

# Chapter 1

## **Your Body Revival:** *Weight Loss Straight Talk*

It appears that losing weight has become one of mankind's social pastimes, a big industry for the resourceful businessperson and a specialty in the medical community. Motivation for the overweight and plans to follow in the quest for trimness are the subjects of numerous books, magazines, clubs, clinics and commercial weight-loss centers around the world. There are neighborhood programs and online support groups that point the anxious and needy in the right direction, but they serve more as a crutch than a fix. I could dig in and present a string of suggestions on why and how to lose weight with psychological underpinnings, but will they penetrate, provoke and stimulate? Even the optimist in me thinks probably not. Will the ordinary words, the ever-loving clichés rephrased grab hold and shake the hungry and dismayed reader into action, or will they evaporate like steam from a boiling kettle?

Not wanting to exercise the involuntary reflex of pitching a “sure-fire” weight-loss program, I have prepared a heartfelt, long-overdue, point-blank approach that I believe can do no worse.

It goes something like this...

My name is Dave Draper and I'm your friend. What I am about to say is harsh and disturbing—it is meant to be—but in no way is it designed to violate or demean you, the reader. We are, in spite of all our strengths, proliferated with weakness. Let the strong rally and wrestle to the Earth's rugged surface a fair share of those limitations and set a high mark for the less brave that surround us.

The masses of the modern world are getting fatter and less fit every day, an inexcusable combination that profiles man's deteriorating backbone, character and instincts. Where we were once hardy, square-shouldered and erect, we are now stooped and burdened. Where once we ran and played, we now stumble and grope.

The precious fresh fruits, vegetables and hearty proteins that nourish our bodies have lost their appeal and been replaced by sugar, fat and chemicals in a bag, to go.

Like sheep gone astray, we are accompanying one another to the slaughter: dumb, fat, lazy and meek. It doesn't stop there. We know better and we ignore the dilemma. We deny and we procrastinate. We avoid considering the eventual consequences of our over-consuming as if by magic they might not one day visit us, personally. Stroke, heart attack, diabetes, shortness of breath? Oh, no, thanks, I gave at the office. Maybe next year. We find comfort in the overwhelming presence of others of similar structure and countenance and convince ourselves of the normalcy of corpulence. The descriptive word "fat" is no longer a socially correct term and we shy of its use should we offend the deceived ego and start a war. Veiled eyes dart to another distraction (TV, video games, obsessive work, food, drink) and the pain of reality is quieted again.

My harshness is kindness in disguise. Does one tell a child about to thrust his hand into the beehive to enjoy the honey?

We can fix the problem. You who dare read this verbal affront to self-destruction—one's continued contribution to a fattened and deteriorating body—are only a nod from the solution. Stop here for a moment and consider the common crossroads before you.

Each road, at first sight, is similar in appearance and takes you along your way in everyday travel. One, a common road, goes left and abruptly downhill with no margins on the food you eat, no exercise, no real disciplines, no hope. Discarded fast-food bags, Big Gulps and beer cans litter the muddy ditches and blinking neon—Eat 'n' Go—illuminates the brooding, overcast sky. The other road bends to the right with a gradual uphill grade that wanders through tilled farmland, orchards and meadows of grazing cattle. It's called the high road where the air is fresh, the water is pure and good eating habits are

shared generously. Exciting workouts charge the body and there's a gym just over the hill and another in a warm, sunny valley.

Do you want to be among the fat and the lazy? Is that a self-image you are willing to accept? Do you like to be out of control? Are you content being one of the mindless masses, the ordinary on their way down the wrong road? Don't be offended, deny, rationalize or blame. You have passions and opinions; you protect your rights and options and you're a good person with intelligence and aspiration. Furthermore, you have arms and legs and a will. Why not apply these qualities to the preservation of your life? Gather them together, multiply them like earnings and enhance your days.

Your choice, your decision: left or right?

What difference does it make which way I should go? Why, if not asked to pause, I would surely go slightly downhill as it appears to be easier and, by evidence of its broadness and trodden surface, it is the road most traveled, probably safer. That's for me: easier and safer.

Think twice. Easier and safer leads to rounder and softer amid a crowd of the dull-eyed. Go right and feel the wind, the flexing of your muscles and, ah... hear the sound of music, one sure step at a time, day after glorious day. There's a perceptible difference—an appealing difference—in the effort of travel and soon you define it as stimulating and invigorating, a fulfilling adventure without which you would despair.

The choice, to be effective and comprehensive, needs to originate in the center of your being where hope resides. Only when you review your nature and are dismayed by its composition, only when you are struck with purpose, impelled by its power and visualize transformation, will you raise your head and say, "I'm going right; I'm taking the high road, where life is lived and honored and cherished."

Somewhere along our journey we have forgotten our responsibility—our obligation—to care for our body and maintain its well-being. Respect for the fragile and intricate vehicle in which we travel is seldom considered. The least we can do is feed it nourishing food and gratefully, lovingly nurture it with exercise. There are rare exceptions, and I suspect you and I are listed among them, but the majority are ignorant, just along for the ride till the ride gives out.

### **No one stands above the fight**

I'm careful not to judge, ridicule or condescend, yet the message I choose to relate is hard and must be driven home hard. What good is it if the facts and figures are offered with euphemisms and mildness as the intended recipients are stroked and lulled and treated as if fatness is a common dilemma we should one day address?

It is not unlikely in some instances that obesity is the symptom of a sickness of far greater significance than poor body composition and an overtaxed system. Consider apathy, the boundless spirit tethered, calmed to complacency, and void of motivation, aspiration and interest. It's not hopelessness; it's never having hoped. Exercise and diet? Not now; tomorrow, perhaps. Pass the potato chips and remote control, please.

Only with you fully on my side can we confront the topic before us. I have spoken candidly about the ever-growing condition of modern man's waistline. The subject is serious and delicate and, therefore, difficult to approach. How do I speak of man's fatness without hurting, angering or demeaning the beholder while none of these notions are intended? I pause, write, delete and pause again.

Are you still with me? I'm somewhere between 50 and 100 and not without my loss of years. Though I've never let go of hard exercise and right eating, I romped in bad habits long enough to crash. Thus, as I take aim at mankind and ask where his sense of responsibility has gone or remind him of the gift of life, I am not without being wounded by my own words. It's your obligation, I shout, to care for your body, mind and soul, and I submerge in bittersweet humiliation. I have made the mistakes. The time I lost has been my gain; I'm wiser and able to tell you.

Take hold of your life with thanksgiving.