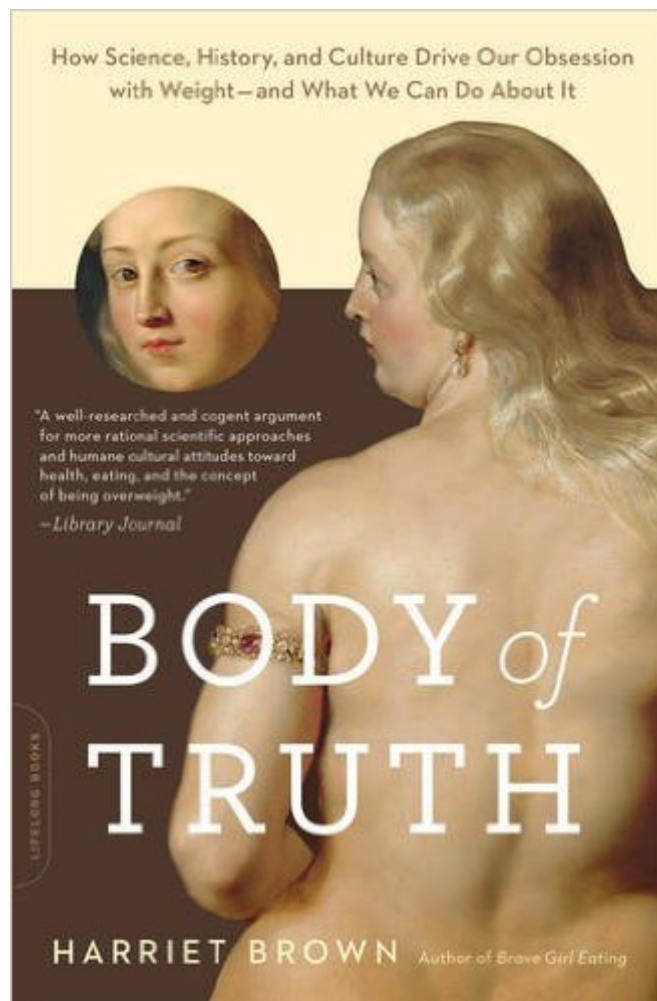


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Body Of Truth: How Science, History, And Culture Drive Our Obsession With Weight--and What We Can Do About It



Synopsis

Over the past twenty-five years, our quest for thinness has morphed into a relentless obsession with weight and body image. In our culture, "fat" has become a four-letter word. Or, as Lance Armstrong said to the wife of a former teammate, "I called you crazy. I called you a bitch. But I never called you fat." How did we get to this place where the worst insult you can hurl at someone is "fat"? Where women and girls (and increasingly men and boys) will diet, purge, overeat, undereat, and berate themselves and others, all in the name of being thin? As a science journalist, Harriet Brown has explored this collective longing and fixation from an objective perspective; as a mother, wife, and woman with "weight issues," she has struggled to understand it on a personal level. Now, in *Body of Truth*, Brown systematically unpacks what's been offered as "truth" about weight and health. Starting with the four biggest lies, Brown shows how research has been manipulated; how the medical profession is complicit in keeping us in the dark; how big pharma and big, empty promises equal big, big dollars; how much of what we know (or think we know) about health and weight is wrong. And how all of those affect all of us every day, whether we know it or not. The quest for health and wellness has never been more urgent, yet most of us continue to buy into fad diets and unattainable body ideals, unaware of the damage we're doing to ourselves. Through interviews, research, and her own experience, Brown not only gives us the real story on weight, health, and beauty, but also offers concrete suggestions for how each of us can sort through the lies and misconceptions and make peace with and for ourselves.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It's true: every woman should read this book. Superbly detailed research fairly presented. Author's powerful and poignant empirical knowledge plus variety of real-life case studies (different ages, lifestyles, body types) sprinkled throughout book pack huge impact. This sentence from Ellyn Satter's definition of what "normal eating" means stuck with me, "Normal eating takes up some of your time and attention, but keeps its place as only one important area of your life." Few nutshell takeaways: Be conscious about how you speak to any female about her physical self. Choose your words extra carefully with daughters, nieces, granddaughters about their physical selves. Don't abide self-talk that happiness equals a certain (lower) number on a scale. Be your own best advocate with doctors and other health professionals. After reading, Brown's "Body of Truth," try your damndest to share your raised awareness that diet supplements, weight-loss operations and other weight-loss/diet industry books, gimmicks, plans, and DVDs GUARANTEED TO WORK FOR YOU IN LOSING TONS OF WEIGHT are just marketing BS. The quick-fix? Is for a quick-buck. Exorcise negative messages from that first grade gym teacher or "best" friend who disparaged you as a whole person judging the body you're in. You, reading this review right now, are also too smart to not get the disingenuous promise that people will like you more and that you'll be okay if you look like a tabloid star. To paraphrase Brene' Brown's "The Gift of Imperfection," everyone has a story that will break your heart. A myriad of influences combine to make each of us who we are. Size 2 or 22, each of us is so much more than a size label.

I loved this book. So, alert: This is going to read like a shameless testimonial ad for it (unpaid, however). Body of Truth is an important tie breaker. For the past ten years, actually more, I have been reading (obsessing?) about diet, exercise blah blah blah. This is what a lot of women do in first-world cultures, regardless of their weight and BMI classification. I read both mainstream media (women's magazines, fitness magazines, my local paper, etc.) and lay-friendly science publications (Science Daily, the Weight Maven Blog, Psychology Today, New York Times Well section, etc.). I have noticed a split happening between the two. The popular media continue to report the same tired stories that I used to read back in the 1970s: Eat less! Exercise more! When you want to eat, distract yourself by taking a walk or brushing your teeth. (Yeesh!) And let's not even talk about the ads in these magazines and the photoshopped pictures. How much can a brain take? The science publications have meanwhile been reporting that it's infinitely more complicated. Our hormones, genetics, metabolisms and multitudinous bodily systems are much more persuasive than Gillian Michaels, even when she's screeching at us, and they miraculously help us maintain our weights, even when they are higher than we want them to be, and no matter how determined we are to lower

them, at least in the long run. (Anyone can lose weight. The problem has always been the near impossibility of maintaining losses.) Brown's message gives permission to write off the lazy journalism of the popular press. It's an important shot of superglue for the spine, to stand up against messages we might logically know are stupid.

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