

the  **weight** foundation

breaking the dieting obsession...

Today is about...

“Hardcore Dieting – what is it with food that's eating people up?”

Where's the research been going?

Dieting becoming pervasive and permanent lifestyle, overweight becoming pervasive and permanent lifestyle.

-what's going on?

-Where's the tipping point for change to be found?

There's a lot more to it
than a yo-yo!

Up down, up down...

It's a treadmill the silly people
should step off!

PATHOLOGISATION RUNNING WILD

Eating Disorders

EDNOS

Dieting

We make of things what we will – Somatisation

- “I let my anxieties get mixed up with my eating and I'm too easily swayed by what I hear and read every day about dieting and body image”
- “I am overweight and I think persistent dieting may be involved.”
- “I am overweight”
- “I suffer from obesity”
- “I have an eating disorder”

“I'm all over the place with my eating and weight” - Swinger

- Analogous to Yo-Yo pattern but acknowledging that weight regain is determined by embodied Hardcore Dieting's resolution or resumption – and is not automatic.

“It knocks the life right out of me” - Flatliner

- Constant battle between “right” and “wrong” foods and daily swings between indulgence and self-deprivation - but often without major weight swings.

“I'm serving a life
sentence
to food” - Lifer

- The thought of relaxing a severe and rigid regime for even a day or two causes stress and even panic.

“Oi! Who are you making fat?”

- Battle of the sexes - but we're both getting heavier
- Not to deny ongoing assault of **gendered power**: “Becoming fat is, thus, a woman's response to the first step in the process of fulfilling a prescribed social role which requires her to shape herself to an externally imposed image in order to catch a man.”
- “.....fat is a symbolic rejection of the limitations of women's roles, an adaptation that many women use in the burdensome attempt to pursue their individual lives within the proscriptions of their social function.”

The phantasmagoria moves on to culture

- “Many young men can't get aroused by breasts that don't conform to Hollywood standards of size and firmness.”
- **And so:** “To begin to see differently requires, in the nineties even more than in the sixties, that people come together and explore what the culture continually presents to them as their individual choices (or – as in the case of anorexia and bulimia – their “pathology”) as instead culturally situated and culturally shared. Such acknowledgement, to my mind, must remain central to a feminist politics of the body.”

Left, Right! It's them! - No it's not, it's you!

The Blame Game:

- Left – Big Food, all the better if it's U.S. Big Food
- Right – fat people are weak (and they are not like us)

Danger, danger, deviants!

- Entrapped, convicted and then made recidivists by the all-embracing Fatness Culture.

Tanks on the lawn or soapbox in the street?

- Can we achieve anything in advance of the perfect theory or the final revolution?
- A balancing act between nowhere useful and nowhere new.
- How many researchers does it take to change a lightbulb?
- How many activists does it take to change a lightbulb?
- How many community psychologists does it take to change a lightbulb?

Reducing your Fatness Footprint

- Your Personal Guide to Understanding & Escaping the Cultural Environment of Food, Eating & Weight Worries
- www.weightfoundation.com

My Fatness Culture Finder (1)

Fatness Culture Vulture?:

- **“I largely ignore and rarely take any interest in all the stuff in papers, magazines and books and on TV about weight and dieting and body image.”**
- *So, what is your interest level in all the coverage of Fatness issues? Score 0 if you are barely aware of all this fuss, through to a maximum 10 if you read and watch tons of it and feel a strong need to keep up with all the latest eating and diet stuff.*
- (Media credence/immunity)

My Fatness Culture Finder (2)

Calorie Counter?:

- **“I instinctively browse and select foods on taste and balanced nutrition, not by calorie content.”**
- *What is running your own food menu? If you tend to be a really chilled out eater following natural and healthy hunger rhythms score from 0 upwards depending on how often Fatness matters disrupt your calm. If you obsessively calorie count and often let these numbers totally dominate your eating, score yourself up to 10 depending on how much of your time is spent as a prisoner to calorie content.*

My Fatness Culture Finder (3)

ON & OFF ALL DAY?:

- **“I honestly couldn’t tell you to within a few pounds what I weigh as I rarely go near the scales.”**
- *If you can’t remember where your scales are, or you don’t even have any, consider a 0. If you are up and down on your scales like a champion trampolinist all day just about every day, then it’s a 10!*
- (Tyranny of the scales/stereotypes)

The Hardcore Dieting Index

- Dieting is more of the problem process than a potential solution.
- - embedded, embodied, entrenched.

Who's feeding me a line?

- **Ask yourself: If I have Fatness issues, am I trying to *manage* them, or *overcome* them?**
- **Ask yourself: in my life do I have a healthy balance between energy consumption and energy expenditure?**
- **Ask yourself: it's an old question but it's still a very good question – do you eat to live, or live to eat?**
- **Ask yourself: what commercial**

Who's feeding me a line? (2)

- **Ask yourself: how do you feel about bodily fat on others when you see it? How do you feel about bodily fat and yourself? Is there any intensity to your emotions? If so, why do you feel like this?**
- **Ask yourself: if you have been on several diets in your life so far, what have been your honest expectations during your latest experiences?**

• **Ask yourself: are you really a small person?**

Who's feeding me a line? (3)

- **Ask yourself: do I subscribe to the simple, time-honoured meal schedule? If not, what is it that makes *me so special*?**
- **Ask yourself: if I was to let go of my own Fatness Culture right now, what could I possibly lose except weight from my mind and weight from my middle?**
- **AND NOW ASK YOURSELF A FINAL EXTRA QUESTION: with my eyes wide open to it all now, am I staying within**

A shared journey, not roadkill to my ambitions

- Whose knowledge?
- The weakness and risks of “shadow activism”.

Structure/agency – where do you stand?

- “We can choose to make ourselves overweight and to make ourselves miserable, or we can choose to be lighter in our minds and lighter of our bodies. Each outcome takes much the same effort.”