

CHAPTER 2: POPULAR DIETS – “ONE BLONDE’S MEAT IS ANOTHER BLONDE’S POISON”

Want to know my no-fail diet trick? I would put perfume on my food, so I wouldn't retrieve it out of the trash. Brilliant!

The term “diet” is defined as: “foods eaten sparingly; following a regimen or a pattern of eating usually used for weight loss or medical reasons.” Diets come in all shapes and forms. So do we. There should never be one diet for everyone. One size does not fit all! It’s unfortunate that the word *diet* sells without any merit or research. Today, the term *diet* is a euphemism for quick-fix or gimmick. While I was researching the most popular diets, all the librarians and bookstore clerks had the same remark, “None of them work, or they wouldn’t keep coming back.” Protein diets are on their way out, as they have been numerous other times in diet history. The same diets have been around for years. They are just renamed and repackaged to look like a new rage. Simply put, they are *recycled failures in the disguise of a current event*. With so many brilliant people in the world, wouldn’t you think a solution for weight loss would have been found by now? People don’t like the simple truth. Ironically, people would rather BUY a simple fix.

Most popular diets use some type of medical theory or generalization, which doesn’t work. For example, I may have the same blood type as my twin sister, but we reacted differently to the same diet. That was the great thing about being a twin.... “twin experiments!” My body reacted differently, at different times to the same diet, according to my health and circumstances. Diets that are dictated by blood types, for instance, don’t work or hold true all the time. Another example of this would be when I suffered adrenal exhaustion from over-exercising, and my body had a surplus of insulin with a high set point. A *set point* is where your weight maintains at a certain level, no matter what your diet or exercise routine is. I was too tired to starve or eat meat-protein meals. There wasn’t ANY diet that would work for me. When I suffered from pernicious anemia, my body could only digest plant energy and natural nutrients, which was contrary to what doctors often advised (meat and iron supplements).

Diet is another term for deprivation, depletion, and depression. Diets exclude certain food groups or types of foods, which deprive your body

and deplete needed nutrients. Eventually, as I have found, this leads to depression as well. Foods work synergistically with our hormones and brain chemicals. Serotonin (neurotransmitter — calms), epinephrine (adrenaline), and endorphins (hormone — pain/emotions) are all compromised when you diet, which takes a toll on our bodies mentally and physically. Omitting necessary nutrients causes the body to overcompensate for their absence. Subsequently, the imbalance or absence of hormones and brain chemicals leaves you tired, weak, depressed, and many times, sick. The body becomes enervated (drained nerves). No wonder people despise dieting or end up sabotaging them! Popular diets are always compared to good old-fashioned balanced eating. The popular diets usually result in quick and temporary weight loss, while normal healthy eating habits give a better long-term effect. It's a known fact that every time you diet, you train your body to lower its metabolism and become "fat efficient" (effortlessly clinging to fat). When you diet, you starve yourself physically and mentally. Whether you have a weight problem or not, when you finish or "blow" your diet, you will gain back all the lost weight and at least five pounds more. Does everyone think they are the exception to this rule? Obviously...YES!

In this book, I place all diets in these five basic categories. I will go over the pros and cons of each type of diet in each category. Below the various diet definitions, I also listed today's popular diets, which may be included in each specific category.

The five diet categories are:

1. Protein or low-carbohydrate diets
2. High-carbohydrate diets
3. Calorie or fat gram count diets
(including Glycemic Index)
4. Gimmick diets (including *all-you-can-eat* diets)
5. Deprivation diets (including fasting, food replacements, and cleansing diets)

PROTEIN or LOW-CARB DIETS

Protein diets, as I've mentioned, are on their way out. Why? Because they are a "temporary gimmick" which won't last, and sometimes doesn't work at all, as with my sister Shane. Many celebrities endorse them, and restaurants and grocery stores are catering to the low-carb craze. Protein is one of the four basic nutrients. Protein is essential for growth and development. It provides energy and is important in the manufacturing of hormones, antibodies, enzymes, and tissues. Complete proteins contain all the essential amino acids (the building blocks of all proteins). This doesn't mean that we can't receive proper or complete protein without animal protein. Soy products, beans, and grains contain protein, and are a

“complete protein.” (For example, combinations of grains with legumes.) Although fifty to sixty grams of protein is usually recommended, our nation eats far too much. I have found that most of us can survive very well with a mere twenty grams of protein every other day.

Protein diet gurus claim too much insulin is the cause of weight gain. Insulin is the hormone produced in the pancreas, which regulates glucose levels in the blood, and the lack of which causes diabetes. The appeal of protein diets is the “all-you-can-eat” feature of this particular food plan. The large amount of fat calories makes you feel full and satiated. Protein diets advise the dieter to omit or limit carbohydrates (the fuel). This forces the body to break down fat for fuel. This fat breakdown continues no matter how many calories you consume (theoretically), as long as it’s not carbohydrates. Protein diet gurus also claim that carbohydrates, unlike protein, cause insulin spills which stop the fat-burning/muscle-building process. More recently, revised protein diets (which included low-carbohydrate content), claim the protein and fat block the insulin spill caused by carbs. They would exclude certain carbs (or extra carbs), that caused higher insulin spills. *Low-carbohydrate* is the term frequently used for anything with seven grams or less of carbohydrate per serving or twenty-one grams or less per day.

Apparently, high-protein diets are based on the premise that if you eat a big carbohydrate-packed meal and do not use those future glucose calories as fuel, the pancreas secretes an excess of insulin. This drives the glucose too quickly into the cells. When those glucose stores are filled to capacity, the liver breaks down the extra energy molecules and handily stores them as fat. The fat cells can store unlimited amounts of fat. However, I have found the body stores ALL incoming excess calories as fat. This includes extra calories from protein and dietary fat. So why avoid carbs in moderate, digestible portions? Most people lose weight, at first, with protein diets because when they start their diet, it’s usually after a binge. The excess weight loss is usually water weight as well. Initial dieters usually eat considerably less, protein or not, than they did before their protein diet. Protein diets leave the pancreas *dormant*, causing an insulin overflow when the protein dieter returns to any normal amount of carbs, causing a bloated, lethargic feeling and ongoing hunger.

Protein diet gurus also claim you can accumulate enough energy from protein without needing carbohydrates for fuel. Carbohydrates, unlike protein, need insulin to break down into fuel. The protein diet gives you a false sense of weight loss (water weight) because it has a diuretic effect. A baby is made up of 75 percent water. A man is made up of 50-70 percent water. Water helps the skin’s elasticity, but we lose it as we age. You can imagine what the protein diet does to the skin and the aging process. It also gives you a false stimulant effect, which makes you think you have energy immediately preceding a meal. Nitrogen-based proteins (animal protein,

particularly meat) do not have any (or very little) carbohydrate content. This forces the body into an unnatural state of ketosis (the act of burning fat, rapidly, without burning glucose), thus creating fatigue, coated tongue (halitosis—bad breath) and severe water loss. Drinking water is vital with protein diets, but add lemon for the natural sodium. This will prevent you from losing your electrolytes (helps dehydration).

During protein diets, the kidneys are overworking because of the diuretic effect it creates, which later may cause severe kidney damage. Protein diets also have been known to create headaches, nausea, constipation, and muscle cramping, due to the loss of electrolytes. Liquid protein diets have been proven unsuccessful, both with weight and health issues. Dieters who've endured long liquid protein diets have been reported to have severe kidney damage, sluggish metabolisms, and always regain their weight, plus more.

High-protein diets also result in high intake of cholesterol, since they are usually high in animal fat. When your liver and digestive system are working overtime, it enhances the dizzy or lightheaded feeling you receive while dieting. Body builders consume high quantities of protein to help their muscles grow. This is a fallacy because protein cannot be stored. Incidentally, exercise, not egg whites, makes you grow. Bigger does NOT mean stronger or being a better athlete. On the contrary, mega-protein consumption results in bulk, which actually creates a sluggish athlete. Lean muscle creates a more efficient athlete. When I'm scouting for the best horse, I don't look for a bigger horse. I look for good conformation, a horse with long and lean muscle tissue, which permits the horse to perform better. An athlete should never consume more protein (in grams) than half of his body weight in pounds.

Normally, this is how the body works: If the blood delivers more glucose (the body's main source of fuel from breaking down the foods we eat) than the body needs, the hormone insulin signals the liver and muscles to take up the surplus. Then it is stored as future fuel or is converted into fat. Exercise can also utilize the surplus. You don't have to sacrifice carbs, you just need to limit the amount, watch for the quality, and exercise.

The popular protein or low-carb diets are including healthier tips and then renaming them. Some include "magical" nuts, such as the macadamia nut, and emphasize Mediterranean fats, such as olive oil and Omega 3. The essential fatty acid (Omega 3) can be found in salmon, flax, and nuts such as walnuts. These are good hints, but you don't need to eat a protein diet in order to include these healthy choices. These recent protein/low-carb diets usually constrict carbohydrates to 30 to 40 grams a days.

When I suffered pernicious anemia, the doctor gave me the usual instructions: eat meat and take iron. Anemia can be a symptom of a vitamin C deficiency, not just iron, folic acid, and B12. As I said, plant proteins and chlorophyll were the only foods my exhausted body could absorb. When my

adrenal glands were exhausted from too much exercise, protein diets made my body acidic. This complicated the health problems I already endured. Protein diets never worked for me because my body recognized saturated fats as sugar, causing an insulin over-secretion. The body is sophisticated enough to learn every trick and then compensate for it.

Most people eat a diet made for carnivores, which we are not. Our bodies have a harder time digesting meat protein. The hydrochloric acid used for digesting meat is unnatural for the body. This digestive aid has to eventually be manufactured by our body. Our intestines are longer than carnivores. Meat meals can take up to ten hours of digestion, while other plant proteins only take a few hours. This leaves the body open for diseases while the meat ferments in the intestines (acidosis), struggling to digest. This accumulation of toxins promotes parasite infestation and chronic diseases. Furthermore, our cattle and poultry are raised with the use of antibiotics and other chemicals. Animal protein, particularly red meat, contains phosphates (as in sodas), which leeches calcium. Calcium deficiency is the root of all diseases. Meat is connected to most health problems.

Fish is poorly regulated and inspected. Our polluted waters are contaminating our fish supply. There has also been recent concern over high mercury levels in such commonly eaten fish as herring, swordfish, tuna, and mackerel. “Chunk light” tuna has the lowest mercury levels of the bunch. You should avoid these fish when pregnant. Salmon is highly rated because it is known as an anti-inflammatory food which contains large amounts of Omega 3, the essential fatty acid. “Farm-raised” salmon (and other fish) is rated poorly, because of the pollutants or antibiotics. The best fish to buy is wild fish. People don’t realize most fish is dyed, like farm-raised salmon. It’s recommended that you eat no more than nine to twelve ounces of fish per week (two to three servings). Shellfish are filter feeders and considered fairly dirty. Food poisoning is common with shellfish, particularly poorly cooked or undercooked. Fish oils should be taken in careful amounts because they are usually loaded with concentrated amounts of toxins. Fish oils go rancid easily, as well, causing free radicals.

Protein diets, as a whole, overwork your kidneys, liver, and other organs, further escalating the aging process. Heavy-protein meals leave the body’s pH very acidic, which creates the body’s environment, inviting diseases to smolder. Acidosis makes the body more susceptible to diseases and causes leeching from your reserves and bones, which can cause arthritis. Meat is high in phosphates, which leeches essential calcium but can cause unnatural growth. Women who overload on meat and dairy protein are more prone to having a Caesarian-section childbirth. Dairy is a known contributor to congestion, arthritis, asthma, candidiasis, allergies, and odor problems. The saturated fat from animal products interrupts or increases the estrogen balance in women, which continues female problems, edema, and weight difficulties.

From a positive standpoint, it is better to choose a protein food, rather than a sugar/junk food. That doesn't necessarily mean meat. There are healthier choices. Incidentally, all protein is not the same. Liver may have more vitamins and minerals than other foods, but it is also the filter for the animal's body, which contain all the toxins, hormones, and chemicals they were exposed to. Your body struggles to excrete those toxins, which in turn depletes your own nutrients. Protein powders are overrated when it comes to delivering the amount of protein needed. Regardless of their content, protein powders do not give the same effect as non-fragmented protein itself. Whey is the best choice of all the protein powders. The bottom line is, if high-protein diets worked, why have they gone in and out of style continuously throughout diet history, while we have been getting fatter? You decide.

Popular protein or low-carb diets may include: *Hampton Diet, Eat to Win, South Beach Diet, Dr. Atkins Diet, The Zone, Scarsdale Diet and Stillman Diet.*

HIGH-CARBOHYDRATE DIETS

Carbohydrates, like proteins, are one of the four basic nutrients (water, protein, carbohydrates and fat). They are found in almost every plant food, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes. Some dairy products (e.g. milk) contain a considerable amount of carbohydrates. There are two groups of carbohydrates: simple and complex.

Simple carbohydrates (simple sugars) include fructose (fruit sugar), sucrose (table sugar) and lactose (milk sugar), etc. Complex carbohydrates are also made of sugar, however, the molecular structures contain complex chains that are longer. These carbohydrates include fiber and starches such as vegetables, whole grains, legumes, etc. The main purpose of carbohydrates is to fuel both the body's cells and the brain. Though fiber cannot be digested, the carbs convert into glucose. This glucose (fuel) is either used for energy or stored in the liver (reserves). Consuming too many carbs will result in storing fat as reserves. The fiber and sugar content has the most effect on our blood sugar. Fiber actually slows down the secretion of insulin. Therefore, the more fiber, the better the glucose delivery. Animal protein doesn't contain any carbohydrate content, except some dairy. On the other hand, many carbohydrate foods contain some protein, such as avocados, nuts, seeds, and beans. Some sea greens contain all food groups without including any harmful chemicals. This is why, in my opinion, carbohydrates are a better food choice than meat and other animal proteins.

Carbohydrate diets are unfairly compared to protein diets. Most people consume sugars and refined carbohydrates rather than whole grains, fresh vegetables, and fruits. Refined carbohydrates in excess act like sugar

because they are almost completely starch. These refined carbs enter the bloodstream rapidly, causing an excess of insulin to balance the rise in blood sugar. In turn, the excess insulin causes the blood sugar to drop, creating an unending hunger and the same cravings—namely for sweets. Unlike refined carbs, whole grains contain bran (the outer layer) and germ (the internal embryo), antioxidants, fiber, and phytochemicals. These all help fight disease, particularly diabetes II and cancer. The fiber in whole grains helps slow down insulin secretion. Whole grains contain 10-15 percent protein. The FDA claims that “diets rich in whole-grain foods and other plant foods low in total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol, may help reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers.” People who eat live fruit and vegetables with whole grains are healthier and live longer. Whole grains are usually considered low-glycemic. (There is a slow rise in blood sugar and insulin release.) Whole oats and barley are a good choice, especially because they create a slower insulin response. Other healthy whole grains that are usually overlooked are millet, spelt, sorghum, grano, amaranth, and farro.

The best-rated diets for health are the high-carbohydrate diets. High-carbohydrate diets are the opposite of protein diets. They tend to be lower in fat and protein. Frequently recommended by nutritionists, they are often moderate and well-balanced, incorporating all the food groups. These highly rated carb diets are high in whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, legumes, EFA oils or fats that promote HDL (good fats). They are also very low in protein and usually eliminate animal protein such as meat. These diets are proven to fight cancer, high cholesterol, aging, diabetes, arthritis, memory loss, and high blood pressure. When high-carbohydrate diets are compared to protein diets for weight loss, high carbohydrate diets sustain better long-term weight loss.

Carbohydrates, however, hold nine times more water than protein or fat grams. Although this is healthier for the skin and bodily function, it can also give the impression that the water-weight is fat. Eventually, the body adjusts to the appropriate water balance and weight. Incidentally, when muscle replaces fat, one might experience temporary water retention. That is why I never recommend weighing yourself while your body is trying to adjust.

Simply put, eating too much of anything causes weight gain and fat storage. Just because dieters may choose a no-fat diet does not mean it is free of calories. On the contrary, fat makes you feel full. Subsequently, dieters consume more calories on a no-fat diet than they would eating a moderate amount of good fat. Fat can also be used to block insulin the way protein does. Good fats (monounsaturated fats or essentially fatty acids) can actually speed up the thermogenesis (body-heat metabolism) of the body.

The classic Food Guide Pyramid is usually the gold-standard curriculum in nutritional schools and uses a high-carb food program. It recommends that most of your daily calories should come from complex carbohydrates (grains, legumes, and cereals) rather than from proteins (dairy, poultry, meat) and even less should come from fats (oils, butter, sweets). The recent chart emphasizes good fats (Omega 3), fresh fruit, and vegetables with whole grains. Obviously this is much healthier than its previous recommendation, but too many breads and grains cause an acidic reaction in the body. This may lead to joint pain or arthritis. Certain breads, cereals, and fat-free snacks may be low in fat and calories, but they are not low in their glycemic index content (the relative potency of carbohydrates and their propensity to raise and stabilize blood sugar). That means such foods as rice cakes or carrots can be low in calories and fat, but their glycemic index ranking is extremely high, causing an over-secretion of insulin. I believe most of your complex carbohydrates should be obtained through *live* foods, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, and avocados. Live/raw-food dieters don't have to worry about calories, fat grams, or glycemic index rating because the foods are clean, pure, easily assimilated, and easily digestible. This leaves your system more energetic and clean in order to heal, detox, and burn fat. Although I prefer a high-carb diet to a low-carb diet, it is the quality and quantity of the carbs that dictates how efficiently the diet works.

Popular high-carbohydrate diets may include: *The Mediterranean Diet, Macrobiotics, The THE FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID, The Pritikin Diet, Durhan Diet, and Longevity Diet.*

CALORIE OR FAT-GRAM-COUNTING DIETS (and GLYCEMIC INDEX)

It seems every diet, including most protein diets, count calories. I considered myself a "calorie connoisseur." I would simply scan any food item like a grocery store register and be able to guess the exact calorie amount. The average person consumes about 1,800 to 3,000 calories a day. The average weight loss diet recommends about 1,000 to 1,200 calories per day. The average calorie count to maintain your weight is about 1,800 to 2,000 per day. It is usually recommended for men to average no more than 2,600 calories per day and women should have no more than 2,000 calories per day. The quality of the calorie (where it comes from), is more important than the quantity. Calorie intake should vary and depend on your body type, activities, health, and circumstances. A calorie is not a calorie. A laboratory calorie is not the same as a digested calorie. Different foods stimulate certain hormones. Hormones, not calories, dictate your body's health and weight. An empty calorie food may trigger your insulin

or estrogen, causing hypoglycemia or edema. This makes weight loss more difficult. A calorie is defined as a unit of energy equal to the energy needed to raise the temperature of one kilogram of water one degree Celsius. This is a fine definition for a Petri dish, but not for your body. Because your body is dictated by hormones, you can experience a different reaction to the same food at different times. Here’s another example: take a one-hundred-calorie apple and compare it to a one-hundred-calorie chocolate candy. They have the same calorie content, but they will react differently because of the different qualities of the calories. The chocolate candy triggers your endorphins, which act like a drug (hormone pain relief and “high”). The unnatural sugar in the candy can also cause an insulin and estrogen overflow. The lack of fiber makes the candy a high-glycemic food as well. Nature put a natural insulin filter in the fiber of the apple. Apple is a better choice although it may be the same calorie content.

Too many calories cause weight gain. It’s best to compare calories relatively. You have to consider not only the quality of the calorie but your own circumstances as well. If you were eating over 3,000 calories a day, it would be ridiculous to initiate a diet of 1,200 calories to lose weight. This can cause a shock to your body. It’s best to gradually lower calories. You can achieve the same amount of weight loss by eliminating just a few hundred calories per day. Some athletes do well with a lot of calories. Sedentary individuals complain they gain weight eating 1,200 calories or less. Calorie counting can be misleading and turn into an obsession in and of itself. If you consume too few calories, you lower your metabolism and cause your body to sacrifice vital tissue because it’s incapable of finding your reserves (glucose/fat). The body learns to save the fat for future “famines,” creating a fat-efficient body. Eating too few calories can also enervate the body, which leaves no energy to burn calories. Too many calories causes weight gain and digestion problems, leading to further health complications. Instead of counting calories, choose better energy sources.

Any diet less than 1,200 calories per day is almost guaranteed to be unbalanced and nutrient-deficient. Anything from 300-800 calories per day is classified as a VERY-low calorie diet, which is asking for trouble. This can also cause the body to enter into *ketosis*. Ketosis is the body using fat without the help of carbohydrates. Ketones are the residue of ketosis. They are unwanted and abnormal cellular biochemicals, which are made only when the body does not have available fuel sources, namely carbohydrates. Ketosis makes dramatic and quick weight loss possible, but it is temporary, due to the lack of cellular water. This is a dangerous state for your body because ketosis causes excessive urination. This contributes to additional dehydration, a feeling of lightheadedness, halitosis, and nausea. Ketosis during pregnancy causes mental retardation in infants. Throughout the years, I’ve been told low-calorie diets can slow down the aging process.

With the right foods, low-calorie diets have been known to help cancer patients and those with other chronic diseases.

Counting fat grams is more ridiculous than counting calories. Fat is a nutrient that we need to survive. Fat performs many functions in our bodies. Once again, it's not the quantity but the quality of the fat you consume that is important. Trans-fatty acids and saturated fats are known as unhealthy and have little or no advantages. Monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats (especially essential fatty acids) are healthy and necessary for cells to function. Certain fats are essential for thermogenesis in the body (body-heat metabolism). All fats stimulate, trigger, or manufacture our brain chemicals and hormones. Hormones dictate our bodies. These hormones are responsible for all bodily functions, including weight gain or loss. Eicosanoids (mini hormones that dictate all bodily action), are directly effected by the fats in our foods. EFAs (essential fatty acids, especially Omega 3) are the building blocks of eicosanoids. Therefore, the types of fats we eat are more important than the amount of fat grams. There are many high-fat foods that are very good for you, such as avocados, seeds, and nuts. The fats in these foods can lower or even replace your "bad" LDL fat. Obviously, if nature put fat into natural foods, then we are meant to consume it. Whether it's calories or fat grams, too much of anything causes weight gain and health problems. On a live, raw diet I am able to eat a large amount of calories and fat grams because of the nature of the food: pure and easily digested. This leaves the body full of energy and free to burn fat and calories. There are also diets that promote fat intake, basically excluding all the other food groups. These all-you-can-eat fat diets work the same way as the protein diets, by excluding carbs and depending on ketosis. These high-fat diets are obviously dangerous and depleting, and they rarely work in the long term, if at all.

A glycemic index chart (the relative potency of carbohydrates and their propensity to raise or stabilize blood sugar) would be a better chart reference to use instead of a calorie and fat-gram chart. Simply put, the glycemic response reflects how fast and how high your blood sugar rises after eating a certain food and how quickly the body responds by bringing the blood sugar level back to normal. Most people can quickly readjust without worrying about glycemic response. However, some chronic dieters and most of the obese population usually have abnormal carbohydrate metabolism (improper insulin response). That's when it's advisable to be careful or avoid some high-glycemic foods such as corn, carrots, peas, and potatoes. Unlike calorie and fat-gram counting, the glycemic index is reflected by the way certain foods react synergistically with our own hormones. The problem with this glycemic index chart is the poor comparison made between what's acceptable and unacceptable. Their charts will rate some junk foods, such as ice cream, as acceptable (low-glycemic) and yet rate carrots, for instance, as unacceptable just because they are

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a high-glycemic food. I think it’s important to realize which foods are high-glycemic in order to carefully monitor your insulin, however, I don’t think you should exclude healthy foods. Unlike ice cream, high-glycemic fruits and vegetables contain important nutrients that are valuable for brain chemicals and hormonal functions, such as good eicosanoids or serotonin (from tryptophan found in grain, legumes, and seeds). The object is to learn *how* to eat high-glycemic foods and *when* to eat them.

Basically, using any chart, counting, or point-value system creates a *body and food obsession*, causing a further urge to break the rigidity or ritual of your diet. It also creates a detrimental relationship with your foods as being “good” or “bad” rather than healthy or poor choices.

Popular calorie or fat-gram counting diets (and glycemic index diets) may include: *The Thin Commandments, Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig, Richard Simmons, and Glycemic Index Diet and Charts.*

GIMMICK DIETS (including ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT DIETS)

Just about all the diets could be included in this section. Whether it’s relying on charts or the way certain foods react with your body, everyone is selling some gimmick. The unfortunate part of gimmick diets is that nine times out of ten they have no merit. Usually they are based on theories without scientific studies or claims that are poorly researched. Some gimmick diets add a “supernatural” food, substance, secret formula, or magical instrument that offers nothing but a placebo effect. Gimmick diets tend to generalize the diet and assume your body will react the same way as everyone else’s does, all the time. This is ridiculous because everybody reacts differently. We also react differently to different foods at different times according to our mental state (stress), health and fitness, and outside circumstances.

The all-you-can-eat diets are the most ridiculous. Overeating causes weight gain and/or unhealthy deficiencies. It causes a deficiency somewhere by excluding one or more of your important food groups or nutrients. Overeating one food or food group creates allergies, which build up and sometimes cause a false-deficiency reaction because the body tries to compensate for the overload. Overeating any type of food can trigger an eating disorder as well.

Gimmick diets may include a spiritual guide or affirmation. This is a good idea because we direct our body’s cells and hormones to react according to our attitude. Stress has been proven to be a direct cause of weight gain. For example, I have found, when I was under stress, my adrenal glands excrete excess cortisol which triggers excess insulin, causing weight gain. Constant stress can cause adrenal exhaustion, which eventually depletes

the cortisol. Cortisol is the hormone that helps the carbohydrates and proteins metabolize. Too much cortisol can cause weight gain as well. This further disrupts the other hormones and chemicals such as epinephrine (adrenaline) or digestive enzymes. The body's elimination is disturbed and the body stores the undigested food as fat.

People suffering from eating disorders should separate their food plan choices from their spiritual program. I believe recovery is made more successful by incorporating some form of spirituality. But when someone with an eating disorder places magical thinking or shame onto their food or body, it creates an ongoing obsession with both the food and body. They relate to food as good or bad rather than healthy or unhealthy. Using the label "good" or "bad" creates a shame-based mentality, making you define yourself by your choices or weight. Shame-based individuals usually think they *are* the problem instead of thinking they have a problem. Saying a prayer before you eat is an honorable tradition. Food addicts should base their food decisions on healthy choices rather than "godly" choices. Nature's foods are basically raw fruits and vegetables. Eating things that are unhealthy is not a sin. It's a poor choice that we all have made or continue to make. It is far better to inform yourself rather than condemn yourself. When individuals base their diets on *feelings* rather than healthy choices (for a health goal), I notice they struggle with weight. The object of this book is to help you let go of your love affair with food and the feelings attached to it.

Other gimmick diets may include "magical foods" such as adding coconut oil or a grapefruit before each meal. One diet claims eating a small fatty snack before a starchy meal prevents overeating. The diet claims this blocks the insulin or trips the brain transmitter to create satiation). There are other gimmick diets that include eating or drinking a certain soup or one type of food and nothing else. There are diets that claim that eating fruit alone will make you thin. This is not a good choice for a compulsive overeater. Too much fruit can cause fermentation. I know true fruitarians. They do not have an eating disorder. They usually choose that specific eating habit for extreme health results or for a medical condition they were concerned about. The only "magical foods" are natural foods such as vegetables, fruits, and nuts. In moderation and balanced with variety, these are the foods that will give you what you need for good health, which automatically leads to your weight goal.

There is also a diet that excludes all sugars. Although I think sugar itself is a drug, not a food, you should not replace healthy fruits and vegetables that are high in sugar with sugar *substitutes* and saturated fats. Sugar itself causes an over-secretion of insulin and a chemical reaction in the brain and body much like that of a drug dose. Sugar also causes an over-secretion of cortisol and estrogen, making weight loss difficult. Long-term sugar use eventually causes hypoglycemia (excess insulin) that may

develop into diabetes, which is insulin depletion. Sugar excess may also cause adrenal exhaustion (cortisol depletion) and perimenopause (excess estrogen), which may develop into early menopause (estrogen depletion). Sugar is linked to pain, arthritis, scar tissue, infections, and slow wound-healing. It is recommended to eliminate sugar ten days before and after any type of surgery. When you detox from the sugar, just like drugs, you can experience a withdrawal and craving period, creating an eventual crash. Sugar is purposely added to products such as fast food, cigarettes, and toothpaste because of its addictive nature. A high-sugar diet has been to blame for many children who are diagnosed as hyperactive (ADHD) or attention deficit disorder (ADD). I have noticed that children were fed a diet of mostly raw foods and no sugar, most of them were no longer hyperactive or they showed fewer symptoms of ADD. Corn syrup is actually worse if you consider the extreme blood sugar response it causes. Sugars are renamed and repackaged, much like diets, to give the buyer the impression they are safe, healthy, or calorie free. I have found that sugar substitutes cause a backfire effect. For example, the alternative to butter is oil substitutes (trans-fatty acids). Fake fats and sugar substitutes interfere with insulin balance and blood sugar, making weight loss difficult. While I agree with omitting sugar (which is related to health problems such as infections and escalation of tumor growth), I don't believe you should replace it with another poison, such as fake sugar or fat.

A very popular diet is aimed at the carbohydrate addict. I think we are all basically carbohydrate addicts in some way or another. This diet is based on the fact that we all have one “freebee” insulin spill per day that can happen within forty-five minutes of eating a high-carb meal. This leaves the other two meals as a low-carb and low-calorie meals, which should preferably be eaten at night. Shane and I happily experimented with this diet, sharing it with all our other food-addict buddies. We came to a disappointing conclusion; this diet, like others, causes further or eventual weight gain. It also triggered our binge cycles. Obviously, this diet is better for people who normally indulge all day on junky carbs. This limits their bingeing to forty-five minutes a day and helps promote some self-control with delayed gratification. I do not, however, recommend it to any individual who suffers with eating disorders. It only accelerates the disease and doesn't teach you to choose food plans according to your health and circumstances. This sets off the food obsession and teaches you to live to eat, rather than eat to live.

Some diets are a one-stop-shopping gimmick. Some include an initial “kick-start” by starting out with few days of deprivation (ketosis), before the regular diet. Usually a low calorie/carb food plan kick-starts their diet. Their “form letter” diet is usually disguised as your own specially designed food plan. It may also offer a doctor or give medication shots (such as vitamin B shots) with a support group. It's all common sense or

cliché, yet these plans usually charge a fee. Why pay for something you can get without the cost? The twelve-step programs offer about the same thing plus a recovery program that supplements the food plan. You should choose your own healthcare provider or doctor who specializes in *your* health issues, not your food plan. Incidentally, if you take vitamin B shots without needing them, you can actually gain weight. It's best to get your B vitamins from food sources.

Other gimmicks may include food combinations. This theory is related to the digestion of your meals. While this works well with raw food dieters, it is contradicting, in theory, for other normal diets. If you are going to be a fanatic about digestive enzymes, then be consistent about the quality of foods and their effect on body's chemicals and hormones as well. Again, otherwise this is "magical" thinking. Even though everything works synergistically in the body, food combining alone will *not* fix your problems with weight. Try eating a variety of foods rather than overeating selective foods that digest together. Overeating causes insulin excess. Too much of one food or food group creates allergies and a blood sugar imbalance. It is far better to eat simple and pure foods rather than grouping all your indigestible or impure foods into one digestive category. Food combining gurus emphasize the fact that we digest different foods with different enzymes in different parts of the digestive system. This is true. Starch is digested in the mouth, with the help of enzymes found in saliva; meat is digested in the stomach with the help of hydrochloric acid. When we mix starches with protein or fruits with proteins, we interrupt the digestive process, leaving the enzymes disabled or destroyed. Starch is then rushed to the stomach undigested, corrupting all digestion and elimination, and hence weight gain occurs. Subsequently, the foods are fermented and unable to be used for fuel, so we store this residue as fat or toxins. This can further cause acidosis (abnormally high acidity in the blood and other body fluids), which disrupts your pH balance. Food combinations are used frequently by raw-food dieters and other popular diets. Though food combination makes a lot of sense (especially for raw dieters) and is an excellent regimen for the elderly or ill, it doesn't always work, especially for weight loss. Many times dieters have the impression they are on an all-you-can-eat diet and overeat the same food group at one meal. You can only extract so many nutrients from a meal. The rest is stored as fat, good food combination or not. Food combinations don't allow the meal's insulin flow (such as when eating fruit) to be blocked by protein or fat. The body can assimilate just about anything. It's far better to use portion sense and basic balance. Enzymes deteriorate as we age and from excess overeating or chemical use. I've found it far better and more fulfilling to eat "pure," small portions of what I need. Food combining did *nothing* for my weight struggles and triggered my compulsive overeating. I finally found that balance and variety made my body work more efficiently. Overdoing

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one digestive group never quenched my hunger. Digestive enzymes can supplement your diet, if need be. However, the food addict should learn balance, not tricks, which don’t usually work.

Other popular diets focus on portion control or behavioral modification. Both are important, until they call it a “diet.” As soon as a food plan becomes a diet, rather than a guideline, it becomes a rigid regimen that can be broken or “blown.” Diets are a set-up for failure.

Usually the title of a diet book is a gimmick. It’s the old switch-and-bait scam; it draws you in with the pretense that you get something for nothing. Some of these diets may work temporarily, but all of them eventually stop working, if they work at all. The reason is simply that our bodies learn or know every trick and will try to compensate for them. This in turns makes our bodies more diet savvy, making it more difficult to lose weight.

Popular gimmick diets may include: *Binge Busters, The Coconut Diet, French Women Don’t Diet, The Maker’s Diet, Suzanne Sommers Diet, Carbohydrate Addict’s Diet, Lindora, Sugar Busters, Beverly Hills Diet, Blood Type Diets, Tops, The Cabbage Soup Diet.*

DEPRIVATION DIETS: (Including Fasting, Food Replacements and Cleansing Diets)

Deprivation diets can be diets that exclude solid food or a certain food (or juice) to attain certain weight or health goals. The name alone is a turn-off to anyone facing dieting dilemmas. I have witnessed carefully monitored starvation diets slow down tumor growth and the aging process. These are not good diet plans for weight loss. Eventually, starving prevents your mind or body from learning how to eat and can further any eating disorders that may already be present.

The definition of *fasting* is food abstinence. There are many interpretations of fasting. Some assume fasting is going without solid foods (juicing) or omitting entire food groups. True fasting is not ingesting *any* food or juice—just water. Very low-calorie diets or liquid fasts are usually considered fasting because they only include 300-800 calories. Carefully monitored low-calorie diets have been shown to boost our immune systems and invigorate the body and mind. This is because the extra energy usually used for digesting heavy meals is used for healing and other important bodily functions instead. This causes a rejuvenating effect on our cells, organs, and skin. Fasting relies on the body’s ability to supply nutrients or adjust to the no- or low-calorie intake. It is important to specify the quality and quantity of the juice or food intake. When you ingest a very small amount of food, the body recognizes it as starving. When you fast on just water, your body automatically retrieves the body’s reserves. Fasting should always be done under some type of supervision. Usually on about

the fourth day, the body goes into the fat-burning process. Fasters should rest to avoid enervation (robbing from the nerve tissue). A technique fasters use to know when to break a fast is to wait until the coated tongue (ketosis) has cleared. Sweet breath and normal hunger (not cravings) manifests as well. A faster should never break his or her fast during a “fasting crisis,” (the worst part of the fast). This is when the body is detoxing and needs to rest. When the faster eventually breaks his fast, he should only eat one fruit (preferably citrus to counter dehydration) every two hours, six times a day, for the first few days. Extreme hunger returns when the faster eats. It takes twice as many days as the length of the fast to recover from fast. This is why fasting has received a bad reputation. It’s not the fasting that is dangerous but how the fast is broken. Some fasters have nearly killed themselves by breaking their fast with junk food. It is unwise to follow a cleansing fast with a sudden overload of junk food. This can shock your body and create damage.

Water fasting can be dangerous, too, because it is the sodium in fruits and vegetables that retain your water balance. Water has a diuretic effect. This can be dangerous because of the lack of natural sodium and other minerals that are natural in fruit and vegetables. Sodium makes electrolytes when it enters the body, which prevents dehydration. Lemon is very good because it contains sodium that helps our electrolyte balance. Lemon can help edema (water retention) when you are bloated as well as dehydration. During long fasts, there is an initial weight loss that is enormous, but is always regained somewhat with food. This is why fasting should be done for health purposes only. The body learns to starve and lowers the metabolism. When someone ingests less than 800 calories or so per day, ketosis occurs; the body uses fat without the help of carbohydrates. Ketosis makes dramatic and quick weight loss possible, but the loss is temporary due to the lack of cellular water. This is a dangerous state for your body. Ketosis causes excessive urination (which contributes to dehydration), feelings of lightheadedness, halitosis, and nausea. Ketosis during pregnancy causes mental retardation in infants. The duration of a fast does not depend on the faster’s weight. A thin person with good reserves can last longer than an overweight person who is detoxing from junk food and stimulants. Junk food detoxification may cause stress on the adrenals. Stimulants can leech your reserves as well. Fasting is a good spiritual tradition and health option but is not good for weight loss.

Hygienic is a term coined by fasting gurus. It basically means eating raw, live food in perfect food combinations. In a perfect world, we would just pick-and-eat our food. Some dieters claim anything cooked under 105-120 degrees is considered raw. There are several explanations or theories to justifying cooking under 108 to 120 degrees. One is the *sun theory*. The average temperature of the food sitting in the sun is 120 degrees. The other rationale is eating anything 108-120 degrees or under won’t

disrupt the food’s nutrient value or enzymes process. Cooking or processing food causes cross-linkage, which makes the food unrecognizable to the digestive tract. A cross-linkage is cell damage due to certain food or toxin interaction. This is not true for all foods. Raw means raw. Some raw-food dieters include “raw” cheese or kefir. This does not apply to hygienics, who simply eat raw plant food, specifically low-sugar vegetables and fruits.

Hygienics want the *live* enzymes to work on their bodies. They combine foods this way: sweet fruits, melons, sub-acid fruits and citrus fruits, each eaten separately. The vegetables are eaten separately as well. Nuts, seeds, and avocado can be eaten with your vegetables, preferably toward the evening. Fruits are best in the morning hours. Some hygienics only eat vegetables, avocados, and very little fruit (green apples and grapefruit), if any at all. Some believe in eating these foods whole, while other hygienics prefer juice fasting. The object of eating foods whole is to keep the pulp, which slows down the insulin flow. To some, juice is considered oxidized (easily rancid), because it’s not in its complete form, the way nature intended it to be. Oxidation may break down the enzymes and nutrient value. Juice experts believe a tired or sick body may need immediate energy (sugar) without the waste of fiber. Whatever the case may be, I have nothing but good remarks to say about any live, raw-food dieters. I’ve seen good results with both theories. However, it is not a good idea to eat raw simply to lose weight, especially if you have an eating disorder. It takes time to adjust to the simplicity of the diet. This diet should be gradual. It also takes time to acclimate to pure plant fuel to take the place of the familiar animal foods and years of corrupted meals. Weight loss may take time on a live raw-food diet. People who suffer from eating disorders treat a raw-food diet like a deprivation diet, thereby sabotaging their diet and eventually eating junk food. Unlike in other countries, most of our food is loaded with dangerous amounts of additives that are purposefully addictive. Other countries usually reject our food because it’s so impure. This is why it’s dangerous to follow a cleansing diet with the shock of junk food. Raw-food diets should be exclusively for people who want to change their whole lifestyle (not temporally) for health purposes only.

Liquid protein fasting has a very bad reputation. It has been reported to cause severe kidney damage, create fat efficiency, and always cause weight gain. Fat efficiency is when the body makes, creates or holds onto fat much more so than normal. This is the worst choice for fasting. It’s unbalanced and dangerous, and it backfires.

Short-term juice fasting or adding lemon (or other natural nutrients) to water proves beneficial without severe side effects. Juice fasting has helped people detox from chemicals, parasites, and junk food. Again, it’s a poor choice for weight loss, though. It is good to begin a diet with a cleansing regimen, without looking to the fast to be the answer to your long-term weight problems. Cleansing or not, your body can only starve

so many times for so long. The body remembers every time it starves and then compensates. Long juice fasts can be enervating or cause fat efficiency, because your body has a hard time recognizing whole foods after a long fast. Juice fasting can also help combat food allergies, asthma, chronic fatigue, depression, some cancers, and many more illnesses. I have witnessed extremely ill individuals return to good health with a properly guided fast.

Food replacements are usually pre-packaged drinks that are used in place of a meal or two. These drinks are usually loaded with sugar and unnatural chemicals. The vitamin/mineral content that is offered is often in supplemented form as opposed to coming from natural food sources. It isn't any different than simply taking vitamins with a sugar drink. The sugar (a drug, not a food) leeches whatever vitamins or minerals that were added to the sugar-malt. It is true that, when you are in a rush, these meal replacements are handy. However, it is much healthier (and just as handy) to create your own meal replacement. If you filled a thermos full of a homemade smoothie of yogurt, fruit, and flaxseed, that would supply everything you need—a complete meal. It's also natural and without side effects. Food replacements do not teach you how to eat. If you are using food replacements to lose weight, you are training your body to starve during two meals and binge on the third. The object is to learn to choose enjoyable but healthy foods without freaking out. Meal replacements are usually used by overeaters who fear dealing with food. You don't learn anything when you abstain from choice.

There are some diets that are specially designed for health rather than weight loss. These diets include soy, fruits, vegetables, and natural supplements. Many of these diets are used for treating people with chronic diseases such as heart disease and cancer. These natural diets usually exclude any animal protein or sugar. I think these diets are superb. There is criticism of certain diets that emphasize too much soy because of the phytoestrogens, which some say cause estrogen complications. Soy is very hard to digest. (It's better to use fermented soy, like tempeh, which is easier to digest.) Others believe that the phytoestrogens actually bind with any estrogen surplus, helping to eliminate the excess. Soy is a complete protein with many benefits, *including* the phytoestrogens. Quite simply, soy, like any food, should be eaten in moderation.

Popular deprivation diets (including fasting, food replacements, and cleansing diets): *Slim Fast, The Master Cleanser, Dr. Weil's Diet, Hygienic Raw Food Diet, The Optimum Health Institute.*

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*Note: Shane and I have tried all of the diets above, plus more. We concluded diets and gimmicks don't work! We did, however, incorporate some of the popular health strategies (without relying on them as a trick or quick fix into various non-diet food plans or **Eco Anti-Diets**. (Eco Anti-Diets are further discussed in Chapter Four.) I gave a complete thumbs-up to a few popular diets, while others only destroyed my metabolism and promoted my eating disorder. The diets that were superb were the ones that stressed HEALTH—not weight loss—and encouraged or included an exercise and recovery program as well.*