



# STRATEGIES OF THE Rich&Thin

By Ellen Laura

## HOW TO LIVE A HEALTHY LIFE AMIDST GREAT TEMPTATION

AS A YOUNG WOMAN, I had tremendous temptations to overcome. There were no role models of healthy eating and exercising when I grew up. Nobody I knew was thin or rich. My father owned a grocery store, and he made the best Italian sausage in central New York. People drove hundreds of miles for that sausage. I knew the names of every kind of pasta on the planet from linguini to rigatoni to capellini and ditalini and dozens more. I came from a lineage of lusty eaters.

Considering the environment I grew up in, I should be suffering from the same problems that my family members have today: overweight, lethargic, depressed, and some with more serious conditions of high blood pressure, crippling arthritis and diabetes. Yet, when I turned 50, I gracefully moved through menopause and did not gain an extra pound. Today, I weigh 108 lbs. and that

is actually less than I weighed when I graduated from high school.

Over the years, I have learned the best methods to stay not only thin but also sane and happy. The greater blessing is that one of my spiritual gifts is my ability to teach and mentor people on the path to healthy living, and in turn, my students drive me to search for even better answers every day.

### WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

By the time I was 14, I had focused on learning an important skill: I became expert at bending rules, but not breaking them. This later served me in two ways that have brought me great success: 1) I became masterful at studying the rules in every situation, including eating and exercise – so I could figure out which I could bend and which I could not break without negative conse-

quences. This was essentially understanding the difference between freedom and slavery and wisdom and stupidity. 2) I learned to search for my happiness where the rule makers and the masses were not looking.

Yet, I didn't head directly for health, wealth and beauty; rather, I set forth on a spiritual quest when I was 19. My longing was to experience God, truth and love – not riches or fame or a svelte figure. In my 20s I began fasting and eliminating heavy toxic foods as part of a spiritual purification. I learned about nutrition by working in spas, taking hundreds of hours of courses from Eastern and Western doctors, as well as lots of trial and error. I fasted and ate raw foods for five years in my late 20s and upset my digestive system. When I found Ayurvedic medicine and eating – the system used in India by royalty and

the highly educated – I learned that fasting was not correct for my particular physiology.

On the other hand, when I was carrying around an extra 10 pounds, it disturbed my meditation practice. For years I wondered why I couldn't meditate or pray if I had eaten too much. Finally I gave up trying to understand the why and accepted it was one of my limitations. I was not destined to be a round-figured cherub.

Up to my early 30s, I couldn't understand why any woman would want muscles because I had only two images in my mind: super athletic women and those like me – softer and more feminine. I was almost 40 before I realized that yoga alone was not enough to keep my stomach flat and my behind up where it belonged. So I reluctantly added strengthening exercises to my health regime.

It wasn't until 1997 that I found the next key piece to remaining effortlessly thin: I learned about brain chemistry and how low serotonin could drive me to emotional eating and abandoning my exercise program when stressed. That's when I finally connected the dots. Even though I experienced successful weight loss in the '80s and early '90s, when I eliminated the 'poison foods' like wheat and sugar, I still suffered from backsliding into old habits. I could pile on 10 pounds in a month, especially when stressed. So, my next discovery was learning how to eat to keep my brain chemistry balanced and that's what helped me glide through menopause to look and feel great today.

#### A FOCUSED SPIRITUAL EFFORT

The priority through my life has been spiritual development. So every decision I've made has taken that into consideration. If I made a career move, even if it didn't make sense to anyone else, I focused on finding work that would develop virtuous habits and help break my deeply ingrained patterns of negativity. The same with any geographical move – it was always to enhance my spiritual development.

So, what does a focused effort toward spiritual development have to do with getting thin and fit? And, what are these

secrets that are known to both mystics and saints – and the rich and thin? The secret is positive focus, sustained attention, and being fully present and engaged each moment of the journey. Whether you want to experience the celestial realms or get thin, you cannot proceed with scattered attention. You can't be making excuses about how hard it is to get to the goal. If you do, you will only have to backtrack and correct the course. If you haven't achieved your goals – be they fitness, weight, wealth or spirituality – you can bet that you have not yet mastered the process of focusing your attention, and you need to get on that pronto.

#### THE FOCUSED RICH AND THIN

Rich and thin women have mastered the process of focusing their attention on the goal until they are unconsciously competent in living that lifestyle. They are not haphazard in their approach. Those who are healthy and thin have discovered how to focus and give attention to the goal without becoming compulsive. Those who have missed the mark have fallen prey to eating disorders or other serious health problems. Along the way they usually meet highly competent professionals who help them refine any flawed strategies.

Think about the beautiful, thin women of Park Avenue in New York City. There we find the most elegant, stunning women who live, shop and eat in exclusive Upper East Side neighborhoods. Are they prisoners of silly diet rules? No. Do they wonder what to do when they see someone else overindulging? No! They have integrated dining and discipline the way a mystic lives with her head in heaven and her feet on Earth.

In the best selling book, *How the Rich Get Thin*, New York's leading diet doctor, Dr. Jana Klauer, says: "The reason why the people on Park Avenue are so successful is that they have a plan for absolutely every aspect of their lives. Many people out there neglect to plan the two most important things: the foods they will eat and the amount of daily exercise they can squeeze in."

According to Dr. Klauer, another area in which the Park Avenue crowd particularly excels is stress management.

Though a fast and hectic pace of life goes with the territory, she teaches her patients to respond to the stresses of everyday life in a positive manner. Some of the long-term strategies she recommends for controlling stress include getting regular amounts of sleep, concentrating on breathing and self-hypnosis.

Not only must they contend with extremely high levels of stress, but Dr. Klauer says her wealthy clients also are constantly being exposed to a culture of excess. This requires them to display tremendous discipline in order to make the healthiest possible choices.

"Many of my clients regularly attend events where people are eating and drinking in a grand manner," Dr. Klauer says. "They have to learn how to treat their bodies with respect. There are many ways of living richly, but taking care of your health is one of the best," Dr. Klauer says. "You can be the wealthiest person on earth, but if you lose your health, it becomes meaningless."

Rich and thin women have revealed their secrets: They exercise daily, they avoid processed foods, they master food cravings, and they take quality nutritional supplements. They know what they want. So, ask yourself, what do you want? Each of these actions is within your reach if you really focus.

When you know what you want, you must deliberately focus your attention on the feeling of your wish fulfilled until the feeling fills the mind, crowding out all other ideas of the consciousness. The power of attention is the measure of our inner force. Concentrated observation of one thing shuts out other things and causes them to disappear. The great secret of success is to focus the attention on the feeling of the wish fulfilled without permitting any distraction.

The ideas that impel you to action are those that dominate the consciousness and possess the attention.

Happy focusing.

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