



# THE FEEL FREE DIET

*The Rational Unconscious Diet*



Cerca Trova

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CERCA TROVA

2023

This book, originally titled *The Feel Free Diet. Le régime de l'inconscient rationnel*, has been translated from French into English by Cerca Trova.

Set in EB Garamond Variable 12pt (Georg Duffner and Octavio Pardo).

Book design and typesetting: Thomas Savary, with Lua<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X and the memoir class.

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contact@cercatrova.eu — [www.cercatrova.eu](http://www.cercatrova.eu)

ISBN 978-2-9586-3666-1

## CONTENTS

<i>Warning</i> .....	6
<i>Introduction</i> .....	7
<i>The rational unconscious</i> .....	11
<i>The analytical grid of the unconscious</i> .....	18
<i>The enigma of overweight</i> .....	23
<i>Satisfy cravings</i> .....	29
<i>Satisfy hunger</i> .....	36
<i>Hunger</i> .....	42
<i>Satiety</i> .....	50
<i>Our food heritage</i> .....	56
<i>A normal diet</i> .....	61
<i>The rational unconscious diet: the principles</i> .....	65
<i>The rational unconscious diet: practical implementation</i> .....	73
<i>Practical implementation</i> .....	81
<i>In conclusion: A new approach to enjoying “very fat, sweet, and salty” foods</i> .....	85

## WARNING

*This book is intended to present informational content and should not replace the advice of a qualified healthcare professional.*

## INTRODUCTION

**Y**OU probably know this statistic: 95% of all diets fail. Worse: we end up gaining back more weight than we had lost. Faced with this observation, doctors are now sounding the alarm. Many recommend we stop dieting, which some will translate as accepting ourselves “the way we are”.

The truth is that not everyone can lose weight! Or more precisely, while many can reach their dream weight at some point, few will succeed in maintaining it.<sup>1</sup>

Our hopes would simply not add up to reality. Our physiology would be to blame. It would doom us to fail, by not letting us be thinner, even though we wish we could. Our mistake would be to set ourselves unrealistic goals. We would like to lose weight, but of course we

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1. Jean-Philippe Zermati, *Maigrir sans regrossir, est-ce possible?* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2010), 10. (author’s translation)

## *Introduction*

would like to lose “too much” weight, without realizing that we cannot. We do not understand that our body will not allow us to look like the fantasized image we have of ourselves. Our fault would lie in our inability to admit that we do not have the means for our ambitions. We would set ourselves impossible goals, we would delude ourselves.

But this is a tough sell. First, because many people feel too fat, despite what is said about our “ideal weight”:

Nearly half of Europeans would like to be thinner. In Switzerland, among 14–17-year-olds, 62% of girls want to lose weight, and 77% think they are too big. Among adults, 35% are dissatisfied with their weight, while 60% of women and 49% of men report paying attention to their diet. In France, among women with a normal weight, 51% are on a diet, and among women who are overweight but not obese, 64% are on a diet because they feel too round.<sup>2</sup>

It would be convenient to believe that if many people feel too fat, it’s actually just some kind of collective delusion that no one feels good about their body. We would therefore be influenced by social criteria, conveyed by irresponsible media, and collectively victims of a psychological bias against which we should all fight.

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2. Magali Volery, “Encourager l’abandon des régimes dans les programmes de lutte contre l’obésité”, in *Traiter l’obésité et le surpoids* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2010), 304–305. (author’s translation)



## *Introduction*

However, nowadays, not only do many people “feel” too big, but they actually tend to be.

In North America [...], 20 to 30% of the population suffers from obesity. In Europe, 10 to 20% of the population is affected. [...] In Geneva, among 35–74-year old, 45% of men and 25% of women are [moderately] overweight, 15% of men and 11% of women suffer from obesity. Added together, these figures show that 60% of men and 36% of women are overweight. [...] [I]n Switzerland, 1 out of 5 children, between the ages of 6 and 12, is overweight.<sup>3</sup>

So that what could previously have been interpreted as a purely psychological phenomenon is now indisputably reflected in medical statistics, even if these do not correspond precisely to the intuitive perception that we may have of our body.

Despite all our desires to lose weight, it seems that we eat against all common sense. We tend to eat too much, too fat, too sweet, too salty. Many of us are overweight — or think we are — many of us want to lose weight, and are willing to make a lot of sacrifices to do so. Yet, when at last do succeed, few of us are able to keep up our new weight.

Our desires seem totally irrational, and quite simply incompatible with our needs. Fulfilling one would require denying the other. We cannot have it both ways: indulging in our cravings and be thin. Life is about making choices,

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3. *Id.*

## *Introduction*

and if you prioritize your health over your appearance, then you should accept not to look like a model.

The flaw in this line of thinking is that it implicitly assumes that what governs my appetites, my unconscious, is irrational. He would make me crave for things that were impossible to achieve, induce me to pursue them, and then punish me for the efforts that he had induced. How could I trust it then? Obviously, this would be impossible. One would have to suppose that two unconscious forces are acting within me: one, totally rational, which would guarantee my survival, and the other, totally irrational, which would govern my desires.

However, all the statistics above are remarkable in that they reflect extremely common emotions. *The vast majority* of us believe we are overweight, and *a large majority* of us want to lose weight. The vast majority of us experience the same unconscious message: that we may be too fat, that we should lose weight, and that this weight loss should come through dieting.

That is to say, for our unconscious losing weight is not only desirable but also possible. And, in general, our intuition leads us to think that it goes through food. That is to say that our desire to lose weight is well founded. What seems clear, however, is that the vast majority of us don't know how to lose weight or at least stay thin. Assuming our rational unconscious, knowing how it works, is giving yourself a chance to understand what it wants, and to be able to achieve it.

END OF EXCERPT