

## **Chapter V**

### **Cracking the Secrets of Gaining and Losing Weight**

If you're over age 10 you've heard the relentless math: what you eat, minus what you spend in energy equals how fat you are:  $x - y = z$ .

If "x" is a double cheeseburger with fries and a shake, "y" had better be enough time on the bike, jogging trail or roller blades to keep "z" constant, so that your jeans will continue to zip.

Society condemns if you're a size 16, claiming that you lack self-discipline to make the formula work. Your fat is your fault, they say, citing your tendency to pig out on foods, or sit like a bump in front of a computer all day.

Actually, it's far more complex than that. Excess weight isn't easy to lose, no matter what the diet plans promise or the health club proclaims, because three powerful forces are conspiring against you.

First, your body cheats on you, plays tricks on you, fiddles with the formula in sneaky ways. The harder you work to change the "x" and the "y" to produce the "z" you want, the more your body tries to cheat on the formula.

Second, Madison Avenue is conspiring against you. We are programmed to consume, because the dominant economic theory in America is that progressively greater consumption is beneficial. We are consciously and unconsciously lured by advertising to buy this or that new product, which we are to eat or drink.

And, since Madison Avenue has clothes and automobiles to sell, our smoldering desires and wants are scientifically presented as pleasure seeking, sensuous, all-embracing, and our right to have. The models are always beautiful, thin, and wrinkle-free. The image we are encouraged to become and the lifestyle we are encouraged to adapt are media-generated, artificial standards. But, we buy into them.

Third, official medicine puts the fear of death into you if you're either chubby or grossly fat. Yet, they've fallen short on effective systems prescribed from their offices, the logical source of low-cost solutions.

As we explore these components of being fat, let's look at why we become fat and how the medical profession views at persons.

### **How We Get Fat**

All food is potentially fattening. Any calories that aren't spent are stored. What goes in and doesn't come out can't simply disappear. The excess of energy intake over energy spent is stored as fat.

#### **We get bigger in either of two ways:**

First, through growth --- where bones and muscles thicken and lengthen with proportional increases in fat.

Second, through adding fat, known as adiposity, which, when it is a threat to health, is called obesity.

The scientific community investigating obesity also characterizes fatter than average people through supposedly scientific theories as having personality defects with attributes such as:

- Weakness of will.
  - Too stupid to count calories correctly.
  - Giving in to every temptation to eat.
  - Having appetite mechanisms that run wild.
  - Tending to gobble food.
- Having insufficient discipline to sit and eat at regular times and places.

Doctors who treat obesity assume that the problem is in the habits listed. They approach the problem by advising the fat person on ways to change these presumed habits.

The fat person becomes persuaded that these experts are correct in their labeling and through their comments about themselves they reinforce the stereotype of the public, the scientist, and the physician.

In fact the fat person is like the lean person. We are all too lazy to count calories, too busy to sit and eat, and most of us have wild appetites. The lean person becomes fat through the same thermodynamic law that each fat person became fat. It isn't necessary to be mentally unbalanced or to have a character problem to become fat.

All it takes is a few mouthfuls extra each day. Whenever food taken in is greater than energy spent, the excess becomes five to ten pounds of stored fat that has accumulated over whatever time the excess occurred.

The food excess only has to be about two percent, which is impossible for scientists to measure and for individuals to detect. People usually gain weight too slowly for others or themselves to see any change in eating habits or in exercise patterns until the excess poundage is obvious to everyone.

The fact is: The food we eat and the amount of exercise we get are the key factors in whether or not we get fat. Yet, the eating pattern need not seem unusual in the slightest way.

Nonetheless, fat people blame their eating and curse their metabolism and exude guilt over their failure to start an exercise program, and rightly so.

Here's the point:

*Something crucial is missing in our quest for slimness.*

It is this:

*Each fat person is an individual who doesn't know enough about herself or himself to be able to identify what it is in their eating patterns or life perceptions that helps make them fat. If the cause was precisely known they could work on their habits and avoid getting at or reverse the habit and get slim,. or at some point they accept themselves and get on with life.*

### **How Your Body Changes the Rules for Losing Weight**

If you check out the statistics, you'll find that 98% of people who lose weight, perhaps after an Oprah Winfrey-ish effort, regain it within two years. It's not because most of them go back to pigging out. It's because their bodies keep trying to push them back into a sort of pre-set shape. And the body does this by altering the way the  $x y = z$  formula works.

You may have experienced the frustration, as million's of other Americans have, of not being able to figure out why neither overeating nor insufficient physical activity alone can account for the fluctuations in your weight as it goes up and down in a mysterious way.

What happens is this. When you lose weight or gain it, the body slows down or speeds up the rate at which it burns food stuffs, in order to swing you back to the weight you were. Dr. Rudolph L. Leibel and his colleagues at Rockefeller University, reported on their research in this area in a recent issue of the New England Journal of Medicine.

About 60 percent of energy is spent to keep the body's processes working, 10 percent in digestion and using nutrients and about 30 percent in physical activity, explains the article. When a person gains weight or loses weight, the body makes changes in how much energy is needed to perform these functions.

So when a person has gained, say, 10 percent more than his usual weight, his body will increase the amount of energy it uses by 10 or 15 percent, with the apparent goal of returning, however slowly, to the initial weight. Unfortunately, it works the other way, too. With weight loss, the body will adjust the amount of energy it takes for maintenance and physical activity, even if they do not change, in efforts to regain the lost pounds.

Even when physical activity remains the same, total expenditures of energy are significantly lower in a person after he has lost 10 to 20 percent of his initial weight than originally, the researchers say.

"Physicians should be aware that for some obese patients the achievement of what is considered to be a more healthful body weight may be accompanied by metabolic alterations that make it difficult to maintain the lower weight," according to the researchers.

"The body has a complex, highly sophisticated system for regulating fat stores," says Dr. William Ira Bennett, commenting on the Rockefeller research in the same issue of the New England Journal of Medicine.

When stores of fat in the body deviate from a person's internal standard, the body puts compensatory measures into operation designed to return the body to its previous weight, Bennett explains.

There appears to be a "set point" mechanism for body fat located in the brain, Bennett says. The biology

of this control mechanism is only partly worked out. But it involves a network of neurons that maintain an internal image of the proper amount of fat in the body. It compares the actual fat stores with this image and takes steps to correct any differences.

The set-point mechanism can alter the efficiency of metabolic processes, Bennett explains, making them use more or less energy for the same biological activities, with the apparent goal of reducing or conserving stores of fat. "This is a slow process and under ordinary circumstances, a subtle one," he says.

No one is yet precisely sure what role a recently discovered gene plays in this process, or how many other genes may be involved or even how the body's set point is determined. No one knows how the set point can be re-set, or if it can, by factors like diet, exercise or age.

But if jeans size is at least partly a matter of genes, if there is evidence that a person's body can — and will — change its metabolism to make weight loss or gain difficult to maintain, now what? If  $x - y = z$  isn't a workable, permanent formula for the figure we really want, what then? Maybe we should accept the fact that most of us are stuck with body types and sizes that don't measure up to model standards.

### **How Nature Can Be Changed**

Ideally children run, jump, swim and play ball with day long energy and enthusiasm. For many children the ideal doesn't match the reality. According to recent medical reports our children are far more likely to choose television watching over playing ball.

This pattern is alarming because an inactive life easily becomes one of being overweight with high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease to follow.

The paradox is this: American popular culture emphasizes fitness. Why aren't our children more fit? [www.ChristianHealthForums.com](http://www.ChristianHealthForums.com)

The answer isn't simple. It begins with the fact that several times every day we and our children choose foods and drinks that are healthful or not healthful. Our behaviors toward foods and drinks make up a major part of our lives. If we aren't eating and drinking, we're thinking or talking about eating and drinking. Some of us get fat, others not. Let's discount the idea of inheriting a tendency toward fatness through family lines. If so, we should do everything possible to avoid fatness. Recent research shows us how to win against nature by modifying children's' diets and increasing their levels of physical activity.

For three years researchers at the University of Tennessee, monitored the food intake and physical activity of 146 children aged 3 to 5 years of whom 40% were obese. They found that healthy diets low in fat and participation in sports decreased both weight gain and obesity. Nature can be modified.

### **The Pressures to Get Slim**

The media create a lifestyle image that the producers of goods and services want to sell. It is unrealistic. It is artificial. Only a weary few achieve it.

When we pursue the Madison Avenue lifestyle — and to some extent we all do — we either find it unattainable, or, if obtained, discover it cannot be maintained; or, finally, it isn't worth the effort. The result of trying to achieve the beautiful, slim life and failing produces a level of painful dissatisfaction that is brought to mind daily as we are exposed to our consumerism society and to our mirrors.

In America a lot of unhappiness is caused in plump, big-boned, and short people by our cultural tendencies. Female hormones dispose to plump hips and breasts, sites traditionally regarded as good-looking in a woman. If, however, plumpness is perceived as being

unattractive, then a normal female figure is perceived as something to avoid. Hence, even quite lean women feel fat and struggle with their eating habits.

With success comes more money, less time and fewer reasons to move around at work. Work, then, becomes being tied to the desk. Running around becomes less productive. Opportunities for feasting on the job abound and weight mounts. As the energy balance shifts and the eating habits of youth and the uncontrolled appetite flourish, middle-age spread and child-birth are added, making many feel broader.

Slimness is lost. With it goes the freedom of youth, because slimness and the freedom of youth are linked by our culture.

### **Looking Young**

For decades the entertainment, clothing and food and soft-drink industries have targeted young men and women. Fashion models need to be super-slim to sell expensive clothes because fine clothes hang straight better than they wrap around lumps and bumps.

Food and drink companies fend off your fears of getting fat by designing products without calories or with fewer calories. Now you are being persuaded to eat on the run through products marketed with brand names, catchy phrases, and visual images that make the product a plausible part of a lean and vigorous lifestyle.

There is, therefore, an economically powerful and socially pervasive cult that has created an ideal of slimness which is not attainable by most adults. But, because you are persuaded by the ads, they help you make your choices of what to eat, when, and how much.

Another persuasive force after your money is the dietary industry that pushes scrawniness through myths, rituals, and seductive moods and values.

To top it all, official medicine puts the fear of death into you if you're either chubby or grossly fat.

### **The Psychology of Obesity**

Most fat persons are unsuccessful dieters. The psychological focus should therefore center on the process of dieting. The key job is to clear up the question of why fat people stay fat even though they face substantial health problems. This draws attention to the mind, in relation to the body and the culture.

Psychologically you may want to lose weight and this fact should influence your choice of foods. What's missing is this. Scientists have not found a way to motivate you to move to do what you say you want to do. And, they aren't consistent in their advice about which food choices are wisest, with one exception—cutting most of the fat from your diet.

As a result you have many roads to choose from. Most dieting is a series of unsuccessful trips down one road after another upon the recommendation of a psychological scientist, a practitioner, an educator, a nutritionist, a diet-product developer, an author, and so on.

The researchers, psychologists, and practitioners have neglected these questions, leaving us floundering without professional advice or effective public action for a tremendous public health problem. As well, fat persons shoulder heavy burdens when they strive for a fashionable shape, to say nothing of the expense and suffering of obesity-related chronic disease.

The neglected fact of physics is this: *To gain 10 lbs. in a year you must eat only 50 calories more a day than needed or ride an elevator twice more daily instead of walking the stairs or park the car as close to the entrance as possible. You get the point.*

The reasoning process of dieting has been largely ignored. Instead, research psychiatrists have looked for

unstable personalities or symptoms of emotional disorder such as depression. Medical researchers on obesity gave up on psychology when they could find:

- No obese personality.
- No more compulsive or melancholy behavior in fat people than in those with healthy appetites who failed to restrain themselves.

### **The 9 Top Weight-loss Secrets of Successful Dieters**

It makes sense to focus on what works. Prevention magazine surveyed its readers and compiled a large number of responses into 9 rules:

- Rule #1.** You must exercise - 97%.
- Rule #2.** You must cut the fat from your diet - 96%.
- Rule #3.** You must learn to read labels to make wiser choices - 92%.
- Rule #4.** You must say no to sweets - 91%.
- Rule #5.** You must cut calories in general - 89%.
- Rule #6.** You must boost your self-esteem - 84%.
- Rule #7.** You must choose high fiber foods - 83%.
- Rule #8.** You must leave off red meat, choosing vegetables - 80%.
- Rule #9.** You must use meal planning to stick to your goal - 79%.

### **The Facts About Fats**

At different times over the past 25 years, fat-watchers have been told to:

- Crank up the polyunsaturates.
- Keep the polys steady but increase the monos.
- And, eat as much fat as you like, as long as it's olive oil.

A healthy diet needn't be so confusing. Most of us have three main dietary problems:

- We eat too much.
- We eat too much fat.
- We eat too much saturated fat, in particular.

The challenge is to cut down and at the same time to create or obtain dishes that are enjoyable.

### **Fat and Health**

Cutting down on fat alone is a one-sided approach to weight loss. The reason: there are so many low-fat but high calorie food products available, like Sunshine Biscuits "reduced fat" Vienna Fingers, with 40% less fat than the original But, just four of these still add up to 260 calories. So, the best approach: count calories as well as fat.

The government now recommends that Americans get no more than 30% of their daily calories from fat, with no more than one-third of that fat being saturated. Many nutrition experts, however, advise 20-25% total fat with 7% being saturated.

At 22% fat, eating a 2000 calorie diet, you can have 44 grams of fat which is 396 calories (9 x 44). Protein and carbohydrates carry 4 calories per gram while fat contains 9 per gram.

Unfortunately, exceeding the fat limit is as easy as pie. A bologna and cheese sandwich with mayonnaise has about 39 grams of fat. A half cup of ice cream can pack up to 18 grams of fat, half of it saturated. And a slice of apple pie has 19 grams, almost all in the crust. Most Americans have no idea how much of their diet consists of fat, but here are some ways to cut the intake down.

### **Avoiding Package Fats**

The new, required nutrition labels, have made it easier to avoid fats in processed foods. You can use the labels to either design a low-fat diet or use them as rough guides. Here are precise word meanings for several food labels:

- Low fat - no more than three grams of fat per serving.

- Low saturated fat - no more than one gram of fat per serving.
- Fat free or saturated fat free - less than half a gram of fat or saturated fat per serving.
- Reduced fat - 25% less fat than usually found in that food.
- Light fat - 50% less fat than usually found in that food.

Elsewhere in the store, heed these labels:

- Thin or Smart - these suggest something good for you but can mean just about anything.
- Nutrition labels aren't required on fresh products, including meat. As a general guide, the lowest fat and fewest calories are found in skinless chicken breasts, skinless turkey breasts, and pork tenderloin.
- Low fat on a milk carton is misleading. It pertains to 2% milk which contains more than 4.5 grams of fat per serving.

### Types of Fat

All fats are strings of carbon atoms dotted with hydrogen atoms. The hydrogen makes the difference. Saturated fats such as lard, butter, and tropical oils are thoroughly saturated with as many hydrogen atoms as the carbon can chemically carry. "Unsaturated" fats, like those from vegetable oils, leave unfilled spaces on the carbon atoms.

Saturated fats are hard at room temperature and hard on the heart. Unsaturated fats tend to remain liquid at room temperatures and are less harmful to your health. Now, most nutrition scientists believe that we should avoid tropical vegetable oils — palm and coconut, and cottonseed oil. Otherwise, make your choice based on taste:

- Sesame for stir-fries.

Extra virgin olive oil for pasta.

- Canola or safflower for bland taste.
- Walnut oil for nutty-tasting salad dressing.

Distinctive tasting oils let you use very little and still get the flavor.

### Your Food Budget

You can estimate how many calories you can eat daily without gaining or losing weight this way: multiply your weight in pounds,

- by 11 if you're a woman.
- by 12 if you're a man.

This gives you your basal metabolic requirement — the energy you need at rest.

Then, select your highest level of regular exercise from the following four phases:

<b>Exercise Level</b>	<b>Activity Factor</b>
• Sedentary	1.40
• Light (housekeeping, cooking, short walks)	1.60
• Moderate (brisk swimming or walking)	1.70
• Strenuous (heart pounding exercise)	1.85

Now select the corresponding activity factor and multiply with your basal metabolic requirement to get your daily calorie budget.

### How to Track the Fat in Your Diet

Just because health guidelines recommend limiting your fat intake to under 30% of your calories doesn't mean that every food must meet that figure. Because many foods you eat — fruits, vegetables, skim milk — have little to no fat, other foods can hit above the 30% mark and still fit a healthy balance.

So, no need for fancy calculations, just count the grams of fat. It's far easier and more meaningful.

Better yet, if you know the number of calories you eat — you only need to calculate for one figure — the maximum fat grams per day, as suggested below, keeping in mind that you can aim lower safely.

<b>Average Daily Calories</b>	<b>Maximum Daily Fat Grams</b>
1,200	40
1,500	50
1,800	60
2,000	67
2,400	80

### **Smart Eating Out**

Thanks to the well-publicized efforts of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, we have learned that Chinese, Mexican, and Italian restaurants are waiting to snare us with their fat-laden meals. Still, you can order a low fat meal if you do the following:

- Stick with items that are broiled, grilled, roasted, baked, steamed, or poached.
- Keep your distance from fried, deep-fried, and "crispy" dishes.
- Ask for vegetables seasoned with herbs instead of butter.
- Ask for pancakes with fruit or yogurt topping.
- Ask for a baked potato instead of fries.

### **Special Guides to Specific Type Restaurants**

#### **Fast Food**

Grilled chicken sandwiches, roast beef sandwiches, and salads with low-fat dressings are the best choices nutritionally.

High-fat favorites get slimmer when you hold the mayonnaise-based dressings, skip the cheese, skin the chicken and go easy on the dipping sauce.

#### **Chinese**

Eat as the Chinese do, small amounts of meat, poultry, and vegetables atop a mound of steamed (not fried) rice. Egg-drop soup, wonton soup, and steamed dumplings make good beginnings. Avoid egg rolls, fried noodles, and

spare ribs. Select steamed foods with a variety of sauces. If ordering stir-fry, ask that less oil than usual be used.

#### **Mexican**

Request baked or steamed corn tortillas instead of the usual tortilla chips. Similarly, look for baked tortillas rather than fried ones as a basis of tamales, tostadas, and enchiladas. Use salsa instead of sour cream, guacamole, or cheese. Chicken fajitas are a good choice; ask that they be cooked in little or no oil.

#### **Italian**

Chose tomato-based or clam sauces for pasta instead of a cream sauce like Alfredo. Order chicken, meat, or seafood, broiled or grilled, instead of breaded and fried.

### **A Focus Question — Do You Lead an Unexamined Life?**

Madison Avenue works hard to define for you who you are and what you are in terms of a beautiful slim person.

Using weight reduction techniques purely to obtain a slim look can become an emotional and physical trap, leading to disordered eating and extremes of exercise.

Clearly, something is missing. Could it be that obesity is a moral issue? If so, instead of leaving the dilemma to doctors, psychologists, and other ill-equipped health service practitioners, let's see how self-examination might help.

Plato said, "the life which is unexamined is not worth living."

The author of Lamentations said, "let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord," Lamentations 3:40.

### **Your Circumstance Today — The Seed to Begin Again**

Nearly every success story about weight loss begins while the person lays flat on his or her mental, physical



and spiritual back.

In this position you are usually sufficiently disgusted to reach deep down inside and pull out talents, abilities, desires, creative instincts and determinations — the basic essentials required of anyone wishing for things to get better.

It is in the face of adversity that things begin to change, and things always change as a result of the personal awakening that takes place. They are linked together as closely as two peas in a pod.

### **Things Never Change by Themselves**

Things change when a human with sufficient disgust, desire and determination in his or her life finally bites the bullet, steps up to the throne of grace and tells God, "Lord, I have had it with defeat and humiliation, and I refuse to tolerate it any longer."

That is when you and your circumstances call a hasty conference with the Lord and you wearily agree, "Lord, I'm ready to step aside, because I am unable to change in my own power."

Be warned, most people, unfortunately, don't change. They wait for their circumstances to change. They blame others or blame situations for their meager progress. They give in to despair as though it were God's design for his creation to wallow in pools of self-pity and defeat.

But, life will continue. You will wake up tomorrow just as you did today. Your day will unfold with its familiar regularity, unless you are committed to change. Your problem is a temporary situation. Convince yourself of this and you will rebound from your circumstance just as surely as you gravitated into it.

Every time you are tempted to think you are carrying as much negativity and failure as your life can tolerate, look straight into heaven and say, "With your help, Lord,

this too shall pass."

Just when you're mentally, spiritually, and physically exhausted, the power of the spirit will begin a slight movement deep inside and you will recognize it as the seed of a new beginning. Soon you will have pulled yourself to your feet.

Then, as change occurs, you will begin to leave an indelible mark upon your circle of influence. They will talk about you in a new way. You will be noticed and written about. Soon they will judge you as being "lucky", having forgotten the agony and loneliness you experienced before you began your march arm in arm with God.

So, foolish as it may sound, thank God for your present limitations, for you occupy a status from which nearly all success stories originate. Remember, you are free to go where you want to go. You are free to do what you want to do. You are free to create anything you want to create and to become what you want to become . . . right from where you are.

So, be grateful for your adversity.

But, for your own better future, strive to understand your deep trouble. Then, make it work for you, not against you. Society will convince you to conform to their wishes and then willingly stand aside and let you die of feeling sorry for yourself, if that's what you want.

Society will also stand aside and applaud you when you firmly decide that your present situation is only temporary and that you are ready to get up and move to make your mark.

The world doesn't have the time or patience to care which choice you make. So for yourself at least, give a run at an exceptional adventure, at a remarkable journey, setting your eyes firmly on achievement, not merely existence and self-pity.

After all, you only have one life. Let's do something remarkable with it.

### **Seven Changes You Can Make Today**

Just as a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, overhauling your diet begins with a single meal. Small adjustments can pay big dividends. Start today by making the following 7 changes:

1. Maintain a healthy weight. Eat what you eat now - simply reduce all portion sizes by 10% to 25%.
2. Increase calcium intake. Drink a tall glass of skim milk with every meal, and you'll get all the calcium you need.
3. Cut cholesterol. Eat vegetarian dinners on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
4. Cut fat. Limit butter use to only one meal a day. Switch to nonfat dairy products.
5. Eat more fruits and vegetables. Start every meal or snack with a piece of fruit or a serving of fresh vegetables. Aim for at least five a day.
6. Increase fiber intake. Have a high-fiber cereal, such as raisin bran, every weekday morning. Switch exclusively to whole-wheat bread.
7. Up your intake of antioxidants. Drink citrus juice at breakfast, eat a raw carrot at lunch, and prepare a leafy green vegetable for dinner every day.

### **Eight Steps to Success Tomorrow and Beyond**

You will have to find your own best way to change your eating habits. The following steps are proven ways to a framework for change.

**Step #1.** Write down everything you eat.

The connection between your eating pattern for a day and a log to record your choices is a powerful tool. It creates awareness. And awareness prevents unconscious eating. Note especially the connections between eating and emotions. Do you always reach for something to eat after a quarrel with your mother?

**Step #2.** Evaluate what you need to change.

Look at quantity - the size of portions. Do they need to be smaller?

Look at fat content. Does it need to be less?

Is your intake of fruit and vegetables adequate? Are you getting 1,000 to 1,500 mg of calcium daily?

Figure out exactly what you need to do and then design a specific eating plan.

**Step #3.** Individualized your eating plan.

Only you can set your ground rules because your personality, lifestyle, and food preferences are only yours.

**Step #4.** Seek help if you need it.

If you have trouble changing on your own or don't know which direction to take, a registered dietician can help you devise an eating plan and support your efforts.

**Step #5.** Enlist the support of your family

Eating is a social activity. Get everybody involved for their own sakes as well as yours. Avoid three different kinds of milk in the refrigerator.

**Step #6.** Set concrete goals and tackle them one at a time.

Consider integrating your exercise goals with the changes in your eating patterns. Aim to eat sensible amounts. Don't diet by depriving yourself. Make a list of specific strategies:

"I'll eat three vegetables a day."

"I'll replace white bread with whole-wheat bread" and so on.

Then, when you're solid on one change, add another.

**Step #7.** Find substitutes for favorite foods.

You can eat low-fat yogurt instead of ice cream and let low-fat cheese substitute for full fat cheese.

**Step #8.** Accept that you must change your eating

patterns permanently.

Most diets are geared toward temporary change. Success comes when you learn to make the right choices — not just to fit into that little black dress for the reunion — but forever.