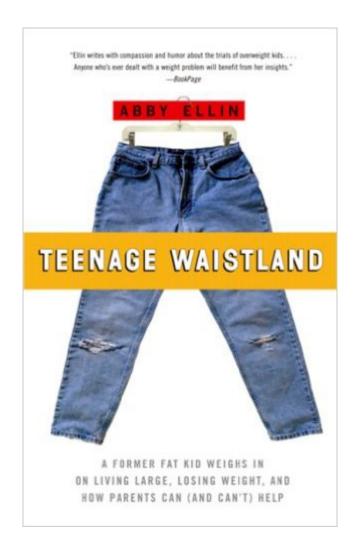
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Teenage Waistland: A Former Fat-Camper Weighs In On Living Large, Losing Weight, And How Parents Can (And Can't) Help





Synopsis

We've been inundated lately with books and articles about childhood obesity. Most offer cultural critique or nutrition and exercise advice — in tones that are alternately appalled and patronizing. Few address the psychological, medical, cultural and developmental complexities affecting overweight kids. The truth is, many parents already know that Whoppers are fattening. What they don't know is how to effectively help an often discouraged, often reluctant kid on what will be a difficult, life-long journey. Abby Ellin, a journalist and former fat-camper whose parents' attempts to "save her" from fatness proved counterproductive, has had a lifelong interest in figuring out how they might have done it better, and an abiding compassion for overweight kids. In Teenage Waistland she shares the story of her own adolescent struggle with food and weight, and journeys with hope, skepticism, and humor through the landscape of today's diet culture. She visits camps and community programs, and talks to experts, kids and their parents, seeking to answer these questions: What can parents say that kids will hear? Why don't kids exercise more and eat less when they're dying to be thinner? What treatment methods actually work? Willpower, or surrender? Shame, or inspiration? Teenage Waistland is ultimately clarifying and provocative for anyone who's ever wrestled with weight issues. One size does not fit all when it comes to weight loss, and the better we understand that, the more likely we are to be able to help our kids.

Book Information

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Weight Loss

Customer Reviews

Prepare to laugh, cry and cringe --- but also to learn --- as Abby Ellin leads us through the

landscape of obese teen life. First, though, a confession: When I volunteered to read this book, I feared that I was facing a hard, long slog through a dry tome packed with scientific studies on how to help an overweight kid drop a few pounds. Instead, I could barely put down this lively read. Ellin keeps a page-turning pace as she skillfully weaves her own story as a heavy, weight-obsessed teenager through the stories of other such adolescents. Ellin begins with her own family, who courageously support her by not challenging her right to tell the unvarnished truth about the ways in which her home contributed to her weight problems and food fixations. Interestingly, the family's attitudes toward weight resulted in the author's sister becoming anorexic. Even as Ellin grew larger and larger, her sister began dieting by third grade. Ellin's grandmother was a major influence on her self-image, withholding affections when Ellin gained weight. On visits to Grandma's house in Florida, Grandma weighed Ellin daily. At home, Ellin's mother obsessed over her own weight, restricted her diet and exercised before stepping on the scales each morning. She taped a photo of an obese woman on the refrigerator door. Both grandmother and mother repeatedly drilled into Ellin and her sister the dangers of gaining weight. As a child, Ellin was devastated when her grandmother told her she couldn't come to Florida for a visit at Christmastime unless she lost 15 pounds. The ploy didn't work. Nothing really did, for many long, sad years. Ellin spent six years at weight-loss camps.

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