



Q & A with Dr. Stacey Rosenfeld, Author

What is the most important message you want people to take away from the book?

“While most women do not have a clinical eating disorder, the majority of women have some sort of unhealthy relationship with food or their bodies, which I believe interferes with their quality of life. We have a culture that supports and encourages this problem, and I think this needs to change.”

What are the most frequent and common ways women – who do not think they have a problem -- are practicing disordered eating today?

“Juicing, cleansing, fasting, pathological dieting, cutting out food groups – are all efforts to restrict intake, which ultimately is not healthy. Another way is compensation for overeating like long workouts or skipping meals after going overboard. Any time we are looking at compensating or punishing ourselves for what we have eaten, that is problematic. Getting on the scale multiple times a day, repeatedly checking body parts in the mirror or by looking or touching them - these are all disordered behaviors.”

If you think about calories or get frustrated when your pants do not fit, does that mean you have some sort of eating disorder?

“No. However if this happens consistently, it could be a sign of disordered eating or a body image problem. Do these thoughts significantly affect mood? Are the thoughts and feelings happening much of the time? Do they impact other areas of life? We are talking a matter of frequency and severity that shift ordinary thoughts and behaviors from normal, to disordered, to -- with the right set of genetic/constitutional factors -- eating disordered.”

When is it considered a serious disorder?

“Any time there is a significant drop in weight, if there is bingeing and/or purging, compulsively exercising, significant restriction of food no matter what one weighs -- these are all serious concerns. When one’s eating or body image issues significantly impact other areas of life - relationships, work/school – that is a big concern.”

Are bulimia and anorexia still the most serious disorders?

“They are the most dangerous in terms of medical complications, though other presentations have been shown to have significant mortality rates. Yes, eating disorders have been on the rise for years. While there are multiple components that contribute to the development of an eating disorder, I

think the shift in frequency is a cultural phenomenon - we have such a strong thin ideal now, we are constantly bombarded by media that promotes thinness at all costs, and we have heard so much about the obesity crisis - all have taken their toll.”

If we lose the diet, won't we gain weight? How is this healthy?!

“Research shows that dieting predicts weight gain over time. And science does not support the notion that overweight means unhealthy. Eating a nutritious/balanced diet and regularly exercising are more important for health than weight.”

What do you tell people who just cannot get motivated to exercise – no matter how many different routines and activities they've tried?

“Get creative! It really does not have to be something we typically conceptualize as exercise - it just matters that you're moving. Walk the dog. Ride bikes with your kids. Go dancing. Just move and have fun.”

What advice do you give to someone who just cannot stop hating their thighs or their arms?

“I would take a step back and ask what this thought pattern does for them. I would work with them on labeling the thought when it happens, like saying, 'I'm body bashing now.' We automatically have some distance from the thought, which is the first step in pulling away from it. Ask yourself if you really want to be spending your time engaged in these thoughts. Consciously redirect your thinking each time this happens. Remember that at the end of your life, you're likely not going to look back and think, 'I'm so glad I spent such a large percentage of my time hating my thighs.'”

What is intuitive eating and how important is it? Does it work?

“IE involves returning to our biological wisdom around food - eating when we are hungry and stopping when we are full; eating a variety of foods that nourish and satisfy; paying attention to cravings and the emotional and physical impact that food has on us. It should be the goal for everyone because it focuses on biology and hunger rather than emotional eating.”

What are your own favorite foods and how do you stay healthy?

“My favorite foods are pizza, Mexican foods and any creative uses of vegetables in cooking. I stay healthy by doing different activities -- cross-train -- throughout the week, which keeps me motivated. I love indoor cycling. I also loved getting trained in Zumba - it was such a body-positive experience. I run, lift weights, and do yoga. I always have music on, and I love to be outside!”

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