Making Peace
With Our Bodies & Our Food

Jon Robison, PhD, MS, MA
“At first, I thought Dr. Robison was misinformed or possibly a crank and I was wondering why NWI would give him a forum. Then, I began to understand that I was the person who was misinformed.”
THE “WAR ON OBESITY”

Historical Context
“Obesity has replaced vitamin deficiency diseases as the #1 nutrition problem in the United States today”
“Overweight: America’s #1 Health Problem”
“Normal Americans are now so heavy that their weight is inducing excessive mortality”
“For the rest of the decade, these dire warnings continued unabated. Scientists were unequivocal. Overweight shortened life. Dieting and weight reduction lengthened it.” ‘Pleasently plump’ was not just unfashionable, it was deadly.”
“When you look at obesity, what I call the terror within, a threat that is every bit as real to America as weapons of mass destruction....”

U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Richard Carmona
“The steady rise in life expectancy during the past two centuries may soon come to an end...obesity may shave up to 5 years off the average life spans in the coming years.”

Olshansky et. Al, NEJM, 2005, 352:1138-1145
The Reality...

“These are just back-of-the-envelope, plausible scenarios. We never meant for them to be portrayed as precise.”

Obesity: An Overblown Epidemic, Scientific American, June, 2005
The Obsession

- Unique Confluence of Social, Economic & Political Factors
- Diet-Pharmaceutical-Industrial Complex
- Fashion, Cosmetic, Fitness, Media
- Medical Establishment / Government
Public Health Calamity?

- Overweight leads to premature death
- Overweight increases risk for disease
- Weight loss improves health / longevity
Body Mass Index

- "Normal" Weight = 18.5 – 24.9
- "Overweight" = 25 – 29.9
- "Obese" = 30 or greater

CDC - Weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared
All adults with a BMI of 25 or higher are considered “at risk”

64% of adult population

100 million Americans
Body Mass Index

BMI Treatment Guidelines

• Below 25 -
• 25 - 29.9 - diet, exercise, behavior modification
• ≥ 30 - above plus drugs
• ≥ 40 - above plus surgery
Body Mass Index

- Not a good predictor of fitness
- Not a good predictor of blood pressure
- Not a good predictor of mortality
- Not a good predictor of morbidity
Body Mass Index

- Does not account for gender
- Does not account for age
- Does not account for ethnicity
- Does not account for muscle mass
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>BMI</th>
<th>WEIGHT STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George W. Bush</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>Overweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Smith</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Overweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yao Ming</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>Overweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Clooney</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Overweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnny Depp</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>Overweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt LeBlanc</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Obese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Cruise</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Obese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaquille O’Neil</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>Obese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnold Schwarzenegger</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Obese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Association of bodyweight with total mortality and with cardiovascular events in coronary artery disease: a systematic review:

BMI was found to be a poor predictor of cardiovascular disease or total mortality

“BMI can definitely be left aside as a clinical and epidemiological measure of cardiovascular risk for both primary and secondary prevention”
“Although BMI is a generally convenient measure, it lacks a theoretical foundation and may be compromised by ethnic, cultural or lifestyle differences”

QJM, Association of Physicians in Great Britain, 2000, Sep;93(9):589-96
Body Mass Index

Do You Believe in Fairies, Unicorns or The BMI?

Stanford University, Mathematician
Dr. Keith Devlin
The “Math Guy” on NPR
“Since the entire sorry saga of the BMI was started by a mathematician - one of us - I think the onus is on us, as the world’s experts on the formulation and application of mathematical formulas, to start to eradicate this nonsense and demand the responsible use of our product.”
“Given the existing limitations of BMI to diagnose obesity in clinical practice, it is unclear that recognizing obesity as a disease, ...will result in improved health outcomes. The disease label is likely to improve health outcomes for some individuals, but may worsen outcomes for others.”

AMA - The Council on Science and Public Health, June 2013
American Medical Association

- Encourage doctors to have conversations with patients at risk of obesity
- Provide impetus for health insurers to cover both those conversations and subsequent weight-loss interventions
Public Health Calamity?

The Premise

- Overweight leads to premature death
- Overweight increases risk for disease
- Weight loss improves health / longevity
Obesity Kills?

“Obesity is the second leading cause of preventable death in the United States, exceeded only by cigarette smoking … and it contributes to 300,000 deaths annually in the United States.”

Manson, NEJM 1996;335:659
“Actual Causes of Death in The United States”

McGinnis, JAMA 1993;270(18):2208
### Causes of Death In The U.S. - 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet/Activity Patterns</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbial Agents</td>
<td>90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toxic Agents</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearms</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Behavior</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicles</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

McGinnis, JAMA 1993;270(18):2208
“For overweight and obesity combined, our estimate was 25,814 excess deaths”

Flegal et al, JAMA 2005;293(15):1861-1867
“When socioeconomic and other risk factors are controlled for, obesity is not a significant risk factor for mortality; and...for those 55 or older, both overweight and obesity confer a significant decreased risk of mortality.”

Tuesday, June 16, 1998: Overweight = BMI > 27.3 for women, > 27.8 for men

Wednesday, June 17, 1998: Overweight = BMI > 25

RESULT: 30 million people woke up overweight on Wednesday!
Obesity Epidemic ??

BMI Changes – Most Recent Data - 2014

• Overall, there have been no significant changes in obesity prevalence in youth or adults between 2003-2004 and 2011-2012

• There was a significant decrease in obesity among 2-to 5-year-old children

JAMA; February 26, 2014, Vol 311, No. 8
Public Health Calamity?

The Premise

• Overweight leads to premature death

• Overweight increases risk for disease

• Weight loss improves health / longevity
Weight & Disease

- Weight is associated with increased disease risk
- Confounding factors reduce or eliminate the association
- Fitness, activity, SES, weight cycling, nutrient intake, etc.
Weight Loss & Diabetes?

- Improvements are usually seen in the first few days before much weight is lost.
- Improvements can deteriorate even if weight loss is maintained.
- Weight loss is rarely maintained.
Numerous studies have shown that these so-called ‘weight related’ health problems can be treated effectively with lifestyle interventions without significant weight loss and in individuals who remain markedly ‘obese’ by traditional medical standards.
Public Health Calamity?

The Premise

• Overweight leads to premature death
• Overweight increases risk for disease
• Weight loss improves health / longevity
“...The ultimate goal of diets is to improve people’s long-term health, rather than to reduce their weight. Our review of randomized controlled trials of the effects of dieting on health finds very little evidence of success in achieving this goal.”

“If diets do not lead to long-term weight loss or long-term health benefits, it is difficult to justify encouraging individuals to endure them.”

Weight Loss & Health

- Exaggerated effects of weight on health
- NO evidence of wt. loss sustainability
- FIRST, DO NO HARM!
“Over the last hundred years medicine has promoted a wide variety of potentially dangerous and sometimes lethal diets, drugs, and surgeries to help people reduce their weight “in the name of health.”
The use of corsets was advocated by the health establishment though it often resulted in constricted lungs, squeezed livers and bladders and dislocated stomachs.
“In The Name Of Health”

*The Lady’s Friend* - October 1867 (volume IV, # 10), "Dress Versus Health"

“Every respiration is imperfect, and the most important vital organs are impeded in the performance of their sacred functions.”
Hollywood’s Dangerous Slimming Trick

The powerful belt forces the waist to just 23 inches,

The same size as a soccer ball, & the waist size of the average 7-year-old

In Touch, 11/19/07
In The Name of Health

- 1890 - Corset
- 1893 - Thyroid Extract
- 1920 - Laxatives
- 1933 - Dinitrophenol
- 1937 - Amphetamine
- 1940 - Atropine
- 1940 - Digitalis

Ernsberger & Haskew, Rethinking Obesity, 1987
In The Name of Health

- 1957 - HCG
- 1964 - Total Fasting
- 1969 - Intestinal Bypass
- 1974 - Jaw Wiring
- 1977 - Gastric Bypass
- 1985 - Gastric Balloon
- 1990’s - Fen-Phen, Redux, Meridia, Xenical
The KEN Diet

Ketogenic Enteral Nutrition Diet

Most extreme diet ever?

Imagine being fed on a drip for 10 days solely to lose weight – now even a leading NHS specialist is recommending it!
Aspiration Therapy
Cotton Ball Diet

2013
Slim Chance Award
The Legacy of Failure

Consequences of “The War”

- Eating disorders
- Disordered eating
- Body hatred
- Exercise addiction
- Exercise resistance

- Weight cycling
- Smoking
- Discrimination
- Shame & isolation
- Wasted resources

SALVEXO PARTNERS
Building Tomorrow’s Workplace
Wasted Resources

40 Billion Dollars

Could build 2.5 Habitat for Humanity homes for each of the 2.5 million homeless people in the U.S.
Wasted Resources

2011 Update

- 60.9 Billion Dollars!
- 75 million dieters (2010)
- Typical dieter - 4 times per year
### Shifting The Paradigm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight-Centered</th>
<th>Health-Centered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everybody needs to be thin for good health &amp; happiness</td>
<td>Thinness is not intrinsically healthy &amp; beautiful, nor is fatness intrinsically unhealthy &amp; unappealing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Shifting The Paradigm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight-Centered</th>
<th>Health-Centered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People have different body shapes &amp; sizes because they lack will power, eat too much &amp; move too little</td>
<td>People naturally have different body shapes &amp; sizes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SALVEO PARTNERS**

Building Tomorrow’s Workplace
### Weight-Centered

Everyone can be happy, healthy and thin by dieting

### Health-Centered

Dieting usually leads to weight gain, decreased self-esteem and increased risk for disordered eating
Shifting The Paradigm

Weight-Centered

- GOAL: Weight loss

Health-Centered

- GOAL: Improved health

WHY NOT?
Shifting The Paradigm

• The ill effects of weight on health have been exaggerated

• The relationship of weight loss to health is questionable

• Weight loss is not a sustainable outcome for the vast majority of people
• Health can be improved without weight loss

• There is growing evidence that promoting weight loss violates the principle of “first, do no harm.”

• The weight loss industry is really a weight-cycling industry

“Healthy Weight”

**Eating:** non-restrictive, internally directed (intuitive, mindful, normal)

**Movement:** reasonable, enjoyable, sustainable
“Healthy Weight”

• Not all people are currently at their most “healthy weight”

• Moving towards intuitive eating & physical activity will produce a “healthy weight”

• Focusing on weight loss leads to weight cycling and increased weight
• Self-Acceptance - feeling good about self
We wear Foster Grants to avoid eye contact with the lady folding the incredibly huge panties.
Because Your Employees Need Help With Leading Healthier Lifestyles...

WELCOA’s New 16 paged Lifestyle Management Guides will help your employees get started...

To learn more about how to provide your employees with this important resource, please visit www.welcoa.org/store.
“Among all adults in the study, weight discrimination was more prevalent than discrimination due to ethnicity, sexual orientation and physical disability.”

“Among women, weight discrimination was even more common than racial discrimination.”

Rudd Center for Food Policy, Yale. Puhl, perceptions of weight discrimination, IJO 2008
• Self-Acceptance - feeling good about self

• Movement – being comfortably active
“The often-cited ‘conclusive evidence’ that obesity decreases longevity comes from epidemiologic studies of BMI and mortality without adjustment for fitness.”

“Obese men and women who are fit are at no higher risk for CVD and all-cause mortality then their normal weight and fit counterparts.”

McAuley, Blair, Obesity Paradoxes, J of Sports Sciences 2011;29(8):773-782
Health at Every Size

• Self-Acceptance - feeling good about self
• Movement – being comfortably active
• Intuitive Eating - natural, relaxed eating
Intuitive Eating (normal)

Based on Internal Cues

- Hunger
- Appetite
- Satiety

Fuel & Nutrients
Pleasure
Connection
Fulfillment
Nutritional Information:

Don't even ask. This is the best ice cream made in Wisconsin, and it tastes so good because it has gobs of rich Wisconsin cream, tons of real ingredients for boat-loads of luscious flavors. That means it's not low-fat, low-calorie or low-anything, and that's why everyone loves it. You want nutrition, eat carrots.

© Copyright 1997, Chocolate Shoppe
Intuitive Eating (normal)

Is Being Able To:

• Eat when you are hungry and continue eating until you are satisfied

• Choose food you like, eat it and truly get enough – not just stop eating cause you think you should

• Use some constraint on your food selection, but not miss out on pleasurable foods
Intuitive Eating (normal)

Is:

• Giving yourself permission to eat sometimes because you are happy, sad or bored, or just because it feels good.
• Three meals a day, or choosing to munch along.
• Leaving some cookies on the plate because you know you can have some again tomorrow, or eating more now because they taste so wonderful.
• Is overeating at times: feeling stuffed and uncomfortable.

• Is under eating at times and wishing you had more.

• Takes up some of your time and attention, but keeps its place as only one important area of your life.
Intuitive Eating (normal)

Is flexible. It varies in response to your emotions, your schedule, your hunger and your proximity to food.

Ellyn Satter, How To Get Your Kid To Eat...But Not Too Much, 1987
Health at Every Size

• Self-Acceptance - feeling good about self

• Movement – being comfortably active

• Normal Eating - natural, relaxed eating
Recognition that body shape, size and/or weight are not evidence of any particular way of eating, level of physical activity, personality, psychological issue or moral character; confirmation that there is beauty and worth in EVERY BODY.
We don’t wear Foster Grants to avoid eye contact with anyone. In fact, we won’t wear them at all.

Size discrimination is not cool. Don’t buy Foster Grants.

For more information on the Foster Grant boycott, call or write:

Astarte / woman by design
Original Designs for Sizes 14 & Up
24520 Hawthorne Blvd., Suite 100
Torrance, CA 90605 • (310) 373-0638
Health for Every Body® is an on-site, 10-week program based upon the principles of Health At Every Size® (HAES®) offering employees an alternative, evidence-based approach for making peace with their bodies and their food.
1. Current research on dieting, weight & health
2. Examine the social & cultural pressures to be thin
3. Discuss the health consequences of body hatred
4. Improving body acceptance & self esteem
5. Pleasurable movement: Fitter at any size
6. Reduce disordered eating - mindful, intuitive eating
7. Health benefits of relationships & social support
8. Managing stress, mindfulness, meaning & purpose
9. Improving health in presence of a chronic condition
10. Solidifying & protecting improvements
Health for Every Body® - 10 Weeks

- Intrinsic
- Relationships
- Social Support
- Evidence-Based
- Culture of Inclusion
HEALTH FOR EVERY BODY

Making Peace 🌍
With Our Bodies & Our Food

Jon Robison PhD, MS.

jon@salveopartners.com
www.salveopartners.com