

Introduction

Maybe so many Americans (and millions of other people around the world) are obese because losing weight has been made to seem like such hard work.

Going to meetings, counting calories, running until we drop, counting fat grams, keeping a journal (which often includes writing down every single bite you took during the day), buying (and using) expensive exercise machines...whew!

I don't know about you, but I need to eat a lot of calories just to keep up with the typical weight loss program.

We're stressed out enough by the rest of our lives. Heck, we're stressed out by being overweight. Who wants to add more items to their "To Do List?"

I don't want to add stress to your life. I don't want you to count calories. I don't want you to go to meetings. I don't want you to run long, boring hours as "cardio." I don't want to control every bite of what you eat. I don't want you to write a food blog or journal. I don't want you to waste money on diet pills. If you like certain protein bars or shakes and they're convenient to eat on the run, that's fine, but they're not required. I don't want you to pay for a gym membership or an exercise machine.

Most of what I'll ask you to do consists of—are you ready for this?—sitting down and relaxing.

Obesity is a serious problem.

Why Do You Want to Lose Weight

According to experts in the field, people want to lose weight for many reasons. But boiled down, there're only two:

1. You want to look better.
2. You fear current or future health problems caused by carrying excess pounds.

I wrote this book to help you look and feel better—the simple and easy way.

Weight loss should be simple and easy—or it won't last.

That's why too many people see their weight bounce up and down like yo-yos—they get so exhausted from their weight loss programs they have to stop and rest, and so the weight soon returns.

Look at it this way...

If your goal is just immediate weight loss, you can achieve that simply by spending the next entire twenty-four hours fasting (don't even drink any water) and exercising (walk as far as you can, stop and rest, continue walking).

You'll lose weight all right, but will you keep it off? Probably not. The next day, you'll sleep all morning and then eat three times as much food as normal.

The Seed of This Book

Late last year I read a dieting book that gave a weight loss “tip” that enraged me.

Because all physical activity burns up calories, this book advised readers to be constantly moving some part of their body. That means tapping their feet or twitching their fingers. Work, church, movie theaters or any other place where you can't accomplish any major physical movement are perfect for this.

The author's rationale is that all such movement burns calories. Yes, of course tapping your finger all day doesn't use up a lot of calories—but the calories it does burn are calories you no longer need to lose.

And over time, those calories can add up to a significant amount of weight that's no longer on your body.

So why did that advice outrage me?

Maybe it's because I have a tendency to be nervous. Continuously tapping your finger is not a healthy activity.

Besides, if you're in a public place you may be a stress “spreader.” I know many times at work and in other places, I've been stressed out by people's nervous habits, including nonstop shifting around in their chairs and tapping their fingers (especially drumming their fingernails).

What's even worse is that acting nervous not only bugs the people around you, but our own feelings tend to correspond to our physical states. So when we act

nervous, we FEEL nervous.

If you're always jittery, people won't notice and admire you for losing weight—they'll be too busy trying to move away from you because you make them feel nervous.

What's the point of losing weight if you're always acting like a cokehead who hasn't snorted a line in two weeks?

And how can you have perfect health when you're all stressed out?

You can't.

Sometimes what seems like a good idea doesn't work in real life.

Weight Loss is About a Lot More Than Food and Blood Sugar Levels

Here's another example that affected my thinking, eventually leading to this book.

In my opinion, the best eating plan to lose weight and improve your health is the Zone Diet by Dr. Barry Sears.

I've read all his books. I've been on it as much as practically possible. And I have lost a lot of weight—38 pounds in the past seven months.

So it works. I absolutely believe it's the healthiest way for everybody to eat. But one thing Dr. Sears says in his books irritates me.

Perhaps it's because of his scientific training.

According to research, he writes, we feel “hungry” when our blood sugar levels fall below a certain amount.

The Zone Diet advises you to eat what you need and no more, spreading your meals throughout the day. According to Dr. Sears, this will prevent your blood sugar levels from falling far enough to make you feel hungry from one meal to the next.

According to Dr. Sears, the Zone Diet keep your blood sugar over “hunger signal” levels. Therefore, you don’t feel hungry between meals. So you aren’t tempted to eat too much.

Yeah, right.

I knew it was B.S. the first time I read it. And my own experiences with the Zone Diet reinforces that opinion.

I keep to the Zone as much as I can—enough to lose 38 pounds in 7 months—but I’m perfectly capable of feeling hunger almost right after eating a full meal for men (according to the Zone plan), even though I’m a woman.

I used to deliver pizzas. Sometimes I’d eat a (Zone) Balance Bar while on a delivery, then return to the store and still have room to stuff my face with several slices of a “mistake” pizza.

I’ve never tickled my throat to induce vomiting so I could stuff even more food down my mouth, as ancient Romans reputedly did. However, I have many times felt totally full—even stuffed—after one plate, then gone back to the line for a second plate full of food.

I’m willing to bet you’ve done that too.

The Zone Diet worked for me, but not because every Zone meal and snack made me feel “just” satisfied when I really wanted to feel stuffed to the gills.

It worked because I combined it with meditation and other techniques I’ve learned over the years.

That brings home the point an effective diet is not just about the food you eat, or even how much food you eat.

Those things are important, but what’s going on inside your head has the most effect on your diet’s ultimate, long-term success or failure.

And yet your mind is blocked because you’ve been brainwashed into thinking losing weight is hard work.

Wouldn’t it be great, I thought, if somebody could write a book about losing weight the EASY way?

So I did.

You’re welcome.

Chapter Six

“Relax” Doesn’t Mean You Can Do Whatever You Want and Still Lose Weight

Sometimes you just have to rely on common sense.

I knew when I came up with this book’s title many people would—deliberately—misunderstand.

Many people will lump the word “relax” in their minds with such activities as—

Hanging out with friends and family

Drinking alcohol

Watching TV

Surfing the Web

Smoking marijuana

Sitting around

And—(drum roll please)...last but not least—

OVEREATING

By now, you should realize I'm not claiming the laws of biology have been repealed and you can stuff your face full of pizza, beer, chocolate cake, ice cream, candy bars and soda while sitting in front of the TV or computer until 2 AM at night and expect to lose weight.

I've nothing against hanging out with friends and family, surfing the Web or even watching TV.

But you've got to understand when I say "relax to lose weight," I mean—RELAX!

It means many things. You can do away with the stress caused by standard diet programs—

Counting the calories in the foods you eat

Adding up the calories you ate all day long

Adding up how many steps you took all day (some people actually do this) or how many calories you burned up through aerobic exercise

Keeping a food and diet journal or blog

Going to meetings

Tricking yourself by putting your dinner on a super small plate so the food looks bigger than it actually is. (My stomach was never fooled.)

You also get to do away with the stress caused by—

Carrying heavy grocery bags.

Buying expensive foods.

Sitting in fast food drive-through lanes

Walking into the gas station after you've already paid for your gas at the tank, because you need to spend extra money on soda and candy.

Thinking about how much money you throw away every week on empty calories and how much money you'd have if you simply put that into a savings account instead.

Watching grossly obese people shuffle up to a counter and realize you're buying even more snack food than they are. And of wondering how you look to thin people.

Not fitting into the largest size dress or slacks in the store.

Feeling your husband or lover turn over in bed every night, after just a goodnight peck.

Entering a bar or party, seeing men's heads turn toward you, give you a quick glance—and then turn their eyes away.

Fearing high blood pressure and diabetes, or the medicines you're already taking for those diseases.

Stuffing yourself until your stomach bulges so you can hardly move.

Instead of experiencing all that stress, I want you to just...
plain...relax.

Is that too much to ask?

Instead of walking to the refrigerator for a beer or bowl of
ice cream, relax and continue sitting on the couch.

Instead of fixing a big meal for yourself, relax and cook
just enough.

Instead of staying up until one in the morning, relax and
go to bed.

My hope for you is to eliminate all that stress from your
life.

Relax—to lose weight.

You can start with your next breath.

Chapter Seven

Deep Breathing Starts You Burning Fat

We've established the connection between overweight and stress. Now we begin discovering a way to reduce stress so we lose that excess weight on our bodies.

It's a terrific break for your mind and body, and takes only about five minutes.

Not only that, it—

1. Gives you more energy.
2. Improves your digestion.

It helps you get more value from the nutrition in the food you do eat, so your body is less likely to feel undernourished, which pushes you to eat too much.

3. Makes your metabolism more efficient.

You'll burn more calories even while sitting at your computer or watching TV.

4. Improves your general health.

5. Burns calories even though you're barely moving.
6. Helps you relax and reduces your stress level.
7. Helps keep your spine limber.
8. Signals your pituitary gland to release endorphins into your nervous system.

Endorphins are the natural body chemicals that make you feel good when you eat chocolate and have sex. In fact, opiate drugs work by filling the endorphin receptors in your brain.

So this weight loss method actually gets you high—but is not addicting.

You can practice it anytime, anyplace. Including on the job in front of a computer screen or an angry customer or your boss.

Not only that, it's 100% free! No pills, no shakes, no monthly memberships, no equipment or uniform needed.

This wonderful health and weight loss technique is...

Slow, deep breathing.

Your brain, your heart, your lungs, your muscles and all the trillions of cells in your body will love you for it.

Few people breathe in a healthy manner. We tend to breathe too fast, too shallowly, too often and with our mouths open.

Since you're overweight, it's almost a certainty you fall

into that category. It's even likely you breathe in ways even less healthy than most people, including while you sleep. (Most people with sleep apnea are overweight.)

The more you make a habit of slow, deep breathing, the healthier you are and the more weight you'll lose.

If Oxygen Were a New Drug, We'd Need a Prescription and It Would Cost a Fortune

The major fuel for our bodies is not food at all. It's not even water—it's oxygen.

Our cells convert oxygen into energy to use the food and water we consume. We need oxygen to think, to move, to digest food, to eliminate dead cells and to burn fat. 70% of our body's wastes such as dead cells and carbon dioxide are eliminated (or the body attempts to eliminate them) through our lungs, during exhalation.

Don't exhale fully, and you're aerobically and metabolically constipated. The toxins have to go somewhere, and so they do—into your fat cells.

And not getting enough oxygen signals your body to store fat instead of burning it for another reason. It takes oxygen to burn fat. If you're breathing shallowly, taking in barely enough oxygen to run your brain (which needs 20% of your total oxygen supply) and keep your other vital organs functioning, it figures it can't "afford" to spend oxygen to burn fat.

When you breathe deeply on a regular basis, your body comes to realize it now has enough oxygen to not only think and digest food, but to burn stored fat as well.

Plus, oxygen is the one thing we need our bodies can't store. We need a steady supply.

Yet so many people breath like it's not important. Stop taking oxygen for granted.

It's Your Oxygen—Suck It In

However, although as adults our lungs hold two gallons of air, most of us inhale only two or three pints. We settle for some air in our upper lungs instead of filling them completely, from the bottom.

If you bought a fountain soda like you breathe, you'd pay full price for a thirty-two ounce cup but fill only the bottom fourth with soda.

You'd never do that with a soda, so why do it with oxygen?

The way we can change our habitual, constant breathing practices is to sometimes be aware of them (we certainly can't all the time) and to make a habit of taking a few minutes daily to breathe deeply.

One problem is, for reasons I can't figure out even though I did the same thing as a child, most people think "deep breathing" means lifting our chests and sucking in air through our mouths.

This can help athletes rev themselves up before a competition, but it won't help calm you down or lose weight.

"Slow" deep breathing means, first of all, breathing slowwwwwwwly.

Not excruciatingly slow like a hibernating bear, but at a comfortable, deliberate pace.

Take three to five seconds to inhale.

Myself, I like to use four. If you're smaller or need to build up your lung capacity, use three. If you're in better shape than I—five.

Slow, “deep” breathing means, secondly, breathing deeply.

Hitching up your shoulders and chest is just the opposite.

The deep part of your lungs are at the bottom of your ribcage. You breathe deeply by expanding your stomach and diaphragm so air can start by filling up the bottom of your lungs. Then let your lungs ripple up, so the incoming air fills the middle of your lungs, then the top.

During our daily lives, most of us breath shallowly, using only the tops of our lungs. That's why we don't take in enough oxygen to stay thin, healthy and energetic.

Here's the Procedure:

It's easiest to sit comfortably (though you can stand too).

Keep your spine comfortably erect. If you tilt forward, you're squeezing your lungs, reducing their capacity.

Relax your belly muscles and diaphragm, letting them expand out.

(Yes, you read correctly—let your stomach swell. If you

put your palm on your tummy you should feel it relax and move outward a little bit when you begin to inhale. Just as though there's a balloon just below your navel. If you can't you're not doing this correctly, and that may be one major reason you're carrying excess weight. Your body doesn't have enough oxygen to burn that fat.

So, just practice relaxing those muscles and letting them move out while you inhale. You can practice this by lying down flat on your back and putting a book on your stomach. Then practice raising the book when you begin to inhale. It can feel weird at first, but oddly relaxing.)

Inhale through your nose for three to four seconds, filling your lungs from bottom to top.

(Except during special breathing exercises as practiced by some disciplines such as yoga, or when you're breathing hard because you've just run two miles, you should breathe in and out through your nose, not your mouth.)

(If evolution or God wanted us to breathe through our mouths, we wouldn't have noses.)

Hold for quadruple the time you spent inhaling. If you inhale for four seconds, hold for sixteen.

Exhale through your nose for double the inhalation time. If you inhale for four seconds and hold for sixteen, exhale for eight.

Repeat for a total of 10 times.

If you lose track (and it's amazing how quickly you feel so good and relaxed you can barely keep track of the number of repetitions), don't sweat it. One more or less will not

break you.

Do a set of ten in the morning, the middle of the day and at night.

Many people have lost weight doing nothing but that.

Breathe Deeply Whenever You're Tempted to Feel Bored

Pay attention to your breathing during the rest of your life.

When you need to be at a mental peak—say you're drafting an important report at work—start out by taking 10 slow deep breaths. Your brain will appreciate the extra oxygen and reward you with additional insights and ideas.

During and after a long spell of work, take a few deep breaths. If you can't work in all ten, that's OK. One is enough to 95% relax you and give you the energy to go on.

Whenever you feel stressed out by a customer, a client, a co-worker, your boss, traffic, your husband, or your kids...notice you're probably holding your breath.

Relax and let it out. Take a slow, deep breath. That won't make the problem go away, but it will give you the chance to think of a more helpful response than either crying or screaming.

One warning. If you take a slow deep breath at a long red light or while stuck in a long line of traffic, the light will turn green or the car in front of you will move forward,

interrupting your relaxing breath.

Which will irritate you.

But hey, at least you're moving again!

Deep breathing is also a good way to spend your time while you're waiting in line at the bank or supermarket, during a boring meeting or presentation on the job, or while you wait for your computer to finish some automatic systems thing it does when you need to check your email.

It's also great while you're watching TV.

At such times you don't have to hold your breath, just inhale deeply and exhale, practicing filling your lungs with good old-fashioned—even free!—oxygen.

Many indoor environments with air conditioning don't have as much oxygen as the outside air. All the more reason to fill your lungs so you can inhale as much oxygen as possible.

Breathe Deeply Instead of Eating Unhealthy Food

Add eating unhealthy food to that list of stressors.

See a billboard for McDonald's that makes you salivate like Pavlov's dog? Take a slow deep breath.

Pay for your gas and suddenly feel thirsty because you see somebody carrying two extra-large glasses of soda? Take a slow deep breath.

Go into your office break room and find a large cake for somebody's birthday? Take a slow deep breath.

Watch a movie late at night and suddenly crave a bowl of chocolate fudge ice cream? Take a slow deep breath. Heck, take two. Take three.

This book is about relaxing to lose weight. So, relax already.

In case you've forgotten (and chances are good that you have), that's what the next chapter is about.

Chapter Nine

The Thin You Starts in Your Mind

This is the most important chapter of this book. If you read and practice what's in this chapter, you'll lose weight and keep it off even if you don't read the rest of the book.

This is the heart of permanent weight-loss. The information in the other chapters will make it easier, and your particular eating plan can affect it, but in the end your results depend on how you see yourself.

Now you've learned the importance of controlling stress, the importance of breathing deeply and how to relax and meditate, now you can use that state of relaxation and meditation to change your self-image.

Your Self-Image is More Powerful Than Surgery and Mirrors

Self-image psychology was popularized back in 1960 with publication of the book PSYCHO-CYBERNETICS by Dr. Maxwell Maltz. Maltz was a plastic surgeon who noticed something in his practice that puzzled him.

Sometimes after he repaired or improved someone's face, they insisted he'd done nothing. Their nose was still too big. That big scar still marred their cheek.

That led him to wonder why those patients didn't or couldn't accept what everybody else could see and what

every mirror reflected back to them—their faces did look different.

Many of these patients admitted the mirror showed their nose was now smaller, then insisted the mirror was wrong!

He eventually discovered although he could repair physical faces, some patients didn't change their inner self-images to match their new features.

Further research led Dr. Maltz to realize we all have self-images that control not only whether we believe we're beautiful or ugly, but whether we believe we're smart or stupid, fat or thin, good or bad mothers, good or bad at our jobs, and so on.

It's difficult for us to do anything that goes against our self-image.

You Can Do Everything You Decide To See Yourself Doing

For example, what is the difference between me and a mountain climber?

It's not physical conditioning. I'm not as strong as they are, but if I saw myself as a mountain climber I'd begin working out a lot more.

It's not knowledge. If I saw myself as a mountain climber, I'd begin learning about ropes and pylons.

It's not experience. Every mountain climber had to climb their first mountain.

It's just I don't see myself as a mountain climber. I don't want to be a mountain climber. But you know what? If I wanted to climb mountains, I'd begin preparing for that and eventually I'd climb a mountain or ten.

If you want to be thin— and especially if you want to remain thin—you must think of yourself as thin person. You must see yourself inside your mind as a thin person.

Sure, maybe you're fifty or a hundred pounds heavier than your ideal thin weight—right now.

But “right now” will be in the past by the time you finish reading this chapter.

Here's Something to Think About

Think about your best friend or family member who's so thin you're jealous of her.

Now, just imagine this—what would happen if tonight a magic genie transferred all your excess fat from your body to hers?

If you continue to think of yourself as “fat,” (even though that's no longer objectively true), you'll continue to eat too much and too many sugar-rich and carb-rich foods and not exercise enough.

It'll take time, but eventually, if you refuse to change your self-image, you'll regain the weight.

And your thin friend? She has a “thin” self-image, so she'll continue to eat just enough healthy food and to remain active.

It'll take time, but she'll lose that weight.

(By the way, do you think she'd start going to weekly meetings, counting calories, keeping a food journal or blog or buy smaller plates? No, she'd just continue to eat and act like a thin person.

(That's another reason I don't like all that claptrap—they're things only "fat" people do. You'll lose more weight by acting like a thin person and doing the things thin people do.)

In a few years, if neither one of you change your self-images, you'll be overweight again and she'll be thin again.

Make the Thin You More Powerful and Compelling Every Time You Breathe Deeply and Relax

Fortunately, you can change your self-image.

When you spend ten or twenty minutes relaxing or meditating, once or thrice a day, now you have a purpose.

Instead of concentrating on some sound or image, you think about yourself—as a thin person.

See yourself as thin. How do you look at your ideal weight? See yourself there.

See yourself in summer clothes, a bikini, in underwear, in your job's uniform or business clothes, in a sexy party dress, and naked.

See yourself at all your usual activities, and doing things

you'd like to do but now avoid because of your weight. Gardening, dancing, walking through the park—see yourself thin and gorgeous.

See yourself as sexually attractive. See them lusting after you (“them” can be your husband/boyfriend, many men or many women—it’s up to you).

And your clothes? Nothing you wear now. You’re either in one of those outfits you used to wear but which are now hanging in the back of your closet, or something brand new in your new, thin size.

Feel the energy, the tingling feeling of a healthy slim body in super health. Just imagine how great it feels to be thin and healthy.

Just Keep on Seeing Yourself Easily Eating Only Healthy Foods

And hear yourself saying things such as “It’s so great to feel thin. I don’t need a soda, just a bottle of water please. No dessert for me. I have enough energy to climb a mountain. It was so easy. I just realized I didn’t want to eat fattening foods anymore. Chocolate pie is not sinful—it’s just extra calories I don’t need or want.”

Hear the people around you saying things such as, “You look terrific. Congratulations. It’s like you’re a new person now.”

Make the pictures big, bright and moving like an ultra-large 3-D movie. The sounds are crisp, loud and pleasant. The feeling is intense ecstasy.

Magnify all these experiences. Make them bigger,

stronger, brighter—a million times more powerful until you're overwhelmed by the wonderful intensity of how great it is to be the thin you.

Hug all that to yourself, folding it to your chest so you feel it all inside you.

Because, after all, it IS you. You're that thin woman.

Yes, your body still has to lose a few pounds. But inside—where it counts the most—you ARE that thin woman.

And remember to touch your thumb to your forefinger to anchor those terrific sensations.

That way, you can relive that wonderful state of thinness even when faced with the real world.

