

## AUTHOR'S RESEARCH AND BACKGROUND FOR FINDERS KEEPERS

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More personal details can be found in the PDF *How I Did It*.  
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*Additional note, 11/2007*

The PBS program Nova is currently airing the episode “Marathon” which details the progress of 12 more-or-less ordinary people on the Nova staff who decide to train for the Boston Marathon. The latest science in fitness is covered with clear detail. Of great interest was the segment that asked why, after undertaking rigorous, escalating training for months only one of the participants was losing weight! The answer is illuminating, frustrating and encouraging all at once.

The companion website for the program can be found here: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/marathon/>. A result of a PBS program several years ago is America on the Move. Their website is: <http://aom.americaonthemove.org/>.

If you can locate the Nova program on your local air schedule, I heartily recommend checking it out.

— Karin

## *To the Reader*

I didn't set out to write a book about a woman who takes control of her future through nutrition and exercise. Initially, *Finders Keepers* was about a shipwreck, a swept away romance and conflict between the new love and the long-unrequited love. But as always with my stories, the characters blossomed in unexpected ways, and I found myself revising my storyline to suit them. Chapter one became chapter two and a pair of Mephisto pumps came out of nowhere. Such is creativity.

Before I talk about the main reason for this document to even exist, I want to address the emotional and psychological abuse that Linda encountered as a child and teen without giving away the plot to those who haven't read the book yet but are reading this. The device of the yeast was based on fact; such miseries are inflicted by parents. In the factual instance I'm aware of, a mother's cruelty took over sixty years to kill, but it finally did. In part, Linda's story in this book is the outcome I would wish for all victims of abuse.

So onward to the Background behind Marissa's exercise and nutrition Plan as discussed in *Finders Keepers*.

A weight control advisor, like the fictional nutritionist Helena Boxer, can be found in the person of an experienced fitness trainer, a community college professor, a nurse, a doctor or some other health-related specialist, but most of us, it seems, turn to books for advice. Everything that "Helena" advises in this book is the product of my own research in books and print media. While I have endeavored to have only accurate, up-to-date information, this book is a work of fiction, not a weight loss guide. I don't advise fiction be used to pattern real life as your mileage may vary.

That said, my lengthy history with weight loss plans and

research will be evident in this novel. Although many things motivated me, among them was the addition of the word “morbidly” to “obese.” Below I have listed a few resources I have used and/or still go to for no-nonsense takes on research and advice.

I haven’t named any particular program good or bad, but I do have an opinion about how to sort sound advice from marketing. Generally, the sound plans are built on modest goals, reasonable nutrition and focused exercise. There are a number of so-called weight loss programs I feel are not just flawed, but dangerous. It’s my own impression, based on observation only, that the more a program costs the less proof there is that it works.

Given that a magic weight loss pill would make its inventor insanely wealthy and famous, I am convinced that scientists are not hiding one from us. Therefore, if a late night television promise sounds too good to be true, that’s because it is.

Many infomercials claim that the medical establishment’s deep distrust of natural remedies keeps them from accepting their wonderful product as the magic cure-all they claim. Examined closely, this reasoning simply makes no sense. Given that health care insurers spend billions treating the consequences of obesity, and some are willing to pay for expensive gastric bypasses because it’s more cost-effective than treating diabetes, strokes and heart attacks, any pill that truly worked would be free, and doctors would be encouraging its use. If one existed, wouldn’t Oprah know? Think of how many intelligent, driven and amazing women you know who struggle with their weight. If there was an easy solution, wouldn’t one of them have found it?

Because of the consumer “protection” laws, it’s important to know that if a manufacturer doesn’t claim their product cures or treats a symptom or a disease they don’t have to get approval for their claims. For example, “fat burning” is not “cures obesity” or even “makes you lose weight,” so they can claim their product “burns the fat away like magic” with no evidence whatsoever. The user ends up with yet another failure in the weight loss wars, even more

discouraged than ever, but the “failure” had nothing to do with them at all—the product didn’t work, never did work and will never work.

If pressed to give any one piece of advice, it’s moderation in all things. Moderate food intake, moderate exercise, moderate goals and a moderate investment of time and money are, to me, the cornerstones of a healthy and reasonable lifestyle. Laughter and sex are the only exceptions.

— Karin

P.S. Goat cheese is the food of the gods.

P.P.S. If you’re interested, photos of my weight loss history can be found at Flickr, just search for “kallmaker” or <http://flickr.com/photos/kallmaker/sets/72157602820574540/detail/>

## Resources

*The 200-Hundred Calorie Solution.* Katahn, Martin. W.W. Norton & Co., 1982.

Though out-of-print and in some parts out-of-date, it is still the clearest presentation of the math behind calories in and calories out that I have read, so check your local library. Memorable advice: the safest, most sustainable weight loss is taking it off at the same rate it went on. At a time when “60 pounds in 60 days” was a common advertising claim, Dr. Katahn’s program to lose 20 pounds in a year by burning 200 more calories a day than calories taken in, was radical.

The very latest science supports his claims: the only way to lose weight is to diet and the only way to be healthy and fit during and after weight loss is exercise. This is the common sense that all those nutrition supplements and wacky exercise machines want consumers to ignore. Neither strong, but obese, sumo wrestlers nor unmuscled, but thin, supermodels are examples of health. Something in the middle is.

*The Ultimate Fit or Fat.* Bailey, Covert. Houghton Mifflin, 2000.

Bailey’s two-decade commitment to changing how we define “fat” includes his flat-out insistence that any “diet” that doesn’t build in exercise will fail for nearly everyone who tries it. (The very latest research bears this out.) His advice is for ‘real’ bodies, not athletes, and he was, for me, the first expert to carefully differentiate between the how female and male bodies respond to food and exercise. Sometimes corny, his advice is based on science, not the intent to sell a diet bar and a line of clothing. Many others, however, have used his work to create skewed notions of “fat-burning” and “metabolic bonus,” and package such claims in unregulated bottles of nutritional supplements. When I get confused and something sounds too good to be true, I refresh myself with some practical Covert.

*“Nutrition Action Newsletter.”* Center for Science in the Public Interest, periodical.

Nothing is more frustrating than headlines that tout “Milk increases weight loss” and “Caffeine puts on the pounds.” Such articles rarely mention, for example, that the dairy industry paid for the research leading to the former or that fruit producers paid for the research leading to the latter.

CSPI believes that knowing who paid for research is an important part of evaluating its results. Their reports explain complicated scientific data as clearly as possible for the layperson. Crusaders for accurate, informative food labeling and disclosure of financial ties on research, CSPI is the group that made headlines pointing out that the onion blossom appetizer was 3000 calories on a single plate, and a bucket of movie theater popcorn was 1400 calories and several days worth of fat.

The “Nutrition Action Newsletter” deals with virtually any food-related science that has an impact on the health of the human body. A single issue can update and demystify breast cancer research and feature a readable table spelling out the difference between all the artificial sweeteners on the market. Just as this book was going to print, Volume 33 Number 6 arrived with a funny How To article on writing your own diet book, including naming it after a trendy location and promising that the reader will not have to change a thing about their lives. The issue also includes an overview of current popular diet books and provides the clinical information (if any) behind the claims.

Sometimes overzealous in their attempt to wake up an obese, diabetic and stroke-inclined country, they can go into overkill on some issues, such as deceptive advertising. However, they continue to spot cereal boxes featuring plump juicy strawberries when the product contains nothing but tinted bits of dried pear. Regular reading of the N.A.N. has given me the tools to play “spot the fraud” in any number of advertising claims, especially about weight loss products. I fully support their push to regulate dietary supplements;

there is too much snake oil and false hope being peddled with impunity. [www.cspinet.org](http://www.cspinet.org).

*The Ultimate Weight Loss Solution: 7 Keys to Weight Loss Freedom.*  
McGraw, Phil. Free Press, 2003.

Given that CSPI (above) is the organization that blew the whistle on the useless and expensive diet supplements hawked by Dr. Phil, it is certainly odd for me to recommend this book. Part of me doesn't want to recommend it, because good ol' Dr. Phil does (or at least did) want to sell cookbooks, calendars and so on, along with his advice. But, in this case, any motives to profit in other ways do not taint the approach to nutrition control in this book.

Though at times simultaneously too folksy and too clinical, it's one of the few attempts I've seen to relate weight control issues to a wide range of emotional issues, beyond the usual pep talk. Most programs lead off with grandly motivating anecdotes, as if wanting to change is the whole battle. Dr. Phil asks if there are reasons other than food that keep us overweight. Though Dr. Phil doesn't call it the mind-body connection, the "seven keys" all lead to the inescapable conclusion that if your head isn't ready your body won't be either. It also underscored how other programs shy away from dealing with crucial, related emotional issues.

Ultimately, his nutrition advice isn't rocket science. Stop your bad habits, learn what reasonable portions are, get out and move. Get this one from the library if you can and work through the checklists.