

Our health: Will a 'live it' book work better than diet books?



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We all know we are an obese nation, constantly worrying about what we eat and eating all the wrong things anyway.

We have tried every diet from grape-fruit to protein drinks and, most often, none of them seem to work.

Now along comes Susan Burke March, a registered and licensed dietitian and a certified diabetes educator, who seems to speak the truth.

In her new book, "Making Weight Control Second Nature: Living Thin Naturally," Burke says it's not true that some people are naturally thin and can eat with abandon.

Instead, she says it's hard work to maintain a thin lifestyle in an era when everything encourages overeating.

As her news release says, this is not a "diet book" but rather a "live it" book. She tells you how she stays thin —

and offers information, tips and strategies for people who are serious about losing weight and maintaining a thin lifestyle.

Q. This is the first "diet book," frankly, that makes sense to me. You tell it like it is. And what "it is" is hard work to lose weight and keep it off.

A. We make choices all the time, consciously or unconsciously. Behavior becomes automatic. I was overweight with an eating disorder and it took me a long time to lose the weight. It was fits and starts and stops. I had to be comfortable with myself or otherwise it was dieting and regaining and dieting again.

Q. You don't have any secret solutions, like no carbs or no sugar or whatever?

A. I hope to inspire you to be motivated. Losing and maintaining weight is all about making the right choices and doing exercise. You know, I have a mantra for everything and I tell people anything you can do is great. Be prepared to succeed.

Q. This book offers pages and pages of solid information on changing the focus from food to behavior and chapters on dining out

and on ways to stay

focused.

A. Some things I can't control — the weather, the stock market, and so on. But I can control what goes in my mouth. That's the thesis: When you're ready to take control, you can lose the weight. This is not for the faint of heart. Here's the inspiration you need but you have to learn to create your own diet your way.

Q. I like your comments on fast food.

A. If it comes through a car window in a bag, it's not real food. You might as well eat the bag. It might be more nutritious.

Q. Exercise is important?

A. Everyone should understand as human beings we are set up to survive, which means we go through the calories for survival. But we live in an environment where we sit today. It's not that I don't like the calories. But I don't eat as many of them anymore.

Q. What's the best diet to follow?

A. It doesn't matter whose diet you go on. They all work. Do what they say for a specific amount of time and calories will be controlled. But can you incorporate this behavior into a permanent lifestyle?

Q. You have counseled many people — as vice president of nutrition services and chief nutritionist for eDiets programs and services, you did it all. What's the answer?

A. Don't look at what I

eat. Some people need a diet that is really structured in the beginning. Some need to have convenience foods. Some need to change their lifestyle. What you have to do is take charge.

Q. So the answer is you are ultimately responsible for your own diet — and weight?

A. Right.

