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Opening Extract from...

A Course in Weight Loss

21 Spiritual Lessons for
Surrendering your Weight Forever

Written by Marianne Williamson

Published by Hay House

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A COURSE IN WEIGHT LOSS

21 SPIRITUAL LESSONS
FOR SURRENDERING
YOUR WEIGHT FOREVER

MARIANNE
WILLIAMSON



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For Oprah

This book began and ended as a communication between friends. Oprah Winfrey inspired the book, directed its course, and guided its vision. On a soul level definitely, and in many ways a literary one, this book was a collaborative effort. Every page is a reflection of my affection for and gratitude to her; my hope is that it brings comfort to her as she has brought comfort to so many.

To any reader who might feel that this book is a gift, please know that it was a gift from her.

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❧ INTRODUCTION ❧

This book is a spiritual curriculum consisting of 21 lessons. It is separate from anything else you might do regarding diet or exercise. It is a retraining of your consciousness in the area of weight.

Perhaps you've made amazing efforts to lose weight in the past—employing everything from extraordinary diet plans to almost superhuman feats of exercise—yet have found yourself mysteriously unable to keep the weight off permanently. While you succeeded for a time in changing your behavior, you've not yet experienced the deep level of change necessary in order to truly solve the problem.

On your own you might have changed your conscious thinking, but you alone cannot change your subconscious. And unless your *subconscious* mind is enrolled in your weight-loss efforts, it will find a way to reconstitute the excess weight regardless of what you do.

Spirit alone has the power to positively and permanently reprogram both your conscious and subconscious mind. The holistic healing of any condition involves applying internal as well as external powers, and compulsive overeating is no

different. This course is a lesson plan in aligning your thinking with the spiritual principles that will set you free.

The principles that guide these lessons are not difficult, but they are different from the way you might normally think. The principles are these:

1. Your body itself is completely neutral. It causes nothing; it is completely an effect, not a cause.
2. Neither poor diet nor lack of exercise are the *cause* of your excess weight. Mind is cause; body is effect. The cause of your excess weight is in your mind.
3. The cause of your excess weight is fear, which is a place in your mind where love is blocked.
4. Fear expresses itself as subconscious urges, which then express themselves as either excessive and/or unhealthy eating habits and/or resistance to proper exercise. The ultimate effect of this—that is, excess weight—will only be permanently and fundamentally healed when the fear itself is rooted out.

The purpose of this course is to root out your fear, and to replace it with an inestimable love.

It might seem odd to consider that fear is the source of your weight problem, and yet it is. As your mind is trained to let go of its fear, your body will let go of its excess pounds. For that shift in thinking from fear to love is a miracle: the reprogramming of your consciousness on a causal level, freeing the level of bodily effects to transform from dysfunction to healing. This course is not about your relationship with food; it is about your relationship with love. For love is your true healer. And miracles occur naturally in the presence of love.

Love is that which both created and sustains you. It's both your connection to your true reality and your alignment with the positive flow of the universe. Remembering this Divine truth—that love is who you are—is key to your healing, for your relationship to food is an area where your nervous system has lost the memory of its Divine intelligence. As you remember your own Divine truth, the cells of your body will remember theirs.

The body has a natural intelligence for creating and maintaining the perfect weight for you as long as the mind is aligned with its own perfection. Your perfect weight is coded into the natural patterns of your true self, as your perfect *everything* is coded into the patterns of your true self. The *real* you knows exactly how to inhabit your body in the healthiest, happiest way, and will do so automatically when you reestablish conscious connection with spiritual reality. By getting back to the truth of who you really are, you will get to a place where all your problems with weight have disappeared.

Reconnection to your spiritual reality is achieved through a force called here Divine Mind. It is a gift from God that will return you to your sanity, whenever you choose to call on it. Your compulsion is a place where, in your spiritual forgetfulness, you go temporarily insane if even for a moment—just long enough to open the bag of potato chips that's the trigger to your binge food mania. Lost in this forgetfulness, you become confused in your thinking and are unable to say “No” when something truly harmful to your well-being is posing as a supportive and loving friend. Divine Mind is the counterforce to this temporary insanity; when you are lost in moments of spiritual forgetfulness, it will remind you who you are.

The consciousness of the human race is dominated by fear, which has coalesced in your life in the form of a particular

behavioral pattern: compulsive overeating. In doing this course, you will command the spirit of fear to depart.

The power of love is perfect, creative, self-organizing, healthy, self-healing, and abundant. The power of fear is insane, destructive, violent, disease producing, and lacking. It expresses itself as an impostor self, perverting your true nature and making you behave in a way that is opposite of who you truly are. It is spiritually immature to underestimate the power of either of these two forces. Both of them are active, and both of them have their eyes on you. One wishes you well, and the other wishes you dead.

When subconscious forces lead a person into chronic self-destructive behavior over which their conscious mind has little or no control, this is called an addiction. Addiction is a system of self-generated behavior over which a merely self-generated psychological response system holds no sway. Addiction is when you can't stop. When some craziness takes over and you do or don't do whatever it is you do that blows it every time, ruins everything, snatches happiness from your hands, and leaves you desperate at what your life has become. It's life when lived at the behest of a wicked witch who seems to have taken over your brain and now uses it as her control room, directing you to do the most self-destructive things and then cackling with amusement as you lie writhing on the ground in misery right afterward.

Whether or not you are a food addict is something only you can say. Every food addict is a compulsive overeater, but not every compulsive eater is an addict. The principles in this course apply to both.

The love that will free you is a love that comes from *beyond* your mortal mind. It is a Divine intercession from a thought system beyond our own. Placing your problems in the hands of God, the situation it represents will be re-created. That which is imperfect will then become perfect.

Intellectually understanding your body, your mind-body connection, the physiology of exercise, or the realities of food metabolism mean little if you are addicted. In the words of Sigmund Freud, “Intelligence will be used in the service of the neurosis.” The fact that you yourself have anything figured out makes little or no difference to any of this. No matter how smart you are, or how much “work you’ve done on yourself,” you alone cannot outsmart the psychic force of compulsion and addiction. If you could, you would have done so by now. For this problem, entrenched and pernicious as it is, you need spiritual forces to help you. For this, you need God.

This course is not about food but about spirituality—the quest for a power that is greater than your own. It is not about your addiction, but about a force that is more powerful than your addiction. Our purpose is not to analyze your darkness but to turn on a light that, having been trapped within you, is now ready to blaze forth.

The spirit of fear is love inverted, or your own mental power turned against yourself. Have you ever found yourself saying something that you knew in your heart to be the opposite of how you really felt? In a moment of self-hate, your mind became so twisted as to convince you that you are acting out of self-love. “I’m eating all these cookies to *comfort myself*.” “I’m eating all this bread because it *nourishes me emotionally*.” It is not just your mind but also your body that can go insane. Compulsion and addiction render the life-sustaining proclivities of both mind and body temporarily inoperative. This is not a war that reason can win.

So ask yourself this question: *Are you willing, if even for a moment, to consider the possibility that God can outwit your insanity?* If you feel that on your own you simply cannot stop waging this war against yourself—a war that if unabated could eventually kill you—then allow yourself to surrender

to a fervent hope and to feel, if even for a moment, that the help you've prayed for has finally arrived.

You would not be reading this course if you had not already come to this place. Sometimes we need to admit the darkness within us, and at other times we need to admit the light. At the deepest level, it is not your food obsession that you most need to admit to yourself. At the deepest level, it is the memory of your Divine light that you most need to admit to yourself . . . the light of God that lives within you as the gift that it is: the solution to every problem, even this one.

*Dear God,
Please free me
from false appetites
and take away my pain.
Take from me my compulsive self,
and show me who I am.
Dear God,
Please give me a new beginning.
Unchain my heart
so I might live
a freer life at last.
Amen*

