The Straight Scoop About Dieting

Learn the truths about weight-loss diets so you can stop feeling guilty and start losing weight

Sharon Greene Patton

Foreword by Allen Oelschlaeger, author of Finally, the Straight Scoop About Weight, Nutrition, and Fitness

The Straight Scoop About Dieting

Here's just a small sampling of what you are about to learn:

- How nothing has changed relative to weight management over the last 30 years – not the diets, not the clubs, not the attitudes, not the discrimination, not the hype (you will be amazed by the incredible similarities between the early 1980s and now).

- The fundamental and unchanging truths about the physiology of weight management (despite the "breakthroughs" you keep hearing about, everything you need to know about weight loss has been known for decades).

- How dieting sets up the body to actually gain weight (once you read this section, you'll never go on a diet ever again).

- The fallacy of the widely-held assumption that "3,500 calories equals a pound."

- The only two solutions to overweight: one societal and one personal.

- The all-important first step to losing weight (you probably have never heard this one before).

- The importance of completely overhauling your relationship with food – how you feel about food, how you think about food, and what you believe about food.

More...

... More

- How to stop feeling guilty about eating.
- The almost magical result of not thinking any food is forbidden and giving yourself unconditional permission to feed your body in order to meet its energy needs.
- The incredibly simple way to determine what to eat, when to eat and how to eat in order to reach and maintain your perfect weight (this information is the last thing the weight-loss industry wants you to know).
- The most important thing you must learn in order to lose weight (no – it's not the calories, carbs, or fat grams in food or the number of calories burned by various forms of exercise).
- The real story about Kevin Trudeau's "Weight Loss Cure" from someone (other than Kevin) who actually tried the shot he recommends (when it was still legal in the United States).
- Why weight-loss surgery works and how to get the same effect without going under the knife.
- The most important thing people can do for their health (no, it is not losing weight).

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Cover Flap

(from 1983 edition)

This outspoken, compassionate book speaks for the millions of women who have dieted unsuccessfully all their lives and have lost their self-esteem – but no weight. It explodes the myths and fallacies of dieting and exposes the cruelty, discrimination, and injustice society directs at fat people.

For twenty-five years Sharon Green Patton was on a dieting merry-go-round that brought her nothing but grief. Not only did she not lose weight, but she realized that dieting only made her fatter. Finally one day Ms. Patton just stopped dieting. For the first time she began to really enjoy food and to accept the body size and weight nature intended her to have. Gradually she lost her obsessive relationship with food and tried to eat normally again. She ate what she wanted, when she wanted, and in the amounts that truly satisfied her – and, surprisingly, lost weight.

In *Stop Dieting – Start Living!* Ms. Patton discusses why dieting makes you fat; why will power does not and cannot work; why food is neither moral nor immoral; how nature has programmed us to be a certain weight; the destructive psychological, physical,

and emotional effects of starting and stopping diets; the difficulties of maintaining your self-respect in a world that demands every woman to be certain size; and the problems of sex and sexism faced by overweight women.

Based on extensive research and interviews, *Stop Dieting – Start Living!* offers a way to self-acceptance and personal happiness that will be welcomed by every overweight woman in America.

Acknowledgments

(from 1983 edition)

First and foremost, I want to thank my husband, Jim Patton, who helped and encouraged me from the start, who edited the manuscript time and time again, who suffered through a million diets with me, and who shared my dreams for this book.

I also want to thank Karen Provenza, a friend whose wisdom and insight helped me in writing this book. She not only always understood, she often led the way.

Special thanks to Helen Skillman, who braved her way through the worst snowstorm in 100 years to type the manuscript, and who spent long hours proofing the final copy. And thanks to Neil MacVicar and Keith Becker, who took time out from their first trip to Washington, D.C. to read the manuscript.

Thanks also to my agent, Joan Raines, who believed in my book from the moment she read it and took a chance on me, and to my editor, Jerry Gross, for his invaluable suggestions for rewriting the manuscript and for telling me that he believed in me, my book, and the audience for it.

I also want to express my gratitude to the many people who talked to me about their feelings about being fat and about dieting; their feelings helped me to put mine into words.

July 7, 2007

Now, 25 years later I want to add a couple of people to my list. I want to thank my daughter Kate, who understands better than anyone about self acceptance. She is completely at peace with who she is and what size she is, although she does not fit the size 4 stereotype of beauty demanded by today's culture. She has a beautiful body, and even more important, a beautiful and kind heart and wisdom beyond her years. She has taught me so much, and I am forever grateful to have her in my life

I also want to thank Allen Oelschlaeger, who read my book, saw the truth of it and worked so hard to get it republished. He has a profound grasp on the issues of size, weight and fitness and great wisdom about how to enjoy food and life.

Foreword

(for 2008 edition)

In 2004 I was so frustrated with the available information on weight loss I decided to write something myself. After 35 years of studying weight, nutrition and fitness as a pharmacist, medical industry executive and parent of a Type 1 diabetic child, I had become fed up with the misinformation, misdirection and, in some cases, down right lies so prevalent on these subjects.

It was during my research for this course that I discovered Sharon's brilliant book. After reading hundreds of books during my three years of research, hers was one of just six I could, with good conscience, suggest anybody read.

All the rest were filled with so much misinformation and misdirection I felt reading them would cause more harm than good. Sharon's was one of the exceptions. Her book about dieting was an absolute gem. It was scientifically accurate and well written but, most importantly, it did an exceptional job of sharing the surprising truths about dieting.

The most amazing thing is that Sharon's research findings are just as valid today as they were back in the early 1980s when this

book was originally written. Sure, the amount of money spent on dieting has increased ($11 billion then, over $60 billion now), more Americans are overweight (one third then, two-thirds now), and the names of some the popular diets have changed – but, otherwise, the information in this book is just as pertinent today as then.

Sharon's book is so outstanding I was quite disappointed when I discovered it was out of print. So, just as I was ready to publish my course on weight, nutrition and fitness, I contacted Sharon and asked her if I could republish her book as a companion volume. Thankfully she agreed and *Stop Dieting – Start Living* was reborn as *The Straight Scoop About Dieting*.

I hope you get as much benefit from it as the millions who have read it before you over the last two and a half decades.

Allen Oelschlaeger, creator of the B.I.T.E. Method for effortless weight management and author of:

Finally, the Straight Scoop About Weight, Nutrition and Fitness

Internalize the wisdom in this breakthrough course
and never struggle with your weight ever again

Preface

(for 2008 edition)

Diets don't work; in fact, they make you fat. That's what I wrote in the first edition of this book 25 years ago. It was true then, and it is true now. In fact, in the intervening years since my book was published, new evidence has been discovered that reinforces the ideas and facts I presented back in the early 1980s.

Much has changed in the last 25 years. There has been an explosion in technology, globalization has changed the way we do business, and the world seems less safe than it was then.

However, one thing has not changed. People are still obsessed with being thin, and millions of people are dieting. In fact, many more people are dieting today than when I wrote the book. The amount of money spent on diets and diet products has increased from $11 billion to more than $60 billion a year, and at any given time, more than 100 million Americans are on diets. Even girls as young as four are worried about being fat and more than 80 percent of ten-year-old girls diet. These are appalling statistics; yet in spite of this obsession with being thin, more than 60 percent of Americans are overweight and 30 percent are obese. It would seem

with all those people dieting and obsessing about their weight, they would be getting thinner, but as everyone knows, the opposite is true. People are getting fatter, and not just in America, but all over the world. Obesity rates have tripled since my book was published, which leads to the question, what is wrong with this picture? If more and more people are dieting, why are they getting fatter?

The answer to that question is spelled out in my book. Studies show that fewer than 5 percent of people who diet lose weight and keep it off, so dieting obviously doesn't work. But not only does it not work, it actually makes people fat! The statistics about dieting and obesity bear this out. Dieting changes your body chemistry and makes you pack on pounds more efficiently, it destroys your natural hunger signals and alters your relationship with food, it causes deep feelings of failure and guilt, and it damages your health and self esteem.

The human body is a marvelous machine that does not like to be tampered with, and when you diet, you are tampering with it in a profound way, and it will retaliate. It has a vested interest in keeping you at the best weight for your physiology, and your feeble attempts at dieting are no match for it. It will marshal its defenses to make you store fat and eat – not because you are weak or without will power, but because you are hungry and your body chemistry is making you that way.

In the 25 years since I wrote this book, few people have been willing to challenge the traditional thinking about dieting and weight loss. In fact, the opposite has been true. Books, articles and most of the medical establishment continue to send the same, tired message that dieting will make you thin, despite all evidence to the contrary. That is why I was so pleased to read Allen Oelschlaeger's course, *Finally, the Straight Scoop about Weight, Nutrition and Fitness* because, finally, someone has captured the truth about these topics. We met when Allen read my book and thought its message was so important he wanted to republish it – and I happily agreed.

We talked about the serious problems with dieting and obesity and how a dramatic change is needed to reverse the tightly-

correlated trends of more dieting and more overweight. He sent me a copy of the outstanding course he had written which I found to be filled with the real truths about weight, nutrition and fitness. I'm confident Allen's course will help undo the damage caused by the weight-loss industry and help people learn to listen to their bodies and their own hunger once again.

Neither his course nor my book is saying that no one weighs more than they should or that you shouldn't pay attention to what you eat. We are saying the opposite. Listen to your body and pay attention to what is right for you and your health, not to a society and a weight-loss industry that tells you that everyone must be thin and the only way to achieve thinness is to diet. As this book chronicles, I spent a good part of my life doing just that, and I am living proof of the truth that dieting doesn't work and only makes you fatter – that is until I discovered an approach to weight loss that actually works.

Through our work, Allen and I hope to bring about a revolution by helping people understand that dieting is destructive to both body and soul. We want to help create a world where people can learn to enjoy food again, where ten-year children don't have to be afraid of being fat, where young women don't starve themselves to death, and where different shapes and sizes are not despised, but are celebrated.

We hope that our work helps you to never struggle with your weight ever again.

Sharon Patton Greene
July 7, 2007

CHAPTER

1

The Realization

ANOTHER MONDAY, ANOTHER DIET

It was an ordinary Monday morning. I awoke, filled with hope and apprehension; hope because I was starting a new diet; apprehension because it was quite possibly my thousandth new start, and I was not sure I could make it. I tried to shake off my fears. This time I was determined (of course, I had been all those other times too). I had gone off the 999th diet over the weekend and had rid the house of all "fattening" foods. I had put myself in the right frame of mind, and I was ready to go.

I leaped out of bed, full of determination. This would be it! This time I would succeed! No more excuses, no more frustrations, no more failures. I was going to lose this weight once and for all. And this time I was going to keep it off! What did it matter that I had failed every other time? What did it matter that when I did lose weight, sooner or later I gained it back again? One of my diets was bound to succeed, and it might as well be *this* one. After all, I was going to be sensible this time. Years of fad dieting, starvation, and abusing myself had at least

taught me that I had to be sensible. I was going to eat a low-calorie, high-protein, well-balanced diet – no desserts, no bread, no fats, just safe protein and vegetables.

I looked in the mirror and the old anxieties swept over me. Would I succeed this time? Would this be the diet that worked? Would I ever be thin? Would I be able to stay on this diet, or would it be another failure in a long line of failures? Why did I think this diet would be any different from all the others?

I thought of the week that lay ahead. Kent's party on Friday night – he always had such good food and none of it would be on my diet. I told myself I could survive that. But then there was Roberta and Frank's wedding. Would I be able to resist the temptation to drink champagne? Maybe I should wait until after the wedding. Maybe I should start *next* Monday. But as I knew so well, each Monday brought another week with its own trials and temptations. No, now was the time.

As I looked in the mirror at this chubby, plump, overweight (how do you say fat nicely?) person who was contemplating the travails of her latest diet, I had an extraordinary realization. *I had been dieting for twenty-five years!* That couldn't be. No one could be on a diet for twenty-five years! But it was true. I had gone on my first diet when I was about thirteen, and now I was pushing forty. And what had those years of dieting done for me? Was I thin? The mirror answered that question plainly enough. I had been on every diet ever created, repeated them, revised them, broken them, and tried them again. I had broiled my meat, peeled the skin off my chicken, cut the fat from my steak, eaten a thousand grapefruit and a ton of cottage cheese, and *I was still fat!*

I had tried to fool my body with "mock cherry pie" and other "artificial" foods. I had fasted, cleansed, and cajoled my body with every conceivable concoction designed to take off pounds. And this was not an occasional "I think I'll go on a diet." I had been struggling, wrestling, losing, gaining, hurting, dieting for twenty-five years, and I weighed more now than when I first began dieting. I had lost weight many times, but eventually it always came back. It seemed that those

precariously lost pounds hovered around my hips just waiting for me to eat something not on my diet. I had lost enough pounds in my life to populate a small village, but they always returned. As I stood there looking at myself, I had to recognize one simple fact: dieting had not made me thin.

Even if that were true, it wasn't the diets' fault: it was my fault for not staying on them. Dieting hadn't failed; I had. And that meant I had to try again, and try even harder. But over the years I had tried again, and again and again; I had also failed again and again. Many times I had stayed on diets for long periods of time, but sooner or later, I always went off of them. What made me think I would not repeat the same pattern: start the diet with hope, be elated over the first weight loss and depressed over some small gain, fall off the diet, feel guilty, eat more and then start again? I had been doing this for twenty-five years, and there was every indication I would go on doing it for another twenty-five years. Something had to change; perhaps it had to be dieting.

DIETING TAKES ITS TOLL

As I look back over those twenty-five years, I realize that dieting had done more to me than not make me thin. It had eroded my confidence in myself and my abilities. The years of failure and guilt had taken their toll on my belief in myself. I believed I was fat because I was weak and had no self-control, despite having stayed on diets for a year at a time. I believed I was a failure, despite the fact that I had put myself through college and graduate school, received my Master's degree, and established a successful teaching career. I had many friends, a wonderful husband, good personal relationships, and had accomplished many things, but I still believed I was a failure because I had been unable to lose weight and keep it off.

I saw that dieting had seriously damaged my self-esteem, and I also saw that it clearly had not worked, but how could I stop? What were my alternatives? To stay fat or to gain even more weight? I could not just give up and accept the fact that I

was always going to be fat. At least dieting gave me hope. But I had to realize that with each passing year and with each new diet, it became harder and harder to believe I would ever be thin. I had tried and failed over and over again until, finally, the frail bandage of hope could not cover the wounds that the years of dieting had created.

FEAR OF FRENCH TOAST

Where did it all begin? How did I become changed from a normal person into a dieter? I thought back to my first diet. I was a thin girl, a tomboy with pigtails and freckles who never gave a thought to food except when I was hungry. During my childhood, eating seemed more of a nuisance than anything else. I would be in the middle of some great adventure or experiment, and my mother would call me for dinner. I tried to examine honestly my relationship with food at that time. I loved certain foods – French toast and bacon and tomato sandwiches – but mostly I ate when I was hungry and was not overly concerned with food. I liked to eat, but then I was exuberant about everything. I don't remember having any obsessive feelings about food. I ate what I wanted, when I wanted, and never gave it a thought.

What changed me from a normal eater *to* a person fraught with guilt and fear when it came to food? Did my mother use food to keep me quiet and make me behave? Was food a substitute for love? Did I eat out of feelings of loneliness and frustration? Was I weak and lacking in self-control? What had changed me from loving French toast to being afraid of it?

It was dieting. I finally began to understand that a long succession of diets had changed me from a normal young girl into a bundle of neuroses about my body and about food.

"SHAME ON ME"

It began when I was about thirteen years old. It was a time of major changes in my life, as puberty usually is. Up to that

point I was fairly oblivious to the larger questions of the universe and confident that life would continue pretty much the same. Puberty is a time of questioning, awakening feelings, new and unexplored ideas and fears, and changes in my family and in myself made me become more aware of loss, death and all those major questions about which we search for answers all of our lives. In addition to my concerns for these larger issues, I began to gain weight. Unfortunately, adolescence is the worst possible time in life to be different from your peers. I was not very heavy, but I weighed more than the other girls, and for a thirteen-year-old, that was intolerable.

I distinctly remember entering the freshman class in high school and weighing in at a "pleasingly plump" 135. I remember how much I weighed because we had to have a physical exam to enter school, and part of the exam was the ritual public weigh-in. When I stepped on the scale, the nurse shouted out my weight. All the new freshmen heard her; I thought that the whole world had heard her, and I was ashamed. That shame was to stay with me for a long time.

I did not know why I gained weight; it did not seem to me that I ate any differently from my family and friends. I did not understand why I was fatter than they were; I only knew that I didn't want to be. I didn't want to be different, so I bought a calorie counter and a few magazines and embarked on a series of diets, gathered mostly from friends, articles, and other sources of equal unreliability. Thus I began what turned out to be a lifelong struggle with food.

I now understand some of the influences that pushed me into dieting. Society says you must be thin, and I believed it. I wanted to be thin at any cost. And so I dieted. That first year I lost a little, gained, lost, but couldn't keep it off. It seemed as if everything I ate put weight on me. I never understood why I gained weight and my friends did not. I would go to the Malt Shop with them and watch them eat hamburgers, French fries, and chocolate malts. Why didn't they gain weight when it seemed I would gain if I even *thought* about a hamburger?

It was difficult at fourteen to understand the cultural issues

involved in my wanting to be thin. It never occurred to me to question those values *or* wonder about their origins. I just accepted that I should be thin. And at that time I certainly had no way of knowing any of the other factors that might be involved in my being overweight. I thought there must be something physically wrong with me, or at least I did at first. There seemed to be no other explanation, but since that idea was rejected by the entire medical profession, I had no choice but to believe that I was somehow responsible, that I deserved to be fat. I would just have to try harder.

And so I did. When I entered my sophomore year, after a year of erratic dieting, my weight fluctuated between 130 and 140, and I was miserable. I had no idea at the time that maybe that was what I *should* weigh. All I knew was that it was socially unacceptable, so I began *to* diet strenuously or, more accurately, I began to starve myself. I was not going to be fat, so I literally stopped eating. My diet consisted of no breakfast, no lunch, and a small piece of meat and a tomato or cucumber for dinner. Sometimes I would eat only a banana or an orange and skim milk in a day. Slowly I lost weight, but I also was continually sick with colds. Health was secondary to my desire to be thin, however, so I kept right on dieting.

It took nearly an entire year of rigorous dieting, but I did lose weight. When I began my junior year, I weighed 118 pounds (although I was already so neurotic about food and dieting that I thought I was still fat). My belief that thin was better than anything *was* reinforced when I began being asked out by the most popular boys in the school.

However, this new thinness did not make me happy. I was still insecure about my body and was terrified of gaining weight. I lived and died by what the scale said. If I gained a pound, I would be in despair. I would stop eating altogether, or I would eat just a piece of fruit or some celery. If I lost a pound, I would be ecstatic. Imagine the time and energy I wasted!

I don't mean to paint a picture of the world's most miserable person. I had fun and there were certainly good times but, for the most part, my life was pervaded by my struggle with

weight and my fear of fat. I had confidence in many areas of my life, but absolutely no confidence about my looks. Even though people told me I was pretty, I could not believe it.

So my battle to be thin continued. If I allowed myself one extra piece of food, I would gain weight. If I went out with friends and ate dinner, no matter how restrained I was, I would gain weight. A part of me realized it was not normal that I had to eat so little to maintain my weight, but I still did not question it. I realize now that I was fighting against my very own body to keep my weight lower than it was meant to be.

I remember one Thanksgiving when I decided to throw caution to the winds and eat with the family. Various aunts and uncles and grandparents were there and my mother worked for several days to prepare a bountiful feast. She was a wonderful cook and fixed turkey with all the trimmings. I decided to eat a little of everything – not too much, just one helping. For the first time in months, I felt full; I felt like a real person. But the next morning when I stepped on the scale (in those days World War III could have been starting and I would still have weighed myself), I discovered that I had gained seven pounds. That put me on the brink of suicide. No one could gain seven pounds overnight! But I did, and I have done it more than once. I didn't know it at the time, but by starving myself I was making my problem worse.

REACHING PLATEAUS

One of the major effects of dieting is that it alters your relationship with food and creates a fear of it. If food was indeed making me fat, I had every reason to fear it. Through all those years of dieting, I was becoming more and more obsessive in my relationship with food, until not one moment of my life was free from thinking about it, fearing it, avoiding it, and feeling guilty about it.

My life continued pretty much this way through college – dieting and being afraid of food. When I gained weight, I would diet even more strenuously which, in turn, only made

my relationship with food crazier and upset my body chemistry more. I kept my weight down, but made myself neurotic in the process. For the next twenty years I would never stop dieting, never stop being afraid of food, and I would allow my happiness to be ruled by my weight.

Of course, as the years went by, it became increasingly difficult to stay on a diet all the time. In my teens I could diet for years; in my twenties, it was down to months; in my thirties, it was weeks. Would it be down to days in my forties and hours in my fifties? As I grew older, I gradually gained weight, so I would step up on my dieting pace, only to fall off and start again. And so it would go with increasing desperation – lose weight, gain weight, and never stop dieting and feeling guilty.

I would set a plateau for how much I could weigh, but my plateaus kept rising. Each year I would raise my weight limit and vow never to go over it; then the next year, I would raise the limit again. I wanted to understand those years and what they had done to me. I wanted to stop hurting myself, but I did not know how. I only knew that if I stopped dieting I would have to give up the hope of ever being thin.

I wanted to get off this losing, gaining treadmill, but I was afraid. The answer seemed simple enough: stop dieting. After twenty-five years of trying and failing, you would think a reasonable person would have the good sense to stop; surely, the test period had been long enough. But how could I stop? Dieting was as much a part of my identity as the color of my eyes. My friends all knew me as a dieter. When I went to their houses, they would fix a diet dinner for me, or they would not make dessert to avoid tempting me. I even had friends whose entire relationship with me was based on dieting. How could I stop?

If I stopped dieting, how could I explain not caring about being fat? By dieting, I was at least proclaiming to the world that I was not a slob, and that I cared enough about myself to try to do something about being fat. How could I go around being fat and not be on a diet?

Even though I had all these reasons for dieting, I kept coming

back to the same conclusion: *dieting had not made me thin.* In addition to that knowledge I had to face up to just what twenty-five years of dieting had done to me. It had made me miserable about myself a good deal of the time; it had made me feel like a failure and robbed me of self-esteem; it had endangered my health; had ruined countless days for me and, finally, it had made me crazy when it came to food.

FAT DIETERS

I began to think about dieting and dieters, and I realized that most of the dieters I knew were fat. I thought about the parties I had been to where all the thin people were eating food and enjoying it, while all the fat people were either refusing the food with "No, I am on a diet," or taking it with "I really shouldn't, but I can't resist." When I thought about it, I realized that I did not know many thin people who dieted, and I did not know many dieters who were thin. That should have given me additional evidence that dieting did not make people thin. But I would tell myself it was because they did not try as hard as I did and did not stay on their diets. But of course they had tried just as hard, and dieting had not worked for them either.

Talking with other overweight people, I learned that our struggles were strikingly similar: gaining weight easily, dieting, falling off, dieting again, falling off again. For years we had all struggled with this seemingly insurmountable problem. Most of the people with whom I talked had the same story. They had been dieting for years, and dieting had gradually only made them fatter. They also felt guilty and imagined they were failures. Whatever the reasons for our size: metabolism, heredity, weak character, lack of will power, the one fact remained: dieting had not made us thin.

Was it really that we had no self-control and were all weak? Were all those people at parties who were thin better people? They didn't seem to diet, yet they were thin. What secret did they have that we didn't have? All my diets had sooner or later

failed, as had all the diets of other fat people I knew. In fact, I realized that I had never known *anyone* who had lost weight by dieting and had kept it off for any length of time. Are all people failures who diet and do not keep their weight off? Are all thin people successes because they are not fat?

I had to do much research and a lot of rethinking to find the answers to those questions. But one thing I did know: after all those years of dieting, we were still fat. Maybe the time had come to blame the diets and not the dieters.

This realization should have been enough to make me give up dieting, but I was not quite ready to let go. I still could not really believe that dieting was not going to work. After twenty-five years, one does not give up easily. I had one more step to take before I would stop dieting.

NO MORE TEARS

The final decision to stop dieting came when I read a journal I had kept while on one of my various diets. I had started the journal because I thought it would help me stay on my diet or at least give me some insights as to why I had gone off it and failed again. Each time I started a diet, I hoped it would be the one that would work, so I thought I would keep a record of my success to share with the waiting world, or I would at least know why I had failed.

As I read that journal, I began to understand what I meant by the "wounds the years of dieting had created." There, in black and white, was page after page of guilt and self-destruction. I could not believe I had done that to myself, that I could hurt myself so much, ask so much of myself, and be so unforgiving. As I read, tears spilled down on the pages, tears for lost happiness, for years of torment, for never forgiving myself for being fat, tears for myself as a young girl miserable about my body, and for myself as a grown woman, filling those pages with despair, and finally tears of relief, because in some way I knew that it was over. I would never again subject myself to the kind of pain and guilt that filled those pages. I knew it

would not be easy, and it has not been, but as I saw my tears fall on those pages, I vowed they would be the last tears I ever shed because of my weight.

That desperate account contained the entire spectrum of dieting. I began with high hopes. I wrote of expectations, feelings of elation and happiness at the prospect of being thin. I included recipes, hints, and progress reports: "Doing great," "I can make it," "Ate a muffin I shouldn't have," "I was *really bad* today – I'll be better tomorrow." I wrote words of encouragement, telling myself of all the rewards that would come with losing weight. But as I read each entry, I could almost see the hold on hope becoming more and more tenuous, until the inevitable – eating something not on the diet. Then there were notations of hopes dashed, a stalwart, "Begin again, forget the past," then "Fell off again, begin again" until, finally, no more was written.

That journal was a day-by-day account of the insanity of dieting and the delusion that weight loss will bring happiness. It was filled with self-recrimination: "This time I will succeed. I won't be a failure again." It was filled with hopes for the future, plans for how different my life would be when I was thin. And worst of all, it was filled with moral values given to food and eating. I saw from that journal that I considered myself a failure, a bad person, not because of my actions, or how I lived my life, but because of one simple fact: how much I ate. *My worth was measured out in calories consumed.*

MORE TO LOSE THAN WEIGHT

What my journal most clearly revealed was that over the years being fat had not hurt me nearly as much as the years of dieting. I realized I had lost part of my life because of my obsession with dieting, and I had myself miserable because of my failure to lose weight. I had endangered my health and hurt myself time and time again because I could not get thin. My continual failure to lose weight and keep it off was making me more unhappy than being fat. And I discovered something

Else – it was making my problem worse. My search for the answers to this problem led me to understand that dieting was not only *not* making me thin, it was making me fat! As impossible as that sounds, it is true. In many complex and subtle ways, dieting was actually contributing to making me fat. Dieting was changing my body chemistry and making me unable to regulate my weight.

I talked to other dieters, to doctors, and therapists, I attended conferences and diet club meetings, and for more than two years, I conducted research into what makes people fat, why dieting doesn't work, and what I could do about it. This book is the result of that research. It is the story of my twenty-five years of dieting and what they did to me. It is about how people get fat and what compels them to diet in the first place. It is about the anguish of dieting and what it does to its victims. It is about how I finally stopped dieting, and how, from that moment, my life changed. This book is about that change, and how I freed myself from the tyranny of dieting and the terrible burden of guilt that accompanies it.

Author's Note

Thank you for reading my book. I hope I've convinced you that dieting not only doesn't work, but it actually makes you fat! And I hope you will NEVER go on a weight-loss diet ever again.

I've been on both sides – having dieted for 25 years prior to 1980 and eating normally for the past 25 (however, not always succeeding because of the bad habits I picked up from years of dieting) – and I can tell you that NOT dieting is the better route.

Sadly, most people haven't figured this out. When I wrote the first edition of this book, I thought the overwhelming evidence presented would convince people that diets don't work and result in a decrease in the number of people taking part in this silly ritual.

Well, that certainly didn't happen. In fact, just the opposite occurred. More and more people are dieting and, just as the research predicted, more and more of them are overweight. Why hasn't the medical establishment or the public put two and two together and recognized that the epidemic of obesity is occurring in parallel with an epidemic of dieting. More people are dieting while obesity rates are going up!

What is amazing is that this increase in dieting has occurred in the face of a vast amount research over the last 25 years that provides further support for my message.

This shouldn't be a surprise. There are just some fundamental truths about the physiology of weight management that don't change. Still, despite all the evidence they don't work, weight-loss diets continue to be the dominant prescription for losing weight.

After my book went out of print, I thought the truths about dieting and weight loss would never be broadly understood and applied – so people could stop feeling guilty and start losing weight.

That all changed when I was contacted in 2006 by Allen Oelschlaeger, the author of *Finally, the Straight Scoop About Weight, Nutrition, and Fitness*. Allen had read my book in doing research for his comprehensive home-study program and wanted to republish it – in an updated edition – as a companion volume to his course.

I read his course and became convinced that, through our combined work and the help of others, we could bring a revolution to the understanding of weight loss so people would never have to struggle with their weight ever again.

I hope you join our efforts by making a commitment to stop dieting and, instead, rely on your body's natural regulatory eating signals to determine when, what, and how much to eat. Also, please accept yourself as you are and were meant to be. Not everyone was meant to be a size 4 and we would all be happier if we learned to accept that reality.

If you want more information on exactly how to get back in touch with your hunger, appetite and satiety, I refer you to Allen's course (see Home-Study Course page at the end of the book).

Thanks again and I wish you all success with the goals Allen often talks about – to love your body, love food and love life!

About the Author

For 25 years, starting at the age of 13, Sharron Greene Patton was a compulsive dieter. She began dieting as a teenager even though she wasn't fat. She bought into the advertising and weight-loss industries' message that she had to be thin and, from that point on, everything she did and everything she achieved was colored by her battle with weight.

Then in the late 1970s Sharon realized something startling – dieting doesn't work and, more often than not, it actually causes weight gain. That realization led her to spend several years trying to understand why. She read the research studies dating back for decades, talked to other dieters, doctors and therapists, and attended conferences and diet-club meetings.

Sharon's personal experience with dieting and the results of her extensive research were captured in a book published in 1983 by Dodd, Mead, and Company. This 231-page hardcover book was title *Stop Dieting – Start Living!: How one angry woman finally gave up dieting, regained her self-esteem – and stopped feeling ashamed, guilty, rejected and a failure*.

Since then Sharon has worked as a writer, editor and a university teacher. She has a BA and a Master's Degree in English Literature, and taught writing and literature at San Francisco State University

for several years. She also was editor of a national magazine in Washington, DC and worked as a writer and editor in New York City and San Francisco. For the past 15 years, Sharon has worked as a freelance writer in the San Francisco Bay Area.

In 2006, Sharon was contacted by Allen Oelschlaeger who discovered her book in the process of doing research for his comprehensive home-study course: *Finally, the Straight Scoop About Weight, Nutrition, and Fitness*. He was so impressed by her work ("best book on dieting ever written") that he contacted her and asked if his publishing company could re-release her book as a companion volume to his course. Sharon agreed and an updated edition of her book was released in late 2007 with the title of *The Straight Scoop About Dieting: Learn the truths about weight-loss diets so you can stop feeling guilty and start losing weight*.

Sharon's husband, Jim Patton, owns a consulting firm in the San Francisco Bay Area and her daughter Kate, who has been a constant joy in their lives for all her 22 years, is now attending San Francisco State University where Sharon used to teach. She is a theater major and very talented.

To Learn More

Now that you have read *The Straight Scoop About Dieting* you may be interested in learning more about how to never struggle with your weight ever again.

The publisher of this book has available a number information resources (mostly free) to help you with this. To access a complete list, please visit

Here you can:

- Subscribe to one or both of our free emailed newsletters:

  Straight Scoop About Health & Fitness

  Straight Scoop About Health & Fitness for Parents

- Access additional educational materials (free reports/articles) about weight, nutrition, and fitness from Truths Publishing.

- Access our recommended list of related courses, books and websites.

"The information from Truths Publishing turned my understanding of how to lose weight upside down and made so much sense I knew it would work. I can't imagine ever gaining back the weight I've lost now that I have an accurate understanding of how my body works."

– Sharron Patapoff, 61-year old mother of two, Aloha, OR

"As the co-editor of a health journal I'm exposed to almost everything written on the topics of weight, nutrition, and fitness. I can honestly say the *Straight Scoop* information is some of the most comprehensive, accurate and eye-opening I've seen on these topics in many years. Everyone interested in separating the facts from the fiction and improving their health should take advantage of the valuable resources available from Truths Publishing."

– Jon Robison, PhD, MS Nutritionist, Okemos MI

Home-Study Course

Truths Publishing's flagship product is the comprehensive home-study course written by Allen Oelschlaeger titled:

Finally, the Straight Scoop About Weight, Nutrition, and Fitness

Internalize the wisdom in this breakthrough course and never struggle with your weight ever again.

Here is a brief overview of this course from its back cover.

Effortlessly reach and maintain your perfect weight

Eat less and exercise more. For over a century, that's been the dominant prescription for weight loss. And this advice continues today despite its well-documented failure rate of more than 95%.

Over this same time period, several insightful medical practitioners and eating specialists extensively researched a completely different approach to weight management – an approach delivering far grater success due to its precise alignment with the true nature of human physiology. Disappointingly, their amazing results have been overshadowed by the vast propaganda of the profit-driven weight-loss, food, and exercise industries.

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√ Explains the fundamental unchanging truths about the physiology of weight management

√ Describes the researchers' successful approach and the uncomplicated steps for its implementation (Allen Oelschlaeger's B.I.T.E Method for effortless weight management).

This course is available at retail and online book stores or may be ordered from the publisher at this book's online Resource Center.

Order Form

The Straight Scoop About Dieting is available at retail and online book stores or may be ordered directly from Truths Publishing.

Other publications providing truthful and unbiased information about weight, nutrition and fitness can be accessed via the publisher's website at http://www.TruthsPublishing.com.

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