

The Best Life Diet

By: Bob Greene, 2006

Published by: Simon & Schuster

Reviewed: June 2007

PROS

Imagine a diet book that starts off by telling you that you're not going to lose weight for the first four weeks! That's the kind of dieting reality and honesty that you'll get as Greene, an exercise physiologist and certified personal trainer, unfolds his tips in *The Best Life Diet*.

Greene challenges you to be honest with yourself - why are you overweight, why do you want to lose weight, and why have you been unable to maintain your weight loss in the past? This process of self-discovery is quite often emotional, as attested to by Oprah Winfrey, who describes her own weight loss experiences in the book's foreword.

Greene's approach to weight loss is sensible. He first focuses on healthy habits such as quitting smoking (a must before you even attempt to lose weight), eating breakfast daily, and increasing physical activity. Once your meal patterns have improved, Greene encourages you to remove unhealthy foods from your diet, and add more wholesome foods such as vegetables, fruit, and whole grains.

CONS

Greene's nutrition criteria for his Best Life seal of approval logo on foods is only generally described and should be more clearly defined. We would have liked to see the rationale and references for questionable statements regarding lean tissue and bone, signs of body fat loss, and vitamin K recommendations. The information on calcium is incomplete, disjointed, and not well indexed. The concept of "Anything Goes Only" foods confused all of us. The amount of food in the sample meal plans does not always jive with the recommended number of servings in Canada's Food Guide. The sample meal plans are poorly laid out, and recipe photos seem out of place, appearing a good fifty pages before the recipe section even begins.

While we strongly agree with the importance of physical activity, there is a clear gap in the activity levels prescribed by Greene. In his five levels of activity, there is no designated level for the average dieter (and non-dieter alike) who likes to work out 3-4 times a week participating in both cardiovascular and strength training exercises.

BOTTOM LINE

The Best Life Diet is better than your average diet book. The mindful approach to eating is refreshing. The nutrition and exercise information is at times confusing and potentially inaccurate. Improving the overall flow and layout of the book would make this book a much easier and more enjoyable read.