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Think Slim: The Key to making any diet work

Mark Stephens

Published by Allen & Unwin

Extract

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FOREWORD

For more than two decades I have worked almost exclusively with obese and overweight patients. In this modern world of convenient fast foods and easy computer-oriented work we have developed many health problems related to being overweight. Being overweight or obese can lead to cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes, also referred to as Adult-onset diabetes. The side effects of Type 2 diabetes include loss of sight and damage to the kidneys, liver, heart, nerves and blood vessels. Being overweight or obese can also lead to joint problems—it is the number one cause of joint replacement. There are a host of other weight-related illnesses, including sleep apnoea and psychological consequences. An even bigger problem is the vast number of overweight children who also face these health afflictions. The fact is, the majority of these problems are preventable and in some cases reversible.

There are a host of causes of obesity, including inactive lifestyle and comfort eating due to emotional reasons—the list goes on and on. But the one thing I have come to realise is that for most people the problem of becoming slim and losing unwanted weight is largely in the mind. It really all comes back to our way of thinking. Being overweight is often a symptom of a negative mindset.

Some months back I came across Mark Stephen's Think Slim CD program. I can tell you from a medical perspective that I believe Think Slim is a major advance in the treatment of obesity. There's so much in it. It's a complete program with everything you need. As most people who go on diets realise, losing weight is extremely difficult: you need a structure, you need a certain path to follow, and you need to face many psychological barriers to weight loss. Think Slim covers them so well. The Think Slim program not only gives you very wise food choices and recommends a great range of fat-burning activities but, more importantly, it helps you tackle the emotional reasons for your overeating. Think Slim helps you get to the inner cause of the problem.

Now I am pleased Mark is releasing this book which consolidates all this advice. There are many references on how to break habits. Breaking old self-defeating habits is critical to successful slimming. Think Slim describes how to anchor your thoughts and help yourself to feel positive, because the way you feel is determined by the way you think. To my mind it is critical to get that right.

I particularly like all the little sayings in the book—these are simple yet very effective ways to train the brain. There are self-hypnosis scripts you can say to yourself that will help you to get through those difficult stages. Here are some of my favourites:

Whether it's a walk, a swim or a sport I play,
I aim to be active twice each day.

I am tomorrow what I eat today,
Before each meal that's what I say.

I agree with Mark that the battle with weight loss is mostly psychological and in Think Slim all these challenges are addressed. Think Slim really is weight loss for the mind and is very clever indeed. I think it's an excellent system.

Dr Neil Peace
Sydney Medical Weight Loss Centre

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PREFACE

Every now and then people ask if I have ever been overweight. It sometimes feels as though the question means if you haven't been overweight you could never understand what it's like. Well the fact of the matter is I have.

I was born ten-and-a half-pounds and that's when my love of food started. Food glorious food! As a kid at home my nickname was garbage guts. If it wasn't nailed down I would eat it. I would eat my meals so fast that if there were leftovers I would be first in. I would even play tricks on my brother and sister and distract them and take food from their plates. Needless to say they were both pretty skinny growing up, but not me.

At my grandmothers I was affectionately known as Nanny's Little Bickie Boy. Whenever I dropped in after school to my grandparents' house, which was almost every day, and visitors were there, that was how I was introduced. But I didn't mind as it was my opportunity to of course live up to my reputation.

I even used to take biscuits to bed with me. Okay I know you are probably thinking I had a pretty crumby childhood. I used to dream about biscuits. Some nights I would wake up, mouth salivating, eating my own hand. I still think it's a miracle I have all my fingers intact.

In primary school my friends were great but their older brothers would call me Fat Boy or Farmer Edgar—the farmer thing came from wearing big baggy pants for comfort. I remember a kid once saying, 'What are you wearing under those socks?' Of course, it was just my legs but it looked like there was more.

I wasn't huge but I was big enough to be embarrassed. By about the age of 14, I had had enough of being the chubby kid. I practically starved myself and stayed slim for many years to come. Then, when I was 26, I went into a downward spiral after my younger brother was killed in a motorcycle accident. Within two years, as is often the case following a stressful episode, at the ripe old age of 28, I was diagnosed with cancer. I had a rapidly growing Lymphoma.

Being 'Mister Alternative' by this time, I wanted to go to Mexico, drink carrot juice and sit on the side of a mountain and meditate, which I did for four weeks. The doctors told me I would be dead within six months. I did not waiver. If you want to know about a serious diet check out the Gerson Diet. I didn't eat one thing that wasn't in that diet for almost three years. The tumour shrunk from just over four centimetres in diameter to two-and-a-half centimetres.

The six-month death sentence came and went. After almost three years I felt like 'Superman', so I went back to working long hours, teaching Ju-Jutsu, giving seminars and I neglected the diet. Before I knew it the tumour had grown back with a vengeance. Within only a few months of being slack on the diet it had grown to around ten by seven centimetres and was really starting to cause complications.

I believe the almost three years of organic juices, salads, coffee enemas and all things good *had* stopped the cancer from spreading anywhere else in the body. I went back on the diet but there was no stopping the Lymphoma. At eleven by eight centimetres in diameter it had settled into its nice little place near the tail of my pancreas and was wreaking havoc. I added combined chemotherapy with my diet along with countless hours of meditation and Tai Chi to combat it.

Chemotherapy is certainly a quick way of losing weight. I dropped almost seven kilograms in a little over 24 hours! Take my advice, there are better ways to lose weight. The problem was after the three years of living almost a vegetarian lifestyle and then a hectic work life—I was already on the light side. At six one, or 183 centimetres, and weighing in at just over 60 kilograms I looked like a prisoner of war from Changi. Losing that seven kilograms almost killed me.

As I lay in the hospital bed the doctor came in and said if I hadn't come back into the hospital when I did I would have been dead within another six hours. I continued to maintain a modified Gerson Diet and practised hours of Tai Chi, chi kung, visualisation and self-hypnosis every day. The doctor said he had never seen an immune system bounce back so quickly after such intense chemotherapy. At this point I must also add that if it wasn't for the support of my wife Linda, who worked tirelessly, never complained once and never for a moment gave up hope, I wouldn't be here today. She was my rock.

Being so thin, once I was well enough I wanted to put the weight back on. Even though I ate reasonably healthily I

consumed larger and larger amounts of food to do this. Enter the reincarnation of the 'Fat Boy'. Before I knew it I had gone too far and weighed in at just over 100 kilograms. The funny thing was, with all my training, knowledge and motivation it seemed almost impossible for me to slim down again.

It wasn't until I travelled around the country, training more than 300 weight-loss consultants for one of the major weight-loss companies, that I realised why I was having trouble. Through helping the consultants come up with solutions for their most difficult clients, the missing link came to me like a bolt of lightning.

It wasn't about food because I knew what to eat. It wasn't about exercise because I knew how to train. Along with most people the problem was emotional eating coupled with limiting beliefs. The reason I had overeaten as a child was for comfort. Food was my best friend. Sometimes I would eat if I was upset or to distract myself. Sometimes I would eat because I was bored or stressed. Sometimes I was given food as a reward. It was at this point I realised it was all in the mind.

Nobody had ever truly tackled this side of weight loss so I created the Think Slim CD program as a psychological support tool, as much for myself as I did to help others. Within eight weeks of listening to the first CD I was 12 kilograms lighter.

This book grew out of demand based on the success of the take-home hypnotherapy package. I am looking forward to helping you, through *Think Slim*, to reach your goal and to then hear about your great results. Enjoy putting into action what you discover in this book and make becoming slim as much fun

as you can. Learn to laugh at your problems and they will cease to be as serious. Also make sure you register online <www.thinkslim.com.au> for our free slimming tips newsletter.

To your success!

Mark Stephens

ThinkSlim

Success Verse

I am tomorrow what I eat today,
Before every meal that's what I say.

Between each meal I stay snack free,
Between each meal I drink water or tea.

Whether it's a walk a swim or a sport I play,
I aim to be active twice each day.

Excess fat I burn with every step I take,
I have no desire for chocolate, biscuits or cake.

I stay focused on my goal and the body I deserve,
And it all boils down to each meal that I serve.

Water is my body's most efficient fuel,
Two litres a day is the minimum rule.

The more I drink, the more I shrink.

Between main meals I will always remember,
I am not hungry... thirsty. Drink more water, drink more water,
drink more water.

I am a winner. My destiny is to succeed. I will win.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Think Slim*, the missing link in weight loss and your key to making any diet work. My purpose here is to give you the most up-to-the-minute tools for becoming slim and staying slim. Maybe you are sick and tired of being overweight and failing on diets. Maybe you have a special event coming up, like a birthday, wedding or holiday. Maybe the doctor has told you to, 'Lose weight or you will end up six feet under'. Maybe you just want to look better for summer or to be able to go into a shop and buy the size of clothing you want to fit into. Maybe you are fed up with being embarrassed about your excess fat. It's possible you just realised you eat for emotional comfort. Whatever reason you have for wanting to be slimmer, picking up this book is your first step towards doing so.

One of the keys to success can be found in this 1896 quotation from writer Frederick Langbridge:

> Two men look out through the same bars.
> One looks down and sees the mud,
> The other looks up and sees the stars.

In which direction are you looking? Remember this: what runs through your mind, what you say to yourself and how you

look at things, will determine your results in all your endeavours, including any efforts you make to become slim.

In reading this book you will hear about all the ways in which you can burn fat fast. You will see how you can use the power of your own mind to think slim from the inside out. By the time you finish this book you will have discovered why the majority of people last only 72 hours on a diet and why 95 per cent of people on most conventional diets fail and how you can succeed against these odds. It doesn't matter if you are already on an eating plan, or a special diet, now you are going to learn how to control emotional eating. That's right, comfort eating will become a thing of the past.

You will learn how to change your thinking and become successful and slim.

You will find out how to replace bad eating habits and bad thinking habits with good eating habits and good thinking habits.

You will learn how to transform limiting beliefs—those that stop or sabotage your ability to reach a goal.

You will discover your reflection of perfection—the perfect you, how you are going to look in twelve months, nine months or six months from now, when you reach your ideal weight. How good will you feel then? How much energy will you have then? What will people be saying about you then? Most importantly, what will you be saying to yourself then?

You are going to learn that what you think is the missing link and how you can and will become slim quickly, safely and permanently. Before you know it, your old behaviours, old patterns and old problems will be nothing more than a faded memory.

Let me tell you, I'm excited to be sharing with you the strategies that will allow you to reach your ideal weight and body size in the shortest possible time. *Think Slim* is about turning your dreams and your vision for yourself into a reality.

My goal is to help you reach your goal.

Whatever eating plan or diet you are on, whatever your ideal weight is, this program has been designed to support you in reaching your goal. You'll be surprised at how quickly your attitude to food changes. You'll be even more surprised when the excess weight you've been carrying begins to melt away.

Here's the thing. You deserve success, don't you? You deserve to reach your potential. You deserve to feel the way you want to feel and look the way you want to look.

The one thing I know about you is that you already have within you all the resources you need to achieve this success. You have the ability to reach your goal. My mission is to help you tap into those resources.

What exactly is 'Think Slim'?

The Think Slim program comes from combining several key disciplines. Initially the feedback and challenges faced by the more than 300 weight-loss consultants was the driving force behind the need for emotional tools and the psychological support that became Think Slim. These 300-plus consultants, who dealt with thousands of overweight people, seemed to have the same problems as each other when dealing with clients who either found it hard to get started on a weight-loss program,

THE KEY INGREDIENT

The key ingredient to your success will be your commitment to reaching your ideal weight. Read the following questions and carefully think about your answers:

- How committed are you to reaching your ideal weight?
- How serious are you?
- How much do you really want to succeed?
- What's your ultimate vision for yourself?
- What will it mean to you when you reach your ideal weight?
- How are you going to feel when you jump on the scales and you're 10, 20, 30 kilograms lighter?

As you consider the answers ask yourself this: Did you state your answers entirely in the positive or did you answer with a degree of negativity? For example if your answer to the last question about how you will feel was something like, *I won't be as fat* or, *I won't be at such a high risk of falling ill*, then they are stated in negative terms. A key to thinking slim is to transform any negative thinking patterns you have into positive ones. Answering that same question in the positive could go like this: *I will be full of energy and I will look great*.

If your answer to how serious you are was half-hearted it is time you now get serious and fired up. Unless you stated every answer in positive terms, go back through the questions and use positive language to re-answer the questions. The more positive the internal dialogue you use the more successful you will always be.

found it hard to stick to a diet, or found it hard to keep the weight off once they had lost it. The majority of their clients who had difficulties ate for a variety of reasons. Some ate because they were feeling emotional, including when they were feeling angry, feeling sad, feeling hurt, feeling guilty, feeling happy or feeling bored. Some people ate when there was conflict in their life, or when they felt stressed. Other people ate because they felt depressed, and a high percentage of all people had perfected the use of negative self-talk.

To overcome these challenges the Think Slim program was created by combining Neuro-Linguisitic Programming (NLP) with clinical hypnosis, Time Line Therapy™ and motivation, as well as the feedback I received from the 300-plus consultants.

After two years testing the principles for Think Slim and getting incredible results, the Think Slim audio program was created. With the success of the audio program came countless requests for this *Think Slim* book.

What is NLP?

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) explores how the mind works, how we motivate ourselves, how we successfully achieve goals, how we overcome fears and how we give meaning to our everyday experiences. NLP is the study of how we organise our thinking, feeling, language and behaviour to produce specific results. NLP gives us the tools needed to make positive changes and to break free of old self-destructive patterns and behaviours while giving ourselves more choices.

In 1973 Dr John Grinder, a professor of linguistics at the University of California in Santa Cruz, and Dr Richard Bandler, a gifted mathematician and computer programmer, came together to share information and to model (demonstrate) the success of the most accomplished therapists in their chosen fields. They modelled the likes of Fritz Perls, creator of Gestalt Therapy; Virginia Satir, the mother of Family Therapy; and Milton Erickson, the father of modern clinical hypnosis. Together Bandler and Grinder put together a system of therapeutic techniques to bring about rapid and lasting change in an individual.

The thing is, human beings are all-seeing, hearing and feeling creatures. Bandler and Grinder decoded the way we process the things we see, hear and feel along with what we smell, taste and think. Bandler and Grinder called their work Neuro-Linguistic Programming because:

- **neuro** refers to the human nervous system and the mind through which we process our experiences via the five senses, which are:
    1. visual—what we see
    2. auditory—what we hear both externally and internally
    3. kinesthetic—what we feel
    4. olfactory—what we smell
    5. gustatory—what we taste
- **linguistic** refers to how our language and other non-verbal communication skills give meaning to and organises within our mind and nervous system our understanding through pictures, sounds, feelings, tastes, smells and self-talk

- **programming** refers to our unconscious behaviour and the ability to discover and use the programs and patterns we run within ourselves to achieve specific results.

You could say NLP allows you to consciously unpack the baggage in your unconscious mind, disposing of what you don't need, while keeping what you do need and installing new strategies for the best possible result.

Today NLP is a rapidly growing field with *Science Digest* saying, NLP 'could be the most important synthesis of knowledge about human communications to emerge since the sixties', and *Time Magazine* announced that, 'NLP has untapped potentials for treating individual problems'. Increasingly NLP is being applied in the areas of health, psychological wellness, education, business, sport and personal development.

What is clinical hypnosis?

> 'Hypnosis is a state of intensified attention and receptiveness to an idea or a set of ideas.'
>
> Milton H. Erickson

As far back as 1000 BC the Egyptians had, what they called, 'sleep temples'. In these sacred places the priests would put their worshippers to sleep and then suggest to them that they were free of any illness. Amazingly it worked. In the fourth century BC in Greece and then 100 years later in Rome these sleep temples flourished.

During the first century AD the laying on of hands (healing through touch using unseen energy) became very popular. The English monarchy encouraged the laying on of hands as a valid therapy, which reinforced its popularity. In the middle of the eleventh century Edward the Confessor (1004–66) was famous for perfecting the 'royal touch'. However, during the middle ages, mainly due to the influence of the church, the practice of suggestion was relegated to the category of black magic and sorcery and forbidden on pain of death.

Fortunately for us hypnosis underwent a revival during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when the French nobility popularised mesmerism, also known as animal magnetism. Mesmerism was named after its leading practitioner, Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815), whose practice was in such demand and grew to such a size that it became difficult for him to handle. It was reported that up to 3000 people a day were seeking his healing touch. Mesmer was eventually discredited by a group of envious doctors and politicians and mesmerism was relegated to sideshows and carnivals.

Even though Mesmer was censured and exiled, his theories form the basis of modern-day psychotherapy. Dr James Braid (1795–1860), an Englishman who believed that mesmerism was a swindle, set out to discredit the trickery once and for all but became convinced and fascinated by it instead. It was Dr Braid who introduced the terms 'hypnosis' and 'suggestion' to this mysterious therapy. (*Hypnos* is the Greek word meaning 'sleep'.)

Emile Coue (1857–1926), a French pharmacist, discovered the power of autosuggestion, which he named 'waking suggestion'.

In the early 1900s, Coue created the famous affirmation: 'Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better.' He suggested that if anybody was in physical pain they should repeat the words, 'It is going, it is going', extremely quickly. Should the pain return he suggested repeating the process 10, 20, 100, or even 200 times if necessary, until the pain disappeared. It was Coue who first proposed that it was the suggestion being accepted by the mind of the subject, rather than the actual suggestion given by the hypnotist, that achieved results. He also made the discovery that all hypnosis is self-hypnosis. In France, Coue enjoyed enormous popularity with thousands benefiting from his autosuggestion.

This all changed when his theories of autosuggestion were taken to the United States. At the hands of an unscrupulous promoter the new wonder cure became the subject of jokes and ridicule. But hypnosis was used for pain control during the Second World War and the Korean War. Then in 1958 the powerful American Medical Association approved hypnosis for therapeutic use. This was largely through the efforts of Milton Erickson (1901–80), regarded as the father of modern-day medical hypnotherapy.

Unfortunately, many people think only about stage hypnosis when they hear the word hypnotherapy. The reality is that the people who get up on stage and run around like chickens or impersonate Elvis have very little to do with clinical hypnotherapy. When medical hypnosis is used for such purposes as helping a person quit smoking, lose weight or reduce stress, the hypnotherapist is only assisting the person to do something

he or she already wants to do. The stage hypnotist goes through a series of tests to select the most suggestible and cooperative members from the audience, whereas a hypnotherapist will accept anyone who needs help as a client.

Hypnosis is not a loss of self-control or being controlled by someone else. It is about using your imagination and being in touch with your unconscious mind while you are in a state of relaxation.

Hypnosis today is no longer considered black magic. It has gained acceptance and respectability among both the medical establishment and the public. These days hypnosis is also known as meditation, relaxation therapy, guided imagery and visualisation. It looks as if it is finally here to stay. Dr A.M. Krasner founded the American Institute of Hypnotherapy in 1981 and he described hypnosis as a process that produces relaxation, distraction of the conscious mind, heightened suggestibility and increased awareness, allowing access to the subconscious mind and to the imagination. It also produces the ability to experience thoughts and images as real. Here is an example for you.

As you read the following words, it is not the print or the words that make change happen, it is how you interpret each word that makes all the difference:

Imagine you're in front of a large lemon tree.

The lemon tree is full of green leaves and large yellow lemons.

Imagine you can see the bubbly texture of one particular lemon.

See yourself reaching up to that lemon, you take it in your hand and twist the lemon off the tree.

You can feel the cool bubbly texture and the weight of the lemon in your hand.

In a moment you will close your eyes and imagine cutting the lemon into quarters.

You then bring the lemon up to your mouth and as you squeeze on the lemon you suck the juice.

So go ahead, close your eyes and imagine you are holding a lemon quarter and you are sucking the juice.

As you open your eyes you may notice the amount of saliva in your mouth. Did it increase? When I ask this question in seminars some people screw up their face and get that tangy, tingly sensation in their mouths or through their body.

It is not the words that make the change. It is your interpretation of the words. As you create the thoughts in your mind, your body reacts and changes take place.

Just for a moment remember a friend from school. Remember one particular time with that friend.

This is an example of recalling a stored memory.

Imagine for a moment you are at your ideal weight. Imagine how good you will feel and look.

This is an example of turning a goal into a future memory.

All of the above is self-hypnosis.

Time Line Therapy™

Time Line Therapy™ is a process by which you can completely let go of limiting beliefs and past negative emotions. Created by American Dr Tad James, Time Line Therapy™ combines the research of some of the world's greatest thinkers including Aristotle, William James, Dr Milton Erickson, Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawkings.

Years of research in the fields of neurophysics, quantum biology and Neuro-Linguistic Programming allowed Dr James to create a simple step-by-step program that is painless and easy to use. Time Line Therapy™ is a simple, straightforward and natural technique that allows anyone to:

- let go of negative emotions from the past, like anger, sadness, fear, hurt and guilt
- let go of limiting decisions, like 'I'm not good enough', 'I can't lose weight' or 'I will never have the body I desire', etc.
- create your future so it produces the results you want in your life.

Your 'Time Line' is how you unconsciously store your memories or how you unconsciously know the difference between a memory from the past and a projection of the future. Behavioural change in an individual takes place at an unconscious level. People don't change consciously. The Time Line Therapy™ process allows you to be consciously aware while working at the unconscious level to release the effects of past negative experiences and change *inappropriate* programming

in minutes rather than over the course of months or years.

The results of Time Line Therapy™ are breathtaking. In as little as one to two hours all negative emotions associated with your past are eliminated. Time Line Therapy™ is unique as it rapidly accesses the root cause of any problem, and allows you to re-evaluate the problem from a unique and totally safe perspective—before the event occurred. Negative emotions previously associated vanish and the positive learning required for immediate healing is discovered.

How to use this book

To get the best results from this book you should use it as a constant source of inspiration as well as a daily food and activity diary.

Throughout the book you will see certain phrases repeated three times or the instruction to:

repeat the phrase three times
repeat the phrase three times
repeat the phrase three times

Wherever you find a phrase repeated in the text, or you are asked to repeat a phrase three times, pause for a moment and change the tone in which you are speaking to yourself. You may find whispering the phrase to yourself gives you the best result or you may find yelling it in your mind works best. You may get a better result by reading the phrase out loud. Try different tones, levels and speeds inside your head to find out which works best for you.

Sometimes these phrases have been written using the word 'you'. This is a hypnotic command. Imagine you hear my voice in a commanding but comforting tone each time you see these hypnotic phrases using the word 'you' or 'your'. At other times the hypnotic suggestion is written in the first person using 'I' rather than you. Whenever you see these phrases take the time to read the suggestion to yourself as you really take it in. Providing you are not in a public place you may like to read the phrase out loud so you can also hear it.

What you eat

If you are already on a specific diet, such as the CSIRO Diet, Weight Watchers or the Low GI Diet, and you are happy with the results, by all means stick to their plan and use *Think Slim* to help you gain control of your emotions, your self-talk and your motivation towards activity. Remember, *Think Slim* can be used in conjunction with any diet or weight-loss program. If you are not getting great results from your current diet, try following the meal suggestions in our 'Healthy meal plans' section of the book on page 121.

The food and activity diary

You will find a 'food and activity diary' at the rear of the book on page 279. You can start using this immediately. As you make your way through the book you can make adjustments to your eating plan and activities based on what you feel will work for you. Recording what you eat, what you drink and how active you are will help you stay on track as well as allow you to adjust your plan if needed.

Think Slim transformational keys

Start reading the self-hypnosis/affirmation scripts daily. This section of the book is nourishment for your mind, sustenance for your brain. Reading these scripts will be a crucial step forward in reaching your goal and maintaining your ideal weight. The scripts start on page 220.

Follow the exercises

Think Slim has many sections where you are able to fill in your goals, your reasons for wanting to reach your ideal weight and other steps to success. There are mental games and exercises for you to follow using your imagination. Do your best and be actively involved in each exercise so you can get the most possible benefit from this book.

Order your free MP3 hypnosis session

As an owner of this book you will receive a digitally recorded hypnosis session that is a bonus to help you reach your goal. This audio file has been specifically created to work with the book and will be an invaluable tool. To download the MP3 file visit <www.thinkslim.com.au>, follow the prompts on the home page and enter WX73rau215Z as your password.

Above all else, Think Slim!

You need to make a commitment to yourself and get serious. The time for failure is over. The past has passed and it is time to let it go. It is time to step up and be counted. No more excuses.

It is time to make it happen. The first phrase I want you to think about is: **I can do it, yes I can, do it now.**

Change your posture now. Stand up, roll your shoulders back take in a deep breath, look up and yell:

I can do it, yes I can, do it now.
I can do it, yes I can, do it now.
I can do it, yes I can, do it now.

Your contract with yourself

On the following page is a contract (agreement) you need to read carefully and sign. It is a contract with yourself. Too often we take a half-hearted approach in our attempts to reach and maintain our ideal weight. By filling in and signing this contract, you are agreeing to hold yourself responsible for your actions and achieving your goal.

AN AGREEMENT made this _____ day of _____ in the year _____.
Between _____ (referred to as 'the old me')
And _____ (known as 'the new me')

1. Commitment to reaching my ideal weight.
   (a) From this day forward the new me refuses to eat foods that will be stored as fat in my body.
   (b) The new me will make healthy food choices that are in line with my goals.
   (c) The new me will make all efforts to be active twice each day and no less than once a day. The new me will not, without consent of a registered medical practitioner, make any excuses not to be active.
   (d) The new me will drink between eight and ten glasses of water a day.
   (e) The new me will drink four to five cups of green tea or herbal tea every day.
   (f) The new me will include a reasonable amount (25 to 35 per cent) of protein with every meal and start all meals with a mouthful of protein.
   (g) If other people try to tempt me with fattening, unhealthy foods the new me will politely say 'no thank you'.
   (h) The old me will not act in any way that will affect the efforts of the new me to reach and maintain my ideal weight.

2. In the event that this agreement is breached in any way the new me commits to doubling the efforts in activity for a period of no less than the time the agreement was breached. For example, if the agreement is breached for one day, the following day all activity and efforts will be doubled. The new me will then re-focus on the reasons for wanting to reach my ideal weight and get back on track and stick to the plan.
   (a) Clause (2) is not to be used in any way as a loophole. Clause (2) is only to be used as a safety mechanism to get back on track, in the event of briefly losing sight of the goal.

AGREED AND SIGNED by the old me: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

AGREED AND SIGNED by the new me: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

(If no witnesses are available you may also sign as the witness but bear in mind you will be holding yourself even more responsible for your own actions.)

PART 1 | I am tomorrow what I eat today

1 IS BEING SLIM IMPORTANT?

Unfortunately we live in a society that often blames people who are overweight for their situation. If you are overweight you may have even been labelled as having a disability: you are overweight therefore you are unable to do your job. The stigma associated with being overweight may lead some employers to choose a slimmer, more healthy looking person rather than an overweight person. Even though being overweight doesn't mean you are lazy or less capable of doing a job it is a perception many employers have.

The other important point to bear in mind is that many overweight people suffer from low self-esteem. The sedentary nature of our modern world combined with excessive consumption of sugar and refined carbohydrates is a major contributor to the worldwide obesity epidemic. One fact we can't escape though is the reality that being overweight and, in particular, being obese does lead to an increased chance of ill health.

Health issues

You may or may not be aware of the following facts. They are, however, worth serious consideration as you approach the new

you. A variety of medical problems have been associated with being overweight. These problems include: high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, sleep apnoea, depression and arthritis. Are you aware that The American Institute for Cancer Research also claims that people who gain ten kilograms or more beyond the age of 20 are especially vulnerable to certain cancers? Their research has found that weight gain can lead to a higher risk of colon, prostate, esophageal, kidney and post-menopausal breast cancers.

Why am I telling you this? It is just a little reminder about why it is so important. Even though I suspect you already know all this, sometimes we need to be reminded of the dangers and the truth. We all do realise that obesity or simply being overweight is a serious health condition and can lead to all types of health problems. But beyond the surface problems of not being happy about the way you feel or look and having low energy levels lurk these more serious issues. If you are overweight and don't have any of the above problems it may only be a matter of time before you do. If you do have any of these problems, it's important that you consult your doctor before making any changes to what you currently eat.

Imagine carrying around a 20-kilogram bag of cement or potatoes all day.

Guess what? If you are 20 kilograms overweight, then the shocking reality is you are carrying the equivalent of that bag of cement or potatoes.

Imagine for a moment you are at your ideal weight. How much better will you feel?

Obesity

An individual who is 20 per cent heavier than his or her ideal weight is considered obese. Webster's Dictionary defines obesity as: *a condition in which a greater than normal amount of fat is in the body; more severe than overweight; having a body mass index of 30 or more.* From a medical standpoint you are considered obese if you weigh 20 per cent more than your ideal weight for your height, age, sex and body type.

Another easy way to determine if you are overweight is to look in the mirror and be honest with yourself. When you look at your waist do you have more rolls than Bakers Delight? Jokes aside, how happy are you with what you see in the mirror?

Another effective way of knowing if you are carrying too much fat is to grab some flesh on your waist and do the pinch test. Pinch the flesh and if you have an inch or more of space between your finger and thumb then there is a good chance you are overweight.

If you are overweight there is a good chance you take in more energy (food) than your body expends (through activity). When food intake exceeds that which is needed by the body, the excess gets stored as fat. To burn fat and reduce your weight more energy needs to be expended compared to the amount of energy that is consumed. If you make your motto, *My food is my fuel*, you will go a long way towards being slim and trim forever.

Did you know that severely obese people, that is, people who are carrying more than 40 kilograms of extra weight (two bags

of cement or potatoes) are approximately six times more likely to develop heart disease? The heart in an obese person is required to work harder, and this can lead to early development of heart failure. Severely obese people often have elevated cholesterol levels, which can further contribute to heart disease through the hardening of blood vessels.

Here's another scary fact. Diabetes, which frequently strikes the obese, is another risk factor for developing coronary heart disease. An overweight person is ten times more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes. Diabetes is a major cause of kidney failure and is the leading cause of adult-onset blindness (glaucoma). As well, in the United States diabetes is the third leading cause of death. In Australia diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death. Adult-onset diabetes often develops through lack of activity, poor eating habits and an excess of sugar-rich foods. A sad reality is that children are now falling ill with Type 2 diabetes.

Being obese can also cause respiratory problems. Breathing becomes difficult, as the chest wall is very heavy and difficult to lift. Breathing problems may hinder daily activities, such as shopping, gardening, climbing stairs and exercise. If you are overweight you will know what it is like when you run out of steam.

Musculoskeletal problems, such as lower back pain and arthritis, are common among obese people. These problems occur because the entire weight of the upper body falls on the base of the spine, so the spine may wear out faster, resulting in degenerative disc problems or arthritis of the spine. Much of the weight of the body is also borne by the hips, knees,

ankles and feet, which tend to wear out more quickly in obese people, resulting in arthritis. Obese patients have poorer results with joint replacement surgery. Some surgeons in fact refuse to perform such surgery on severely overweight people. For many years now most doctors have insisted their patients go on a weight-loss program prior to an operation if the patient is obese.

Don't panic. The easy-to-follow approach to becoming slim the healthy way is in the palm of your hand. However, the reasons we have just discussed are all the health reasons for losing weight and you may not be interested in any of them.

To you, becoming slim may be all about looking better and seeing yourself the way you know you should and can look. But, even that may not interest you.

To you, finding slimness may be all about having more energy and not feeling as sluggish. It could be about feeling comfortable with what you wear.

For some people, and that person may or may not be you, it could be all about hearing people say how great you look—or even not hearing people say how bad you look.

We all have different reasons and whatever your reason or purpose for becoming slimmer you will soon be seeing the results and feeling fantastic. It will only be a matter of days before you start to feel the change, maybe sooner.