money on weight loss programs ranging from expensive gym memberships to diet center memberships to diet books (which never got read past chapter three) to bets with friends to therapy. We're all looking for that magic word or that magic pill to keep us motivated. But what we need to find is **NOT** outside of us; it's inside of us. It's letting go of the shame, the fear, and the self-loathing that keeps us from succeeding. It's about being okay with who we are right now, this very minute. It's about loving ourselves from the inside out. Stop the madness, right now, right this minute, and take a deep breath. Cry if you need to, but just stop and breathe. Sit still for a few minutes, be okay with yourself. Close your eyes and visualize yourself letting go of all the resistance, letting go of all the shame, letting go of the need to protect yourself with food. Then take the first step in taking care of you: make a simple plan and set some simple goals.

How much do you deserve to be slender and healthy?

Reward Yourself Often!

Reward yourself for each new healthy habit formed and with each weight loss milestone of 5 or 10 pounds, but NOT with food. Keep these rewards simple and inexpensive, as you will want to continue to give yourself rewards for a long time. For starters, use some of these ideas.

Women: a new haircut, a manicure, new makeup, a magazine or a new book.

Men: tickets to a ball game (Take your own snacks: make sure they require a lot of chewing, like beef jerky. Drink only water, and stay away from the peanuts, hot dogs and beer.), a new book or magazine, or rent a DVD.

What creative ways will you reward yourself with a weight loss win?

Be Okay With Setbacks

Be fully prepared to have some setbacks. Beating up on yourself emotionally will only create more shame and guilt. Starve the guilt: don't feed it. Whatever you feel when you have a setback, simply be with that feeling. Don't let it morph into guilt or shame. Go into pissed off or mad, anything but guilt. Remember, sometimes you just need to say: "Gee, it sure sucks to be me, today." Guilt does nothing more than continue the cycle of self-punishment.

What does your self-talk say when you make a mistake?

**To Grow, I Must Be Willing To Let
My Present and Future Be Totally Unlike
My Past. My History Is NOT My Destiny!**

Life is very much like the reality shows on TV. The question is on which reality show channel does our life play? The Stress Channel? The Self-Pity Channel? The Insecurity Channel? Hopefully, those shows are part of our History Channel. Our new life should be playing on the Health and Wellness Channel, the New Beginnings Channel, and the My Life is Awesome Channel. The phrases “that’s the way it’s always been” or “that’s the way I am” should be stricken from your memory banks!

What’s the name of your reality show?

Obesity Linked to Dementia and Alzheimer's!

Okay, folks, the findings are in! Obesity is not only unhealthy, but it is now linked to what I consider a fate worse than death: Alzheimer's disease! In a recent study by the Division of Research at the Kaiser Permanente Northern California, published in the *British Medical Journal*, findings confirm that "being fat has a detrimental impact on the brain." It found that people who were obese in middle age, that is, they had a body mass index of 30 or more, were 74% more likely to have brain atrophy—dementia. No big deal, you say, because your BMI is only 27. Too bad, because the study also found that those folks who had a body mass index between 25 to 29.9 were 35% more likely to develop atrophy of the brain. This effect, unfortunately, was more significant for women! A number of reasons were cited for this phenomenon, but frankly who cares if it has to do with lack of exercise, or a high fat diet or that fat cells release inflammatory cytokines! The link is real and the link is there. If for no other reason than to reduce the chance of dementia or Alzheimer's, we must keep our weight at a healthy level. Do it for your grandkids!

How does this knowledge affect how and what you will eat tonight and from now on?

Your Wish Is Granted!

It is now the year 2030. You are in a nursing home, in pain, and you haven't long to live. You can't walk on your own, and the nurse has just left to empty your bedpan for the fourth time today. You haven't had a visitor in weeks. A stranger comes into your room and hands you a small round object. He tells you to hold that object in your hand for 5 minutes, and after that time you will be granted one wish. You do so, and you make your wish. You wish to start your life all over again, to be given a second chance to live your life in a healthy, loving manner. In an instant, your wish is granted. You are now back to today, and this is the first day of the rest of your life!

How are you going to live your life this time?

The Bottom Line Is: You Have NO Excuses!

At this point, I've shed light on most of the excuses any one can have. All except one: medical conditions. And that I won't cover. If you have a medical reason for your weight issue that has been diagnosed and confirmed by a medical doctor, then this book is not meant for you.

One final comment for women over 40: have your hormones checked. Do some research on the topics of estrogen dominance, progesterone cream and DHEA. For some women, a simple addition of progesterone cream and/or DHEA can do wonders to help take off the pounds!

What does your doctor say about your weight?

Resources

The Sedona Method—an excellent home study or live workshop course for letting go of toxic emotions. www.sedona.com

Success Certain Coaching—a well developed and powerful home study course by James Arthur Ray on setting and achieving goals. www.jamesray.com

The Goldman Method—an excellent home study course by Burt Goldman for reprogramming the mind. www.goldmanmethod.com

Silva Ultra Mind—an excellent home study or live workshop course for changing how we see the world. www.thesilvamethod.com

Emotional Freedom Technique—a tapping exercise that helps to reprogram old core beliefs. www.emofree.com

International Coaching Federation—the place to go for a list of ICF member coaches. www.coachfederation.org/ICF