

# CHAPTER 9



## Mysteries Answered

How many times have you wondered what's wrong when you observe your skinny friends eating the same or worse than you?

When I was fat, it drove me crazy. It just didn't seem fair. It didn't seem that I ate any worse than anyone else, but I got fat. They could eat all the things I couldn't, and they had no problem. How could this be, if my metabolism was not screwed up? (And the doctors claimed it wasn't.)

When you look at two people, and one is a perfect 120 pounds at five feet, four inches, and the other is two-hundred and fifty pounds at the same height, everyone assumes that the overweight person eats twice as much, right?

Let me straighten out some misconceptions.

Your metabolic rate depends, more than any other factor, on your height or muscle mass, not your weight. When you get overweight, you have more fat, not muscle, so your metabolic rate is not much different than when you were not overweight. Two women, each five feet, four inches, will have very similar

metabolic rates, about 1,800 calories per day, even though one is 120 and the other is 250.

If the skinny one eats an 1,800 calorie average, she'll stay right where she is. What happens if the fat one eats like the skinny one?

Most people will think that if the fat one eats like the skinny one, she'll get skinny, too. Wrong. She'll stay right where she is, just like the skinny one will stay where *she* is.

The conception that fat people must eat so much more to maintain that weight is an absolute fallacy. In fact, if the skinny one is lots more active because the fat one is limited and sedentary, the skinny one may burn more! In that case, the fat one might eat *less* than the skinny one to maintain her weight. Chances are she *is* less active and *does* eat less than her skinny friend and is still overweight! All the while her skinny friend eats more than she does and stays 120 pounds! How unfair!

So it's true that my skinny friends got to eat whatever they wanted, and they had no problem, as long as they ate whatever they wanted in caloric quantities within their "budget."

I, on the other hand, tried to eat less of the "bad" foods, felt deprived, then felt guilty and like a failure when I did eat them. I gained weight, not because of the "bad" foods, but because my total consumption with all the calories counted (including the diet food) was "over budget."

## SO, HOW'D I GET OVERWEIGHT IF I ATE LIKE THEM?

Most of us get overweight over a period of time. We eat an average of a bit more calories than we burn. It's cumulative.

For instance, imagine that, by some miracle, you were one of the people who made it to early adulthood without a weight problem. By dumb luck, you just happened to form habits

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where your caloric consumption matched your burn. You're five feet, four inches, 120 pounds. But then, your friend convinces you to drink a big glass of fortified orange juice every morning, a health drink. It has calcium and vitamin C, and it's orange juice, for goodness sake! It's good for you!

So, you start drinking this big glass of orange juice in addition to what you normally ate that kept you skinny. You start accumulating two hundred calories a day surplus on your body, which isn't that much, if you look only at that one day. It's a new blob of body fat only about the size of two tablespoons. But then you add to it the next day, and the next, and so on.

By the time a month has gone by, you've gained almost two pounds. It's not really that noticeable, and in *your* mind, you are not overeating. You're not eating any differently than you always have.

By the time a year goes by, you've gained twenty pounds. So you go to the doctor to find out what's wrong with your metabolism. He says there's nothing wrong, that you eat too much, which is an insult, so you find a new doctor. You don't change how you eat because you don't think you eat incorrectly, and five years later, you're one hundred pounds overweight! *On a glass of orange juice!*

Or worse, you go on a diet, and when you're done, you can't wait to have all those things you've done without, and they're so good! And something in you now drives you to eat goodies without restriction, which you never did before, and you hate even the thought of dieting. With that, you'd be two hundred pounds overweight in a couple of years, instead of one hundred. But you can't stand it, so every once in a while you try to diet, and sometimes you do lose some weight. But then, when you stop the diet, you always gain back more than you lost.

## BUT IF I JUST EAT RIGHT AGAIN, I'LL BE OK, RIGHT?

No, and here's why.

Suppose after gaining one hundred pounds, you finally figure out that the problem is the orange juice (or a few drinks, or a little ice cream every night).

You think "I'll just go back to eating the way I did when I was 120 all those years, and I'll be fine."

Wrong. When you go back to eating what maintained 120, all you'll do is maintain 220! Remember, your metabolic rate depends on your height, not your weight. If anything, you probably burn less, because you're not as active.

So, once you've packed it on, eating "right" won't fix things. It will just keep you where you now are.

## OTHER INSIDIOUS WAYS WE GAIN WEIGHT

### HAVE A BABY

The doctor says "You need to put on some weight. I want you to gain twenty-five pounds. Eat cake and ice cream."

So, now you have license to eat, and you gain fifty pounds. You have the baby. Then you're still forty pounds overweight, and you have conditioned yourself into a cake and ice cream addiction. You'll be lucky to avoid being four hundred as a result of his advice.

But, you strive to get back to the good eating you had before the baby, and you think that then the weight should go.

Nope. If you're now 160, and you go back to the good eating that had you maintain 120, you'll just stay 160....until the next baby. Then you'll be 200. God forgive you if you have three!

## BE AN ATHLETE

This is a rotten trick that gets played on lots of men, as well as women.

Imagine that a guy is into sports, and all year long he plays on the school's teams. Football, baseball, basketball, soccer, all through high school and college. Every day, he is out on the field, burning up an extra 1,500 calories a day in intense exercise. And over the years, he develops the eating habits to support those needs.

Now, when he graduates, he starts working in a bank, but his eating habits have hardened like a plaster cast. Even though he cuts back, he gains an enormous amount of weight, fifty to one hundred pounds in a year! Everyone figures he must have a metabolic disease. Nope. He graduated.

## GET MARRIED

Imagine that you are a woman, five foot, four inches at 120, with a burn rate of 1,800. Miraculously, you've managed to keep your girlish figure into your thirties. Then, you marry a guy six feet tall with a burn rate of 2,700 calories.

So, now you're living together. He has a drink; you have a drink. He has a dessert; you have a dessert. If you add only two drinks and two desserts a week to what you had been doing, that will be twenty extra pounds in one year, one hundred pounds overweight in five years. The bum!

## GROW UP

Imagine you survive your youth and make it to middle age, and miraculously, you are one of those people who never had a weight problem. But now you are older, and your body starts changing. Your metabolism slows down. Not much, but say it shrinks by five percent. Now, instead of breaking even, you start

accumulating one hundred calories of fat a day. It's not much, but it's cumulative. After a year, you've gained ten pounds. After five years, it's fifty pounds. After eight years, it's eighty pounds! And it's so unfair! You don't overeat! You're not like those fat people whom you assumed were so flawed. Guess what? You are now one of us. You have eating habits that make you fat, and they are hard to change. And when you try to diet, you fail, and you can't control yourself, and it gets worse. Your desire and urges get the best of you. You are a food addict.

## LIVE IN AMERICA

Remember, our energy balance doesn't have to be too far out of whack to cause a big problem. A glass of orange juice at two hundred calories can cause a gain of one hundred pounds over a five-year period.

Eat 3,500 calories over what you need and you'll gain a pound. And you won't get rid of it, even if you eat "right," even if you eat just what the dietician says. It will sit there and wait for another to join it the next time you eat more than you need.

You could eat perfect all week long, eating just what the dietician tells you, and you "cheat" only once a week with a hot fudge sundae and gain twenty-five pounds a year. Think about it. *You could follow the dietician's diet all week long, cheat only once a week with a 1,500 calorie sundae, and become one hundred pounds overweight in four years.*

Eat five hundred calories more than you need a day, and you'll be fifty pounds overweight in a year, 250 pounds overweight in five years.

Look around. McDonald's newly introduced hamburger is eight hundred calories. Many pastries, donuts, and bagels are about five hundred calories. Denny's Grand Slam breakfast is 1,100 calories. Some of the fancy "coffee" shop drinks are over five hundred calories, up to seven hundred. A bowl of ice cream

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can be five hundred calories. A drink with an umbrella can be about five hundred calories. Many of the steaks they serve in steakhouses are over one thousand calories. The bloomin' onion "appetizer" is about two thousand calories!

How difficult do you think it would be to slip in five hundred calories a day over what you burn? It would be easy, wouldn't it? That's how easy it could be to become one hundred or even two hundred pounds overweight.

Look around. Look at the way food is advertised and glorified in the media, and how food is sold as the satisfier of every human need. Food is a part of every shopping experience, every night out, every fair and festival, every holiday, even church and religious experiences. Look how food is sold as a form of recreation, as entertainment, as the answer to social success, even as the answer to weight control! Ha! Want to lose weight? The food companies have the answer! Eat something! (In 1978, H.J. Heinz, the ketchup company, bought Weight Watchers and today makes all the Weight Watcher Smart Ones foods.)

The food merchants are stalking you. They are stalking your children. They are selling food as recreation, as entertainment, as fashion, as a personal statement, as the answer to all manner of emotional needs, in the schools, as well as in your living room through the TV.

The tobacco companies got caught a while back mercilessly manipulating the nicotine in cigarettes and lying about it. They got caught marketing to kids and lying about it. They got caught knowing that they were selling us a cancer-causing product and lying about it. They had an addictive drug product and a market of addicts. It was a pusher's dream. But they got caught and sued and made to pay for their sins, and then they complained it would put them out of business. So what did they do?

They went into the food business, I kid you not.

In 1985, R.J. Reynolds (Camel, Winstons, Salems, and others) acquired Nabisco Brands (Oreos, Chips Ahoy, Fig Newtons, Ritz Crackers, and many other food products you are familiar with).

In 1988, Philip Morris (Marlboro, Virginia Slims, and others— the largest tobacco company in the world) acquired Kraft Foods (Kraft Cheese, Maxwell House coffee, Kool-Aid, Oscar Mayer, and many other products you are familiar with).

Since then, the trading of ownership of these companies is hard to follow, but remember that industry is populated by people, and in this case, the guys who spent millions and millions of dollars on sophisticated advertising (brainwashing) to get us addicted to consuming a product that was killing us.

The guys who made their money getting us hooked on cigarettes are now doing it with food.

Consider how easy it is to overeat five hundred calories a day (one donut, or one bagel, or one small fries, or a half a burger, or a Starbuck's "coffee.") This little bit extra would result in a gain of fifty pounds a year! When you consider that, it's a miracle we all aren't six hundred pounds! If we keep going the way we've been going, it's only a matter of time. Today, two-thirds of us are overweight. The government's CDC says we have an obesity *epidemic*. Where will we be in another ten to twenty years? Will we all be obese?

We are addicted to our way of life, to our consumerism, to overeating, and to our food. Changing will require a great effort. But we *can* change. You *can* become an undereater, a contributor rather than a consumer.

Don't worry about everyone else changing. Change yourself. Change yourself, and you'll change your world.

When you change how you eat and how you think, it will transform your life and your body. When you change yourself, it will have an impact on everyone around you, on every *thing* around you. You can have a world-changing impact just by changing yourself.

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You may have initially wanted to lose weight only for your own personal reasons, but if you are successful, you will give a great gift to the world. Your well-being will be contagious. You can begin your own trend away from consuming, which ruins us individually, as well as the planet, and you can lead the charge to save us, simply by focusing on solving your own weight problem. Start taking care of yourself, your thinking, your habits, and your body, and the effect will spread.