

Mirror Mirror On The Wall Who Is The Fattest Of Us All?

Did you know that 75% of women believe they are fat even though only 25% are actually considered medically overweight? Did you know that 75% of 4th Grade girls report that they are on a diet? Did you know that dieting can be an eating disorder as serious as binge eating? Given the impact of body image on women's consciousness, it is not surprising that eating disorder is becoming a critical problem in our age of affluence.

It is estimated that Bulimia affects between one and two per cent of women aged 15 to 40. Anorexia is estimated to affect between one and five teenage women in every 100,000, and the age at which most cases develop is 16 to 17. Most of the victims are females. Take a look at this confession from a young woman who is working on her recovery from an eating disorder. The excerpt comes from the book "It's Not About Food", written by Carol Emery Normandi M.S. MF.C.C. and Laurelee Roark M.A.CCHT, founders of Beyond Hunger Inc.

"I began dieting at 13 and started throwing up at 16, after I saw another friend do it. At first, it was just something I'd do now and then, after I'd eaten too much or when I felt too fat. But soon it seemed like I was eating too much too often and feeling fat all the time. In college, I started running to try to keep my weight down, but I couldn't stop eating. The academic and social stress was just too much for me. I remember at night going from vending machine to vending machine, trying to fill this insatiable need to eat and then feeling so disgusted afterward I would find the nearest bathroom and throw up. Only then would I feel calm enough to sit down and study. Soon it became a way of life for me, and I was throwing up 3 to 4 times a day. I lived with hatred and disgust with myself for this behavior, but there was nothing I could do to stop it. I would begin everyday by telling myself that I was going on a diet and would stop eating and then wouldn't have to throw up. I would end every day by hating myself for all the food I ate, for all the times I threw up and for how fat my body was. I was in the middle of a destructive, depressing cycle and couldn't see my way out." (Laura)

Laura's situation typifies the hatred many women feel for their bodies. A cultural obsession with thinness has created a disquieting definition of the "perfect body." Advertisements, TV, movies are proclaiming a standard that is genetically and physically impossible for 75% of female bodies. Most young girls grow up with a hatred of their bodies that is often manifested in depression, anger, isolation. Many resort to eating disorders to quell the emptiness they feel within.

Food issues are not about food; they are about the way women feel about themselves and their bodies. True recovery, say Carol and Laurelee in their book, "It's Not About Food", is "looking at your eating disorder as a friend instead of an enemy, letting it teach you who you are and what you want from life. It is healing your relationship not only with food, but with yourself and your spirit."

Like Laura, Carol and Laurelee both grew up feeling that they were never thin enough; both were trapped in an eating disorder, an obsession with food and hatred for their own bodies which they felt were never perfect enough for acceptance. "Thinness was my god and I was on a spiritual quest. I sought refuge from pain in the churches of Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig and Dr. Atkins diets. I was looking outside myself to fix the ache inside me," writes Laurelee.

Both worked through their despair to recovery by learning to embrace their bodies and tapping into their bodies' wisdom. The result is not only their ability to stabilize and maintain normal weight and eating behavior for several years now but also "Beyond Hunger Inc.", a non-profit organization they founded to help women who are desperate about the severity of their eating disorders. Using workshop techniques that help women break the cycle of vicious eating by going deep within their bodies' wisdom, Carol and Laurelee have turned their personal journey into a universal one--to preserve the integrity of women's body image by stripping away the artificial constructs of cultural pressures.

Their work will be a consolation for many who do not know how to begin. A woman in the depths of an eating disorder may think that there is no way out of her pain. But Carol and Laurelee assure them that "there is a cure and it is right inside each and every one of us."

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

Mary Desaulniers Ph.D will be interviewing Carol and Laurelee of Beyond Hunger Inc. on her Internet Radio show "Reclaiming The Body's Wisdom." Details at <http://www.GreatBodyat50.com>