

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

This workbook offers yoga techniques that will inspire you to nurture your body, mind, and spirit. No previous yoga experience, equipment, or exercise mats are needed. *If you can breathe, you can do this yoga!*

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A Brief Note Before We Begin

- **This is NOT a technical, scientific, or scholarly treatise on yoga, diets, or nutrition. It is MY interpretation of yoga, stress, and weight management techniques that I have developed over a lifetime of trial and error.**
- **This is an experimental system that may or may not work for you. Please take your life seriously and continue to look for your answers.**
- **Please consult a licensed health care practitioner for professional medical advice before making any changes in your health care.**



Dear Friend:

Welcome! I am honored that you have chosen to explore the ideas presented in this WEIGHT MANAGEMENT WORKBOOK. Please note that I am **NOT** a scientist, scholar, or nutritionist. Nor is this a *just eat this, exercise thirty minutes a day, and you will live happily for the rest of your life*. This is a get honest with your core principles and start moving in the direction that you want to go. I am not perfect, but I have found a system based on ancient yoga principles that have helped me deal with my everyday stress, weight, and relationship issues.

We all need basic nutrients to grow and thrive. The challenge is to find the right balance between all of our choices, which can often be overwhelming, confusing, and frustrating. To complicate the situation even further is that everything is changing every day and what makes sense today may not be tomorrow's reality. We need a set of guidelines that ebbs and flows with our life; not a one size fits all diet plan.

As in my previous books: ***Chocolate Yoga: A System of Yoga Techniques for Stress and Weight Management that Will Nurture Your Body, Mind, and Spirit; The Chocolate Yoga Workbook; and Yoga for Ageless Seniors;*** you may find similar themes, ideas, and suggestions in this workbook. I sincerely hope that you will find some gems of wisdom within these pages that will light your fire, make you laugh, and inspire you along the path of living your best life ever. I invite you to take a very deep breath, smile, and remember: *If you don't live your life, who will?*

Namaste,

Margaret Chester, MPH, RYT



The Five Truths About Weight Management

WARNING

**Some of these truths will make you laugh, some will piss you off,
And some may even inspire you to think about your relationship with a very
necessary ingredient to our overall health:**

FOOD!!!

So let's dig in and remember if it does not taste good – please move on!

The homework is optional

The most important ingredient here is YOU!



Truth #1

Don't lose weight, because you will just find it again or it will find you!

The key here is, to be honest, and transparent with yourself.

Tell the truth and set yourself free.

- Don't lose weight. Drop it. Let it go. Release it. Set it free. Come up with a new word!
- Unless you are honest with yourself, your weight will continue to yo-yo or boomerang back and forth. That's why I don't like the word lose...we don't want this extra weight back...we never want to see it again! (If you are dealing with a severe eating disorder please see a therapist ASAP.)
- We all know how to drop weight. Eat less. Exercise more. It's pure science.
- But the reality is that we are juicy, complex, and complicated human beings struggling to find balance, serenity, and joy in our everyday lives.

The good news?

The more I tell the truth, take deep mindful breaths, the more I find myself reaching for nourishing food and activities that will feed my body, mind, and spirit. The key here is to start talking to yourself and listening! And don't give up. I still read diet books and research different food philosophies. Then I take what works and throw out the rest. Not one size fits all. So enjoy the process of experimenting and creating your very own personalized diet!

Your Homework:

Pretend that you are in a nutritional laboratory and you have been tasked with creating the healthiest most colorful meals that you can create. Have fun experimenting with flavors, combinations, and textures. Think of yourself as Picasso and let it rip – have fun. I am a seven-year-old in the kitchen and I have never made the same soup, salad, or stir fry twice in my entire life!



Truth #2

FOOD is a four-letter word. So is LOVE.

No one is going to feed or take care of you, you must do it yourself.

Every decision is a choice.

Food is love. Think about it. Food is defined as *any nutritious substance that people consume that is **absorbed** into our bodies to maintain our life.*

- Love can also be defined as a nutrient. We all know that if babies are not physically held, they will not thrive and some may even die.
- Do we love ourselves enough to feed our bodies, minds, and spirits the best, most nutritious food possible?
- If we slow down enough to savor that first bite of an apple, fresh-picked tomatoes, or homemade cookies...can we feel love, happiness, and pleasure?

- Take a look at your next meal or snack: Does it look scrumptious and taste delicious?
Does it scream: ***I love you! You are amazing! You are incredible!***

Can we use food as a way to nourish our body, mind, and spirit? Think about it – many of us are parents – did we feed our babies a fast-food #2 meal? No, we mashed up fresh fruits, vegetables, and did all sorts of flying bird or airplane noises to get them to open their mouths.

How about when our child, spouse, or parent has a sore throat or a fever. Do we order a pizza for them? Or do we make jello, soup, and bring them endless cups of juice? We fuss. We worry. WE LOVE.

So how about when we get our feelings hurt by a family member, a coworker, or someone on social media. Many of us will go find some comfort food - a bag of cookies, chips, or maybe we will just open the fridge and eat anything and everything. Even the stuff we don't like. Stop using food as a band-aid to cover our hurt feelings.

Your Homework:

Ask yourself before you eat your next meal or snack:

“Does this cookie, bag of chips, or leftover pizza love me?”

Listen closely to the answer.



Truth #3

Diets don't work unless you honestly address the stressors in your life.

We all know about stress. It's not always a bad thing. I sometimes wonder if I would get out of bed in the morning if I didn't have to go to the bathroom!

- The issue is when the pressure builds up and we quickly look for ways to release it. It's easier and faster to put something in our mouth without stopping to assess what is going on.
- Unhealthy snacks are usually easy to grab, accessible, and cheap. There are plenty of food outlets open 24/7 to feed our stress. The key here is to be able to identify the trigger that makes us go running for a *food band-aid*. Once you can pinpoint what the situation is, then you can then figure out: *Will this box of cookies, candy, or bag of potato chips fix this? (fill in the blank).*

Your Homework:

Your homework is to be a detective. Ask yourself some hard questions. Pretend that you are Enola Holmes, Sherlock Holme's sister, and ask yourself: *What happened just before you went and murdered that bag of cookies, potato chips, or a pint of ice cream?* Can you retrace your steps? Be curious. What exactly triggered that sudden urge to snack or eat something?



Truth #4

Life is easier if you just breathe.

Breath is life. You will die without breathing. And yet most of us take breathing for granted. We come into the world with the first question being: *Is the baby breathing?* And we leave this world, someone will officially record the time in which we stopped breathing. The breath is our connection to life and death.

- Once you learn to make friends with your breath, it will become one of your best resources for living a fuller life. Not only is breathing calorie-free, but it can be whatever you need it to be in the moment.
- If you need to slow down you can slow lengthen your inhales, pauses, and exhales.
- If you need some energy you can jump up and down and speed up your breathing.
- If you are experiencing a deep emotion, you can simply place your hand or hands between your breasts, at your heart center, and gently breathe.
- If you are so angry that you feel as if you may explode, find a quiet place and take ten deep long slow breaths.

By taking a deep breath, you can learn to calm your sympathetic nervous system and learn how to pause between the stimulus and your response. Remember, the magic is in the pause.

Your Homework:

Your homework is to practice taking deep breaths throughout the day. Just *inhale...pause...and exhale*. You may want to wear a bracelet or put a timer on your phone or computer to remind you to STOP and breath. The more your practice conscious and mindful breathing, you will find yourself stopping at random times during the day to simply breathe. This is a wonderful habit to consciously cultivate and please give yourself extra credit for smiling.



Truth #5

***You have everything you need to start taking charge
of your life right now.***

Did you know that truly taking care of yourself is a radical, political, and audacious act? We often get caught up in feeling overwhelmed, angry, and sorry for ourselves. And sometimes it's difficult to change our direction. But life is not about being perfect. It is all about living the life YOU want to live. The good news?

- You already have all the tools, wisdom, and creativity you need to thrive by asking yourself important questions:
 1. will this food, drink, or activity nurture my body, mind, and spirit?

2. Will it make me happy?

Be honest. My body is much happier with a bowl of chili with a ton of veggies and rice than a box of cake donuts. The more I choose food that loves me, the more energy I have to do the activities that I need and want to do. As I get older, I have learned to accept my responsibility to make happy food choices. And sometimes I miss the boat, but I have learned to forgive, move on, and make choices that support me.

Homework:

Stop before eating or drinking your next snack or meal and ask yourself?

“Does this food love me?”

“Will this food give me energy?”

“Will this food make me happy?”

These are not stupid questions. These questions will change your life.



Let's be honest, folks!

I am NOT saying NEVER eat a piece of cake, a bowl of ice cream, or a giant donut.

I am asking you to be mindful.

To honor your body.

And tell the truth!

That piece of birthday cake tastes wonderful at a family party.

Sharing that ice cream cone is so much more fun with a toddler.

And that giant donut tastes amazing when you cut it up into bite-size pieces and

share it around the table with lots of laughter and enjoyment.

Remember, food is love.

And so are you.



Remember
Whenever & wherever
you get stuck or need a boost
physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually
simply do the following:

Inhale...

Pause...

Exhale...

Inhale...

Pause...

Exhale...

Pause...

Inhale...

Pause...

Exhale...

Continue doing this for the rest of your life!
It is the secret to the universe and
It will give you much health, love, and happiness.

Namaste.



Thank you for joining me on this journey of self-discovery.
I hope you enjoyed some of the exercises and will continue to
nurture your body, mind, and spirit.
Please feel free to forward this PDF to anyone who would enjoy it
If I can be of further assistance,
please contact me at yogaenergysystems.com

Margaret Chester, MPH, RYT is the author of *Chocolate Yoga: A System of Yoga Techniques for Stress and Weight Management; A Chocolate Yoga Action Workbook*, and her latest: *Yoga for Ageless Seniors – Daily Prescriptions for Increasing Strength, Balance, and Resilience*. She is passionate about finding practical and fun ways to bring yoga techniques to your everyday life. This yoga is not about standing on your head or folding yourself into a pretzel. It's all about living in the body that you have today. As Margaret likes to say: "*If you can breathe, you can do this yoga.*"

The books are available on Amazon.com

For more information: www.chocolateyoga.com

