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Opening Extract from...

Think More, Eat Less

Written by Janet Thomson

Published by Hay House

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THINK MORE EAT LESS

Use Your Mind to Change Your Body

JANET THOMSON MSc



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INTRODUCTION

Let's get straight down to it. You are fat and you want to be slim. Maybe you are a few kilos overweight, or perhaps you are obese – either way, I will help you to help yourself. I won't do it for you, though – and believe me, you'll be grateful for that, because the sense of achievement you are going to get once *you* have changed how you *think and feel, and look*, is priceless. Now that you've decided to take this step, the feeling is coming your way!

The title of this book is *Think More, Eat Less*, but it could just as easily have been *Eat Less and Think Differently* or *Eat Less, Think More*. In a way, all of these titles imply that you are *not thinking*, but in fact, you are *never* not thinking! You may let any old thought come and go, without actually controlling it, but you are *always thinking*. Your thoughts are the way that you communicate with yourself, so you are never not communicating with *yourself*. Let me say that again:

You are never not communicating with yourself.

So how good is your communication with *you*? We spend so much time thinking about how we come across to other people, but have you wondered how you'd come

across to *yourself*? If you'd just met you, what would your opinion be of how well you look after your body? What score would you give yourself out of 10 in that category? I'm guessing it wouldn't be top of the class, otherwise you wouldn't be overweight, *but* (don't worry, it's a 'good' but!) you *can* be top of the class – in fact you can be top of the school.

Once you've read this book, you can be so good that you become the teacher and inspire other people, because you'll probably want to share what you've learnt with everyone you know who can benefit from it. Not only will *you* feel good, but you will help *other people*, too, and that's one of the most rewarding feelings in the world. So, are you hungry for it? Pardon the pun, but as you'll discover, a sense of humour is very helpful for instigating change. If it's fun, it's easier!

I'm guessing that some aspects of your communication with *you* are already pretty good. I'll bet, for instance, that you are great at communicating excuses, at procrastinating, and at telling yourself what you 'should' do and then creating a thousand reasons why you *can't* or *don't* do it! If you're nodding as you read this, then I'm probably right! That's a good start. At least we're agreed that on some level you are already a good communicator – it's *what* you are communicating that's the problem.

The good news is that it's easier than you think to change negative self-communication. When you change what you communicate in the way that I'm going to show you, you *automatically* change to positive self-communication. In fact, it's so easy that it's a little

scary – this book could actually be a one-page leaflet! But if I told you it all right now, you might question it because of its simplicity. You've been putting so much energy and effort into doing the *opposite* that it's going to be much more fun for you to read the book and begin to find it for yourself.

I wonder how far into the book you will be before you 'get it'? When you *do* reach that point, whether it's in the first chapter or the last, every word, sentence or paragraph after it will enhance everything you can learn. You'll be amazed at the simplicity of it all, and wonder why other people can't see it too.

There are exercises for you to complete throughout the book. You can either write your responses straight on to the page, or keep a journal of your progress. It's important that you complete these exercises, because research has proven time and again that people who write down their experiences are more likely to learn from them.

The Canadian psychologist Paul Bloom says that 'The mind is a product of the brain. The mind is what the brain does.' So, what is *your* brain doing? And would you like to *change* it?

As you progress through the programme, you'll start to notice how you can change your mind – psychologically and emotionally in the way that you think – and at the same time, *physically* change the way you look and feel. Try to identify which techniques in particular are working well for you; notice what your lightbulb moments are, and when they occur (as they certainly will!) In doing so,

you'll learn how to adapt and change even faster; this is all part of you creating your *own* strategy.

Introducing Mabel

Hi, I'm Mabel,

I've completed this programme, and while I was doing it, I kept a journal of my experiences. I'll be happy to share this with you, but not just yet! First, here's a little bit about me. I was fat (my friends called it 'overweight', but I knew they really meant 'fat') and I didn't like it. In fact, I hated it. I tried many times to lose the fat. Once, when faced with a short-notice invitation to the wedding of a friend I hadn't seen in years, I lived on cabbage soup and boiled eggs for three weeks (yuk!). I certainly looked slimmer, but I spent most of the wedding clenching my buttocks in an effort not to fart. (Honestly, I'm sure I could've let out the tune to the whole Wedding March in perfect time if I'd put my mind to it!)

After that, I tried the high-protein diet (not so fondly remembered as the 'smelly breath' diet by my mates), until even I couldn't bear the smell. I got fed up with people asking me to 'breathe somewhere else', and I also had a constant backache (I learnt why that was when I read this book). Then came membership of a slimming club, where I diligently followed the strict regime, striving to reach what I had been told was my 'ideal weight'. That went quite well for a few weeks, but then I got fed up with measuring and counting everything I ate and started

to deviate. For 24 hours prior to the dreaded weekly weigh-in, I would stop eating, surviving on diet cola to stave off hunger pangs. Afterwards, I'd go home via the chip shop and vow to 'start again tomorrow'.

Of course, I've also tried numerous 'celebrity' diets, only to realize that most of these require a very deep purse, a personal chef, or a lot of time available to spend shopping and in the kitchen. I finally decided that I didn't want someone to look at my poo, or scold me publicly when I screwed up – I just wanted to know how to change my shape without denying myself all the foods I love. I wanted to stop craving the foods that made me fat; stop stuffing my face then regretting it later and feeling lousy; and stop settling for poor health. I was fed up with feeling exhausted. I was fed up with feeling fed up! I wanted to be able to get into the nice clothes that had been hanging unworn in my wardrobe for longer than I cared to admit. I knew my overeating was ridiculous, and I was certain that inside me there <u>really was</u> a thin person just waiting to get out – despite the fact that I was sabotaging all my weight-loss efforts and keeping her hidden!

Finally, it dawned on me that I needed to control what went on in my <u>head</u> before I could control what went into my mouth. That was a revelation! Actually, I can't believe it took me so long to work it out! When I started this programme I was a bit sceptical, and while I was doing it, it wasn't all plain sailing – I learnt the difference between 'simple' and 'easy' very early on! I want to tell you, though, that I have been where you are now. I'm going to share some of my thoughts and experiences with

you in this book and I hope they inspire you, and maybe even make you smile! Everything you read is real.

Doing this programme has not only changed my body – it has changed my life. Actually, let me rephrase that: the programme itself didn't change things, I changed my life. I took responsibility for the changes and made them happen in a way that was right for me. You can do this too. You are going to experience a sense of change and achievement that will make you tingle when it becomes a reality! And your story might inspire someone else, as I hope mine inspires you. The only thing that comes close to equalling the incredible feeling of achievement I have now is the hope that I can help others experience it too.

Mabel x

Measuring Up

Before you begin, take some measurements so you can accurately monitor your progress at certain stages of the programme. First, weigh yourself on some reliable scales. These must be the *only* scales you use in the following months, because scales vary according to how they are calibrated and where you position them, and your weight varies depending what time of day you weigh yourself, so all these things need to be constant and repeatable.

Next, get a tape measure and measure the sites shown on the table below (if possible, get someone to do it for you). Record the measurements in the table below, or in your journal.

Date	Weight	Arm 1	Arm 2	Bust	Tummy	Hips	Thigh 1	Thigh 2

If you would like to use a fuller weight chart, you can download one for free from my website, www.powertochange.me.uk. Click on the *Think More, Eat Less* link on the home page and type in the password 'Positive Attitude'.

When you measure yourself, make sure the tape is level and not twisted. And *always measure at the widest point for each body site*: there's no point measuring your waist if below it you have a bulging tummy – that's why the table says 'tummy' and not waist! For some people, the widest point for the tummy measurement will be on their belly button; for others (depending on where they store their fat), it may be several centimetres below. It's the same thing with your hips – technically, you would take the measurement in line with the end of the pubic bone, but adapt this if this is not your *widest point*. When you measure individual thighs, do exactly the same thing.

You can't beat noticing that your clothes are getting looser, so, in addition to measuring yourself, find a pair of jeans or trousers and a top that are currently too tight for you and try them on every week so that you can see a real difference. Remember, scales can be unreliable and your body weight can fluctuate by 1.8 kg (4 lbs) within any given day, so you *must* use other measures of your progress to get a balanced view of your progress.

I recommend that you *do not repeat any of the measurements*, including your weight, until you have completed the two-week Healthy Starter Plan in chapter 12. After that, measure yourself once a week, and weigh yourself once every two weeks at the most. *You don't need to weigh yourself every day* – this is not a diet, it is a plan for your mind and body that will get you to a healthy place physically that just happens to include being a healthy weight. How you approach the programme mentally is vital to your success. If possible, get together with a friend or a small group of friends at a set time each week to take the measurements. Research has shown that the support of a group can be very beneficial. I must add though, this is *only* the case if the overall mental attitude is one of support and encouragement. It is not a chance to get together for a right old moan, or to put the world to rights! Be disciplined and use the group only for encouragement and support, and for sharing ideas. You can also join our Facebook group, *Think More Eat Less* for support and on-going tips and updates – you can also ask me questions.

Chapter 1
'I GOTTA FEELING'

Why are you reading this book? Just take a moment to consider that question properly. If your answer is something like, 'Because I am fed up with being fat and I want to be slim', how do you know that's what you want? Seriously, how do you *know*?

Consider this concept – you don't 'have' feelings, you 'do' feelings. Take love, for example. Think of a person, or a pet, or even a thing that you love deeply. Would you say, 'I *have* love for them', or would you say, 'I love them', making love something you *experience* or *do* rather than *have*. Forget the rules of English grammar for a moment, and think of feelings as verbs, in that you *do* them as opposed to *have* them. Now think about how you are 'doing' knowing that you want to be slim. At some level, that 'knowing' is based on a feeling.

This book is going to teach you so many exciting things about how you 'do' feelings. We are taught that we process all the information we receive through our senses in our brains, and of course, technically, that's

true. However, there is a clear mind–body connection that ensures we transmute (change and adapt) those chemical brain processes into sensations and feelings in different parts of our bodies. For example, have you ever felt weak at the knees? You don't have a brain in your knees, so how is it that you can feel something there that is based on an *emotion*? We know we have nerves in our knees and that they tell the brain when our knees are hurt, that makes perfect sense, but how can an emotion create a feeling in our knees that literally makes them weaken or wobble? There are other emotion-based sensations that present themselves as physical symptoms, including butterflies in the tummy or tension headaches.

Your Mind Affects Your Body

The reality is this: there is on-going, non-stop communication between your mind and your body. You are *one* unit made up of *two* different corresponding parts. And here comes a really important point: one of those parts is much more powerful than the other. Your *mind* can directly affect the health of your body. Your mind also drives your behaviours and your body is simply a visible representation of what has been going on in your mind – all your thoughts about yourself. Put simply, you (and everyone else) can see the effects of what goes on in your mind by looking at the state and shape of your body. If you constantly think, 'I can't be bothered', you are likely to have a different body shape from someone who thinks, 'I *will* make the effort'.

In modern medicine, the body has long been treated as a totally separate entity from the mind, often at great cost to the patient. Louise Hay, the founder of Hay House (who publish this book), was one of the very first people to recognize that our thoughts and our feelings affect our health in very specific ways – either positively or negatively – and that we can use our minds to change the health of our bodies. Today, many others are following in her wake, developing new ways of thinking and behaving that can positively impact on our health – physically, mentally and emotionally. Recently, the ground-breaking American scientist Bruce Lipton wrote *The Biology of Belief*, an astonishing account of how our thoughts *literally* change the biology of our cells. The idea that our minds affect our bodies had been dismissed as 'New Age' thinking for years, but it can now be proven at the chemical level, right down to changes in DNA. I will teach you much more about this later in the book.

Turning Information Into Action

Let's look at how your emotions drive your behaviour. If you have two opposing feelings, the strongest of these will determine how you behave. It's not possible to feel good and bad at the same time, because one feeling will dominate. For example, you want to be slimmer than you are now, yet a part of your mind still wants the feeling it gets when you eat too much. Up until now, that has been the dominant feeling and that's why you are overweight. So, do you want to change that feeling now?

Exercise

Stand in front of a full-length mirror with as few clothes on as possible. Spend a few minutes (or as long as it takes) having a good look at yourself as a physical being. Allow yourself to acknowledge all the things you don't like about being fat. You may think, 'I just hate it!' but try to consider exactly *what* it is that you hate. For example, you might think: 'I hate getting undressed in front of someone', or 'I get out of breath whenever I go upstairs', or 'I can't buy the clothes I want'. You get the kind of thing? Now make a list of the top six things you hate about being fat and write them in the table below or in your journal; leave the second column blank for the next part of the exercise. Make sure you start each point with, 'I hate'.

WHAT I HATE ABOUT BEING FAT	HOW THIS MAKES ME FEEL
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

Now think about how each of these things makes you *feel*. For example, 'Getting undressed in front of someone makes me feel ashamed and embarrassed', or 'Getting out of breath makes me

feel unhealthy', or 'Not being able to buy the clothes I want makes me feel frumpy'. When you have identified the *feelings* you associate with each of the six things you hate about being fat, write them down in the second column. Make sure you start each one with, 'I feel'.

Why do you think that, despite hating these feelings, you have still been *doing* the behaviours that make you fat?

The next step is to identify six things that you've been doing on a regular, even daily, basis that have been making you fat, and keeping you fat. Your answers might be: 'I eat chocolate and sweets every day', or 'I keep eating even when I've had enough', or 'I buy and eat junk food', or 'I dish up more than I need', or 'I sit down too much instead of being active – I'm lazy', or 'I eat fast without thinking about what or how much I'm eating'. Spend some time now and honestly identify what your *behaviours* are. Write them down in the table below, making sure you start each one with 'I' so you can begin to take responsibility and associate deeply with what you are learning. Remember, this is all about *you*! Leave the second column blank for the next part of the exercise.

BEHAVIOURS	DESIRED FEELING
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

Now think about the *feeling* you get when you are 'doing' these behaviours, or more importantly, the feeling you *want* to get! For example, you might say: 'I want to feel comforted', or 'I want to feel full and satisfied', or 'I want to feel as though I don't care about being fat'. Write your answers in the second column. If you can't think of a feeling – think again! All behaviours, big or small, generate a feeling of some kind, and doing nothing is by default doing something. Often, especially with comfort eating, the desired feeling is to feel numbness – to blank out the negative thoughts you are currently experiencing. Whatever the feeling is, it ends with 'and happy', otherwise you wouldn't want to feel it. Even if you do something that makes you feel *unhappy*, there's some benefit in your feeling unhappy and that makes it a worthwhile feeling.

Do You Want To Harm Or To Heal?

Have you ever stopped to ask yourself how you actually benefit from this kind of eating behaviour? Would you suddenly get a knife and slash away at your arm to relieve boredom, or to feel comforted? Of course not – that would be madness! There's a name for that type of behaviour – self-harming – and it's a symptom of great mental distress. Well, I have news for you: overeating and making your body fat is a clear case of self-harming! In fact, in some ways, it's even worse than the more obvious forms because it's insidious. That means it's sneaky and deceptive – it's self-harming by stealth. It's so stealthy that you can convince yourself you are not self-harming – but you are. Let me say that again, in another way:

Every time you overeat or drink high-calorie junk, especially when you don't need food for energy (i.e.

when you are already satisfied), you are deliberately harming yourself.

Overeating is no better than self-harming with a knife – you just kid yourself that it is. When you harm with a knife there is clear evidence of the harm in the form of scars. But look again, your excess body fat is clearer and more visible than any scar – it's a sign to you and everyone else that you have been self-harming.

It's time for some honesty now. When you eat to numb emotional pain, or because you don't think you are worth the effort it takes to be healthy, you are using the same technique that an alcoholic or a drug addict uses to bury, numb or forget an unpleasant feeling or difficult circumstances. Rather than changing their circumstances, they artificially and temporarily change how they *feel*. The trouble is, when they regain normal consciousness they crave a return to the escapism of drink or drugs. Instead of dealing with their problems, they amplify and add to them. Being a 'foodoholic' might not sound as bad as being an alcoholic, but believe me when I say it is – if not worse. Shocked? If so, good! It's time for a wake-up call. Remember this:

Overeating is not a form of escapism – it's self-harming.

Some people are 'professional victims' of life's problems, deriving pleasure from feeling unlucky and unhappy because it defines them. Does being fat define you? Is it *who* you are, or is it *what* you are? Think about this question and write your answer down below:

Being fat is _____

If you think it's *who* you are, then you are wrong. Being fat is not who you are, it's merely *what* you are, and you can start to change that right now. Being fat is a physical symptom, or indicator, of your behaviours, in the same way that a scar is the symptom of a past trip or fall. But while some scars are for life, being fat does not have to be for life. It does not define you unless you choose to let it, and opt for becoming a victim. I doubt that this is the case with you, though, because you are reading this book. That tells me (and you) that you want to change and that you want to know how to do it.

Exercise

Now I want you to think of ways of generating the feelings you want through behaviours that are *not* self-harming and fat-making. This exercise is something you can return to again and again, as certain things can make you happy on one day, but not on another. For example, if the feeling you want is 'to escape', or to 'feel numb' in order to avoid a negative thought, watching a movie or a natural history programme like *Planet Earth* will completely take your focus away from you and on to the bigger picture, which is a good thing. However, if it's a gorgeous sunny day, shutting yourself indoors to watch TV may not be the best idea. Similarly, if you want to feel happy and you love walking, taking a hike may have the desired effect in fine weather, but if you make yourself do it when it's cold and wet, you may end up with a different feeling than the one you want!

As you think about this, try to come up with a variety of ways of generating the feelings you desire. I've given some examples below; write your ideas in the blank columns.

DESIRED FEELING	ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIOURS
To escape	Have a long soak in the bath with an inspiring book
To be in control	Make or create something – write a poem, paint a picture, make a meal from a recipe
To be happy	Listen to music; look at photographs of happy occasions; call or visit friends
To spoil myself	Have a pampering beauty treatment; go somewhere special (not food related)

Now, it may seem like I'm pointing out the obvious here, but there's a good reason for this, so bear with me. You need to start believing and accepting that if you want to look and *be* different physically, you have to *do* different things. This becomes easier if you take some time to think about what you can do *instead* of overeating that will still give you the feelings you want.

The problem with the whole concept of dieting is that people do things that they don't enjoy in order to reach a goal. Then, when they get there (assuming they can do what they don't enjoy for long enough), they naturally stop doing the things they didn't enjoy and the weight goes back on. This is because all the reasons they overate in the first place are still there and they haven't come up with an alternative behaviour to meet those needs! But *you* are not going to make that mistake – you are going to address this issue of changing your body by changing your mind – for good – are you not?

Exercise

Before we go any further, let me ask you just what it is that you want to achieve with this programme? I mean specifically, which dress size do you want to be? Or for men, which trouser size? Write your answer below:

CURRENT DRESS SIZE	DESIRED DRESS SIZE

I have deliberately not put weight as a goal here, and I will explain why later on in the book, although we *will* take weight into account. We will also add a time frame to this, but for now, focus clearly on what you want to achieve and start to believe it will happen. Start to see in your mind (or visualize) how you will look and feel a month *after* you have achieved your goal, once you are enjoying all the benefits. Then visualize yourself three months after that, then six months, so it is not the actual achieving of the goal that is first and foremost in your mind, but the months *after* you have already achieved it. As you visualize, make sure you take notice of your new behaviours. What do you see yourself doing now you have made the changes and lost the weight? How is it different from how you behaved before?

There are two important times for controlling your thoughts and feelings, and they are influenced by how your brain works, and on what 'wavelength'.

1. **Just before you go to sleep.** When you are relaxed, your brain uses alpha waves and as a result, you are more creative and better able to use your imagination. You will see in a later chapter how vital your imagination is in the process of change, but briefly, if you can see yourself doing something in your mind in a powerful way, then you can also do it 'in reality'. If you visualize in this way often enough, what you are seeing in your mind actually *becomes* your behaviour. Some people do this all the time with negative thoughts and projections. How many times have you heard someone say, 'I *knew* that would

happen!' when things go wrong? They manifested the event through negative visualization – they focused on the worst thing that could happen, literally made a movie out of it in their minds, and it happened! The technique of visualization must only be used with *positive* visualizations, and as you do this repetitively and with purpose, watch how you can change your 'luck' from bad to good.

2. **When you wake up.** From today onward, dedicate at least one minute to seeing yourself as successful in your goal as soon as you wake up and before you go to sleep. Remember to visualize yourself *after* you have achieved your goal. Are you worth two minutes of your time every single day? You'd better believe that you are!

Mabel's Journal

OK, today's the day I start yet another diet! Actually, the Introduction tells me it's not a diet, which is a relief, because I've done enough of those to last a lifetime! Not sure what to expect – this one seems like a very different approach. If it does what it says on the cover, though, I'll be a happy (and slim) girl. In the Introduction it says, 'The mind is what the brain does.' I'm not sure what my brain is doing most of the time, so this should be interesting. I might get more than I bargained for!!

I'm told it's a good idea to keep a journal of my progress as I work through each chapter of the programme, so

here goes. Just done the measuring and weighing. This is the heaviest I've ever been! I can't believe it! And I'm a dress size 20. Can I really get down to a size 12?

'I Gotta Feeling' – strange to have a Black Eyed Peas song title as a chapter heading. Already though, I can hear the song playing in my head. I wonder if that's the idea? Is tonight gonna be a good night??

Since I finished this chapter, I've been reflecting on the idea that I'm never not communicating... with myself! Seems so obvious now I think about it, but I really do communicate better with just about anyone than I do with myself. Makes me realize that if I spoke to other people the way I 'talk' to myself, I wouldn't have any friends, or a job! Also realized that I struggle with opposing thoughts: on the one hand I want to be slim, on the other, I want to eat and eat! So if the thought that evokes the strongest emotion 'wins', then it's no wonder I'm fat – I'm REALLY emotional about food! And I can't really imagine myself as being slim. I can't really imagine myself winning the lottery either, although I would like to!

Did the mirror exercise today – that was painful! Had to use the mirror in the spare room because I won't have a full-length one in my bedroom. Interesting that on my list of 'Things I hate about being fat', number one was, 'Looking in the mirror and seeing myself!' All I could come up with when asked, 'How does this make you feel?' was 'Like shit!'. This might not be as easy as I thought. Even though I know exactly what has made me fat – eating

rubbish and sitting on my butt too much – I have never really thought about eating to get a feeling. Sometimes I eat just to relieve boredom, but other times it really is to push a negative thought or experience out of my head by focusing on food instead.



OMG! I've just read the bit about overeating being just like self-harming!!!! There was a girl at college who always wore long sleeves, even in hot weather, to cover up the scars on her arms from self-harming. Everyone felt so bad for her but they didn't know what to do or say to help her. I wonder if people feel sorry for me for harming myself with food??!!! I don't like that thought one

bit. Definitely going to work on my 'Things to do instead of eating to get a good feeling' list. I'm going to start now by having a soak in the bath instead of rushing in the shower for two minutes.

Since reading this chapter I've spent the last three nights visualizing myself as slim. Not easy – I can sort of see it, but not very clearly, and it doesn't really look like me. I bought a magazine today with a not-too-skinny model on the cover, and pasted a photo of my head on her body – that helped. Going to look at her every day and focus on my end goal. Wow, this book has certainly got my brain cells going! I am cautiously optimistic now that I actually can change :o)