

ISSUE 16

Dieting

These days, most people associate the word “dieting” with losing weight. But the word actually has many shades of meaning. Some dieters want actually to gain weight, not lose it. Others need to adjust their food intake due to health reasons that have nothing directly to do with weight; they may be allergic to some foods or be deficient in some minerals or vitamins. So, diabetics will avoid some kinds of food, while cancer victims will gorge themselves on others. In addition, some diets are prescribed by religious or social rules. And, of course, the most general definition of a diet is “that which is customarily eaten.”

Why do many diets fail?

- (1) Ordinary people don't know enough about nutrition.
- (2) Most people lack will power.
- (3) People look for shortcuts (such as starving themselves or following a fad diet) rather than make the necessary lifestyle changes.
- (4) People are dependent on commercial diet medications.



-shade : (sth) that is only slightly different from others -adjust : make small changes to (sth)

-allergy : medical condition that causes one to become sick or make one's skin become covered with red marks as a reaction to (sth) one eats, breathes, or touches

-deficient : not having enough of (sth) -gorge : eat until one is too full to eat any more

Sample Answers

(A)

There is only one thing people need to know to lose weight: they have to burn more calories every day than they *store*. Usually, this means getting more exercise and eating less. But no matter how one accomplishes it, it is entirely a mathematical process.

(B)

Most *fad* diets *work*, for a while, often with very dramatic results over a short period of time. But most followers soon *revert* to their old habits, and their weight goes back to the old levels. Even in the case of sensible diets, the pattern is usually good progress at first, but then the curve begins to flatten as the body adjusts to the new foods it is consuming. In fact, even extreme solutions such as *liposuction* often fail, because people do not change their lifestyles sufficiently.

Speak Your Mind

1. Are you worried about your weight? Why or why not?
2. Is it easy for you to stay *fit*? Why or why not?
3. Do you know any good way to lose weight?
4. Ordinary people, especially men, gain weight after getting married. Do you have any ideas why?
5. Talk about problems caused by being overweight.
6. Do you know that many people still suffer from being abnormally underweight? What is a good way to gain weight?
7. Who do you think is more self-conscious about their weight, males or females? Why?

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F : You men are lucky!

M : Why do you think so?

F : The ads, the movies, TV, videos — all the media focus on beautiful women being as skinny as poles! Men are allowed to be their natural selves who don't have to starve themselves or wear tight clothes that hide their weight.

M : Well, I agree that men are lucky if they have a beautiful wife. But women who look that way are lucky, too. They are healthy and popular, and they probably have a rich husband as a result. Men aren't so lucky, because they can't get by on their looks alone.

F : You're *disgraceful*! These are exactly the chauvinistic attitudes I was complaining about. I thought that you at least would be more sensitive to the *plight* of women.

M : Whoa, *slow down*. I'm not trying to insult anyone, I'm just describing the world as I see it. Two hundred years ago, women were expected to have large, round bodies, because their motherhood roles were emphasized. Skinny women were undesirable then. But now the focus has *shifted*. Motherhood is less important now, so the main purpose of a woman is to look good so as to add *status* to her husband's social role.

F : What! You're even worse than I thought! How can any sane person believe such *drivel*? Women and men are exactly the same and should have exactly the same rights and privileges.

M : Some rich women have boy-toys of their own, don't they? Isn't that the same thing?

F : Of course it is. How much respect do the *boy-toys* get from other men? Or even from the women who "own" them? Not much! It should be the same with women — if their only goal in life is to be a trophy for some man, there's something wrong with them.

M : Okay, okay, I'm sorry I got you so upset. I'm just joking. I don't really believe any of this nonsense; I just wanted to see your reaction. So, why don't we get something to eat and *make up*? *My treat!*

F : No, I'm sorry. I can't join you for lunch today.
Can I *take a rain check*?

M : Why not?

F : I'm watching my weight. There's a big new position being created in my office, and I've got to *look the part* if I'm going to get it.

