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food: the good girl's drug

How to Stop Using Food to Control Your Feelings



Sunny Sea Gold
Founder of HealthyGirl.org

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Sunny Sea Gold started fighting a binge eating disorder in her teens. But most books on the topic were aimed at older women, women she had a hard time relating to. Calling on top psychiatrists, nutritionists, and fitness experts, Sunny offers real advice to a new generation fighting an age-old war. With humor and compassion from someone who's seen it all, *Food: The Good Girl's Drug* is about experiences shared by many women—whether they've been struggling with compulsive overeating their whole lives, or have just admitted to themselves, that yes, it's more than just a bad habit.

Food: The Good Girl's Drug: How To Stop Using Food to Control Your Feelings Details

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Author : Sunny Sea Gold

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Kali says

Sunny did a terrific job throughout this book. Very helpful read. Thank you.

Trisha says

As someone who has grown up with a problematic relationship with food, I found this book refreshing and actually quite kind in its approach to eating disorders. I liked the fact that the book made many recommendations to sites like HealthyGirl.org (Sunny Sea Gold's website) and other safe spaces online for people to find others who can help them. Personally, this book has helped me a lot with how I see food and my health. In other words, great book!

Cassandra Lee says

I really enjoyed the pace and flow of this book. While it may be more geared towards a younger set, that makes sense as binge eating disorder has only recently become more recognized within the addictions and psychological community and mostly younger women are being diagnosed, though I'm sure there are plenty of older women who have had these same experiences and are attempting to work on these same food issues.

I loved some of the exercises given and will enjoy going back to this book when I'm having difficulty with my own binges as I feel it will help me to find ways to identify why I am doing what I'm doing and how I feel.

Ashley says

I don't think the other negative reviews I've seen give the book justice, or gave it a chance. As someone who struggles with the issues discussed in this book, I felt it was very helpful. When I got through the first chapter I was in tears because I knew for the first time that there were others out there like me and I wasn't some lunatic with food issues. Sunny was great at taking you through the process of healing. It doesn't just jump-in to the therapy. First you have to accept what's happening, learn about it, learn WHY you do what you do. Then she gives countless types of therapy; actual therapists, meditation, spirituality, things to do when you feel a binge coming on... there are so many things that can help.

I didn't mind or even notice the verbiage she used like others pointed out, what I got out of this book weighed more than her calling us "girls" instead of "women". I am a girl, I'm okay with that.

I'd highly recommend this if you KNOW you have BED. My world gets to have a reset button and I'm grateful for that.

Renata says

Food: A Good Girl's Drug, written by Sunny Sea Gold is a novel about the unrecognized importance and escalation of binge eating disorders or 'BED'. The importance of this disorder is often overlooked because it's "not as glamorous as anorexia or bulimia." By reading this book, I learned a lot of eye opening information on the severity of this disorder and those like it as well. There was not only a lot of information in this book, but there were also many helpful tips and 'solutions' to problems and emotions that people with BED may experience. For example: at the end of every chapter there would be a page of questions that you could answer regarding the topics that were covered in the given chapter.

Although there were many things that I liked about this book, there were also a few that I didn't enjoy as much. One thing that I liked about this book was that Gold used real life stories and profiles in this book. This made the book seem much more relatable and it also created many different points of view on the one topic, therefore resulting in more 'in depth' facts. For example, In chapter 2, Gold documents: "When I (Amanda) was in college, I often hid the fast food bags from my boyfriend because I was so ashamed of my situation." This gives another perspective into the problem as well as gives more examples as to how people with BED feel. Something I enjoyed was the way Gold worded this book. It felt natural. The facts didn't seem forced or exaggerated as they often are in many non fiction books. I was never a fan of non fiction simply because when I read non-fiction books, it felt like i was reading a list of facts and it would drone on and on. This book changed my view on non fiction because it felt more like a novel. The author was actually trying to be personable, which made this book so much more interesting to read. One thing that I however did not like about this book was that some of the chapters seemed far too similar to those that came before. I found myself going back because I was convinced I had already read the exact same thing 2 chapters ago.

Given that this book was quite long and very factual, I learned a lot about this topic. The author clearly believes that binge eating disorder is causing girls to feel ashamed about themselves and is leading to many health problems. Before reading this book, I honestly hadn't pondered on this certain disorder as much as others that are more frequently discussed such as anorexia or bulimia. This seemed ridiculous to me as I got farther into the book. So many more people are dealing with this disorder than any other. You would think that binge eating would be more commonly talked about because of it's bluntness, but this is not the case at all. While reading this book, I began to question how people in our society view this issue, how many people it actually impacts and in what ways.

I would recommend this book to anyone who is 12 years or older. Although the vocabulary is fairly simple to understand, some of the concepts portrayed in this book may be confusing to younger children. However, I think this book is suitable for anyone that is interested in learning more on this topic because its a very interesting, eye opening read.

C says

A practical book with good straight common sense. It is also a quick read. I really enjoyed it and took a few things from it that'll help me think more clearly about food and eating habits (sugar...my kryptonite!). It gave me some insight into my past - in particular my teens - and encouraged a bit more in-depth thinking about the motivations behind behaviors.

Great references in the back and her "toolkit" could be applied to any addiction.

Erinn Batykefer says

I wouldn't say I'm "done" reading this, but I did read it all. Despite the tone of the writing, which at times is almost fluffy (I gave the author some leeway as a writer for Glamour for many years-- I'm sure that magazine copy style is hard to shake), this book has real practical advice in it along with real stories from people with binge eating disorder. As a person whose entire family struggles with disordered eating and actual full blown eating disorders, this book's easy approach to getting help and getting perspective was comforting to me in its way. I imagine it being more helpful for people who haven't already done a ton of work in therapy-- and maybe that's the point of the light tone. The exercises are definitely helpful, and probably something I'll return to, since living with / through disordered eating is something you always have to do, even after you're "recovered"

Stacey says

This was a very useful self-help book. The book is directed mostly towards binge eating, but I feel like it covered everything from strange food rules, food obsessions, overeating, under-eating, over-exercising, and so much more.

Girls get so many mixed messages about food and what's good and bad and acceptable that it is very easy to form rules and unrealistic expectations. This book did an amazing job at going through how you got to the point you are at and it gave ideas on how you can get through and what it will be like once you get past what you're going through. I am very glad I read this book and would recommend it to any girl/women who have ever felt they couldn't eat something they wanted to eat because it was "bad".

Alicia Hurney says

Good book for people suffering eating disorders/ binge eating, would recommend if you have a bad relationship with food. Also very good insights and very informative.

Reeny says

I did not pick up this book expecting to be cured of my tendency to over eat, binge eat, or diet. I picked up this book because it did not promise a cure. It was helpful (for me) that other people shared their feelings and thoughts throughout the book. I found myself relating to some topics and feeling a sense of relief when I couldn't relate to some.

It was also a reminder that we are very impressionable when we are young and not always taught to respect

our bodies or the food (fuel) it needs. The lessons we are taught at a young age and the self image we develop is affected greatly by our parents, and peers, and their relationship to food.

This is a good read for someone who is or has struggled with weight issues, binge eating, etc.

Dani Baxter says

I thought this book was helpful, but not life changing. I think the author spends too much time letting the reader wallow in her binges, feeling the same shame and disgust that she felt at the time, which is NOT the point of the book. Eventually the book moves on into what you can do to help yourself. I like the toolbox idea, and the chapters following. The end was basically, "look at me I'm healed". I get where she was going with this book, but I don't think it's the most helpful thing out there. I think it causes the reader to feel many unwanted emotions. But it is helpful. I would just probably recommend another book.

Susan says

I initially gave this book 3 stars but decided to raise it to 4 after reading (or rather, starting) another book on the same topic. After thinking about the approach this book takes in contrast with the more rigid and structured methodology of the other book's "detox" approach, I can really appreciate the benefits of the more introspective and nurturing approach taken by this author.

The anecdotes really bring to life the various manifestations of a food addiction/binge syndrome. And the emphasis on journaling and becoming more mindful, and even more important, FORGIVING setbacks as you work to change your relationship with food, seem to promote much more sustainable life changes.

While the book is light on the science behind eating disorders (my husband pooh-poohs these experiments as non-reproducible "soft science" but I still like to read about dopamine and PFC changes, etc), I think the true stories are much more valuable and inspirational. It's a quick, easy read, and very important in shedding light on a problem that hasn't had much attention.

Liz says

Easy to read, I knew much of what the author wrote about beforehand, I know where my negative relationship with food and self-image stem from, but it was good to refresh my memory of tools I can use to regain control and try to maintain a healthy body image and relationship with food.

Melissa Fischler says

A bit simplistic, but stories were helpful

Nice to hear other people's stories. It wasn't anything new or astounding, just comforting to read. Writing style was simplistic, but did it's duty.

Nida says

I picked up this book based on a recommendation on a unhealthy eating habit forum and this book has not disappointed me. Gold has included examples of relatable women throughout the book and, personally, she has covered any and all topics related to eating disorders. At the end of every chapter a section titled 'Your Turn' is included where she asks questions so the readers can dive as deep as they want into their own psyche. I highly appreciated these questions. I love journaling and have felt that it has greatly benefited my mental health. I am interested in purchasing this book and I would go as far as saying this book is equivalent to a thousand therapy sessions.
