



Taking Your True Shape™

Taking Your True Shape

Compassionate, step-by-step guidance for the emotional, physical, and spiritual transformation that resolves food and weight issues forever.

Dr. Rebecca Ocean

*****IMPORTANT*****

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Dr. Rebecca Ocean

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Dear Friend,

You have in your possession the first sections of upcoming my book *Taking Your True Shape*. *Taking Your True Shape* provides an original transformative weight loss process that evolved from my own 150-pound weight loss, after weighing 300 pounds twice.

In addition to my own experience, my quest for the truth about what transforms obesity includes doctoral research in transpersonal psychology on women's inner process of permanently losing weight. For two decades, I've been developing the method and teaching the Taking Your True Shape process to hundreds of women in live/online courses, mini-retreats, and private sessions.

While the book is still a work in progress with my publishing company, I hope these first sections will give you a glimpse into the power of this method and help you set your feet on the path to your true shape in body, relationships, and life.

If you are reading this in conjunction with my *Taking Your True Shape Makeover Online Course*, you'll find it these sections to be a powerful foundation for our work together. I apologize for the few typos you are bound to find and I'd appreciate your feedback and questions to help me polish the manuscript for the benefit of future readers.

With love and blessings for your beautiful unfolding,

Rebecca

Dr. Rebecca Ocean



Preface

Taking My True Shape

Walking in beach sand at 300-pounds made me pant, sweat, and curse my excess flesh. But that is another lifetime now. Fourteen years ago a miracle happened. After weighing 300-pounds twice, I lost 150-pounds for the last time and became one of the one-half percent of people who lose more than 100-pounds and keep it off for more than five years without surgery. Every single day I feel grateful for the freedom to do little things I was once unable to do—cross my legs, slip through turnstiles, spring up from the floor, fit in airplane seats, ride roller coasters, and stroll on the beach with ease. Instead of shame, self-doubt, and failure, I now feel contentment, confidence, and celebration about my relationship with my body and food. I'll never gain the weight back because who I am has changed. The path of permanent weight loss is different than what you read in "People" magazine. It's a great adventure of discovering the love, truth and beauty you truly are. Here's how it happened with me.

Trouble with Food

My first memory of compulsive eating happened when I was about 7. My mom, my little brother, and I had just gotten home from grocery shopping. My brother and I were happily watching "Kimba the White Lion" on black and white TV with snacks while Mom put away groceries and started dinner. A short time later, I heard a gasp coming from the

kitchen, “Becky!” Did you eat that whole box of Pizza Spins?!” I remember the flush of shame filling my face along with my own shock at the truth of the matter. The box was just about empty and I didn’t remember eating them. What had just happened?

Heartbreak and 100 Pounds

When I turned 21, I celebrated the weekend with my first true love, a man with whom I was engaged to be engaged. A couple of weeks later a friend called to ask me if I knew he was engaged to his old girlfriend. No, of course, I hadn’t known. I was devastated. Clearly I could not trust myself with food or men. I immediately gave up on both and gained over 100 pounds in a year. Without any skills to cope with the loss of the relationship, I numbed myself with working, eating, and sleeping between irrepressible tears and self-blame.

Five years later, I was nearly finished with my undergraduate program in information technology. A well-liked student leader with great internships and top grades, I was the heaviest I’d been in my life. Close to 300 pounds.

While I looked good on paper, I felt ashamed of my body. Interviewing for full-time work after graduation was confronting. I felt like a fraud inside and I often thought, ‘How could a smart woman be so stupid? How could I be so capable in other areas and not be able to control my weight?’ I felt lost. I had fiercely negative self-judgments. I really didn’t want to deal with the issue. After trying dozens of diets that never worked in the long run, I didn’t know what to do.

So I decided to live from the neck up and focused on my accomplishments, my career, and my social life. But always, great pain and confusion lay just below the surface.

When not in denial, I had a deep sense that my weight was holding me back in my relationships and career. Both because of how I felt about myself and because of how I was perceived by others. Weight discrimination provided outer confirmation for my negative self-worth. The blatant cruelty by strangers toward me because of my size added another level of suffering to an already barely tolerable situation. Even though I was finally opening to the idea of dating again, I was cynical about the possibilities. I was as aware as anyone how far my body was from our cultural ideals of beauty.

The Commitment that Lasts a Lifetime

Trying so hard to fix myself, I got more stuck every time I tried. My trouble with weight brought me to my knees. From somewhere inside, came a desire and a commitment that I later realized was the beginning of my last weight loss program. It was this: I made an innocent but sincere commitment to understanding the truth about my issues with food and weight. Whatever it took. No matter what.

At the time I had no idea how important it was. Now I see Grace engaged my vanity for the sake of my soul. Then I thought if I just work at hard figuring this out I'll be thin in a year and live happily ever after. That fantasy is not what happened at all – not even close – but it gave me the energy I needed to engage in what felt like an impossible, uphill battle. Even though I wanted to lose weight, and a lot of it, somehow, all of a sudden the

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truth was even more important. Whatever the truth was, wherever it took me, I would go until I knew in every cell of my body what was really going on.

A skeptic about anything that smacked of the spiritual, I'd have been appalled if I'd known at that time that I was really committing to discovering my true shape – the truth of who and what I am as a female human being. Back then I was pretty convinced that who I was wasn't all that great, but losing weight would make me better.

After 15 years of dieting, I was coming to terms with the fact that maybe it wasn't about finding the right diet. From reading Geneen Roth's *Breaking Free from Compulsive Eating*, I knew emotions played a part in my behavior with food. My intellectual prowess, which I had relied on to be successful in other areas, wasn't enough to change my predicament with weight. The only thing I knew for sure was that I did not understand enough to lose weight for good and I deeply wanted to – more than anything.

My commitment to truth came from a much deeper place than my usual awareness – a place that was beckoning me to embody the beauty, love, brilliance, strength, humor, power, and aliveness that is our very nature. But I didn't know all that. I knew that I was fat, frustrated, and feisty so at the same time I made my commitment to the truth, I started a liquid protein fast at a renowned obesity research program at a major university.

The fast was the perfect choice for me. I genuinely felt if I had to eat something I didn't like the taste of – like healthy food – I'd rather not eat anything at all. A model patient, I never ate a bite of food, and lost 130 pounds in 10 months. I was even in a television production as one of the program's success stories.

Why Did “It” Work This Time?

A couple of months into the fast, Chris, a dieting buddy and computer friend of mine, could no longer stand it. “I want what you have,” she said. “You’re committed, you’re finally doing it, you’re losing weight and feeling great, you’re happy and successful. I want that too.”

I thought, ‘Yeah, all that’s true.’ After countless hours of commiserating with her about not being able to lose weight, all of a sudden I was in the flow. How did this happen? Why this time? Why now? What do I have? And how did I get it?’

At the time, I could not tell you why I had been able to stick to the program. Certainly, I had tried lots of things – diets, gym memberships, hypnosis – and was sometimes able to stick with them but not in the happy and consistent way I was on the fast.

Like my commitment to the truth, I genuinely and passionately wanted to know what was different this time. Here I was in the place I wanted to be after so much suffering. I knew if I could figure it out I could help a lot of people, including Chris. I knew what it was like to struggle and I really wanted to help.

That very day I made a second commitment – to pass on everything I learned about the truth to those struggling with weight. With the second commitment came even more curiosity. What changes in people that brings them into alignment with their optimal health with a sense of flow and aliveness? What does it take to make this happen?

Fasting for the Truth

That question and quest energized me in ways I'd never before experienced. My motivation was no longer just about me. On behalf of myself and all those who struggled with obesity, I wanted to learn everything I possibly could about the permanent weight loss from the experts at this premiere obesity research program. So I attended their weekly classes religiously. I took every course they offered three times, memorizing and absorbing as much as I could about what they knew.

They primarily used a behavioral-education model and taught us their cutting-edge medical knowledge about weight loss and maintenance. They operated under the belief that if people just knew what foods to eat, what exercises to do, and what happened in their bodies, then they would do it. They taught us to reduce fat, increase complex carbohydrates, and balance calories in and out. This was just before the fat-free movement and their research would soon be used to market low-fat and fat-free versions of everyone's favorite high fat foods. We learned all about exercise, calorie burning, and how muscle development impacted metabolism.

One of the instructions they gave us was to replace fat with fat free options. It was okay, they said, to have pancakes. But you should put syrup on them instead of butter. Being diagnosed with hypoglycemia as a teenager made me suspect pancakes with syrup would not be great for my body. However, I ignored my own experience because they were the experts and I deeply wanted to believe they had all the right answers. I wanted to put all my trust in them so I would know exactly what to do to keep the weight off after the fast.

In this mind over body strategy, we were learning to feed ourselves by relying on our new intellectual knowledge. We learned how many calories to eat each day to maintain our new smaller body weight and how many calories we could burn off with exercise. They showed us charts and graphs, explaining that if we overate on Monday, then we needed to under-eat on Tuesday.

I put all my faith in their doctrine. I convinced myself they had all the answers I needed and I would do exactly as they said – eat a low fat, high complex carb diet, track and balance calories in with calories out – when the fast was over. But in the back of my mind were niggling thoughts, ‘Haven’t I always kind of known the math? Isn’t that just common sense? There must have been a reason I wasn’t able to do that before.’

Then came my first meal after the fast. After not eating even a single bite of food for 10 months, after losing 130 pounds, after reaching my goal weight, after being acknowledged as one of the program’s success stories – after all that – I sat down with my carefully chosen, impeccably prepared, first low fat healthy meal. It tasted terrible! And in an instant, cravings from 10 months of deprivation came through me like a tornado. My intellect was no match for the visceral demand for tasty, high fat food, and in just five short minutes it was as though the fast had never happened. I was in chaos again with eating.

Nothing I had learned in the lectures helped me deal with the craziness I felt inside. I was so scared. I had worked so hard at losing the weight and I was desperate to keep it off.

Making the Inward Turn

After several days of struggling, I remembered my commitment to the truth. Perhaps I hadn't done enough to understand the emotions connected with my eating. Clearly I remembered everything I'd been taught in the program. I knew enough to teach their classes. I got it. But it wasn't enough.

So I redoubled my effort to understand my inner life and started reading three to five books a week. I claimed my inner child, healed the shame that bound me, and was codependent no more. The reading was interesting and evocative but my eating was still out of control.

Each year the obesity research program had a reunion for their successful patients. Holding on by the tips of my fingernails, after one year I was still managing to keep enough weight off to be in that exclusive group out of the hundreds who had gone through the program.

After a brief lecture, we could ask questions of the program's doctors. I'll forever remember a woman I met there, we'll call her Sarah, who quickly raised her hand. She told the panel of doctors and behavioral psychologists that she'd kept her weight off for a number of years. She said, "I know by all standards I've been successful, but I need to know, does it ever get any easier? I am struggling every single day to stick to my food plan. I'm hungry and always fighting cravings. It's hard and I'm constantly at war with myself to eat right and exercise. It's a huge effort and takes up most of my energy. Does it ever get easier?"

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The answer Sarah got from the experts was, “Don’t stop doing what you’re doing. You are a success, you’re one of the few. You’re doing great. Keep up the good work.”

Had they not heard her? Couldn’t they hear her suffering? My heart broke for this woman. I thought, that is not freedom. What this woman is describing is not freedom. It’s like trying to hold a beach ball under water for the rest of your life. How long can you keep that up before it eventually pops up?

What if someday she has a terribly difficult life situation, someone close to her dies or she loses a job or there’s some other trauma or incident in her life that takes all her energy and attention? What happens when, for whatever reason, she just can’t hold that beach ball under water anymore? And even if none of those things happens, is that really a life? Being constantly at war with herself? I really didn’t think so and for the first time I saw the experts’ knowledge as incomplete.

From my reading I knew that Geneen Roth had a better understanding of this part of the equation than did the doctors in the program. When I brought up Geneen’s work to the behavioral psychologist as a possible alternative for helping Sarah with her struggle, she shot me a look like I had just praised the devil in church and effectively said, “You don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Rather than give up, I was even more determined to discover the whole truth about weight loss.

It was clear to me from my own experience and from Sarah’s that true freedom from emotional eating and permanent weight loss was only partially about food and exercise. I was beginning to see that even more fundamental to long-term success was the inner life

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of the person. My heart was set on revealing exactly what needs to change internally so that our bodies naturally and harmoniously change externally. This mission led to my doctoral research on women's psycho-spiritual process of healing obesity.

While I successfully maintained my weight loss at the one-year mark, I didn't make it to the second year reunion. I too struggled to keep the beach ball underwater and it popped up during my second year when I met and married my now ex-husband, Chip. Like the snap of a rubberband, I gained all the weight back and then some. The shame, anger, embarrassment, and disgust I felt toward myself was tremendous.

It Takes a Village

I expected Chip to feel at least as disgusted with my body as I did. While my body size was not his preference, his love for me never wavered. Instead of rejecting or badgering me to lose weight as I was doing to myself, he was kind, empathetic, compassionate, and curious. As a highly educated professional fitness trainer, he was surprised and intrigued by how easily my body gained weight.

It was as though we were sitting together in a movie theater watching what was happening with my body on the screen. He would objectively point to interesting things in my experience, fascinated and curious because it defied much of what he'd been taught in school. He genuinely wanted to know what was going on. Like a compassionate researcher, he helped me make space to be curious, to experiment, and to discover what was really true for my unique body.

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Chip was one of my greatest teachers of compassion and curiosity and very, very slowly, over time I began experiencing these life-changing qualities for myself. My transpersonal psychotherapist, Lisa, was another wonderful teacher for me. She provided a powerfully loving and insightful space for me to experience and understand the emotions I had previously numbed with food and work. After a bad experience with psychiatry in my teens, I was surprised and profoundly grateful to encounter such a sweet soul to expertly support the unfolding of my inner life.

Allowing myself to be supported by caring others freed me of both the painful isolation of trying to fix myself all alone and the frustration of being stuck within the very perspectives I was trying to change. It became clear to me that it is the nature of the human psyche for us to be unable to see ourselves as kindly, clearly, and objectively as we must to know who we truly are. Without help it's almost impossible for us to see the truth that the very parts of ourselves we are relying on to help us get free are the ones keeping us stuck.

Losing weight for good is less about focusing on weight loss as the primary goal and more about learning to work through what's false so we can live what's true.

Every “Bad” Habit Is a Doorway to Love

Skillful outer support allowed me to deeply enquire into my patterns with food. Each habit revealed a way my false but familiar shape – my ego – did it's best to support and guide me in the absence of something more loving, true, and real.

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Disengaging from negatively judging, comparing, and depriving myself made space for me to find an inner source of guidance that knows what's truly best for me and shows me the way with love, efficiency, and brilliance. Enquiring into my willful rebellion with food transformed my self-destruction into true strength, determination, and authenticity. Exploring my indulgence and over-permissiveness with food allowed me to embody the compassion and tenderness that healed my deepest wounds.

Losing It for the Last Time

It took longer than 10 months and had many ups and downs unlike the consistent, linear way I lost weight on the fast. But I wouldn't trade the extra time for a quick fix because I now easily maintain my natural weight and never feel like I'm holding a beach ball under water. Having fulfilled my commitment and discovered the truth about my issues with food and weight, I am finally and truly free.

Every single day I feel grateful to be liberated from internal causes of suffering with emotional eating and excess weight.

Now with over 20 years of research and teaching experience on the exact process I (and hundreds of others) have used to lose weight for the last time, it is my honor to fulfill my second commitment and pass on to you everything you need to take your true shape. As you will soon experience for yourself, every permanent weight loss journey is really a love story. It tells us about losing and regaining the love, truth, and beauty we are.

But because the real story is hidden under tragic tales of losing our fight with the devil – forever trapped in the hell of losing and regaining the fat we most hate – it's hard to find.

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That's why I've written the very book you are holding in your hands right now, to guide and support the unfolding of your last weight loss journey – your love story. Turn the page when you're ready for me to walk you through each and every step you need to embody the love, truth, and beauty that is you.

Introduction

Getting Unstuck

Did you resonate with my story? My hope is that hearing it supports you in opening yourself to a real, permanent solution. What allowed me to lose weight for the last time has become this course. But rather than spending hundreds of thousands of dollars as I did learning the powerful perspectives and technologies through trial and error over ten years, you are going to learn it all in as little as 11 weeks for the cost of this book.

Most women beginning this course have been struggling for many years. They are very familiar with their own feelings of frustration, confusion, pain, and suffering with food and weight. Maybe you are in a similar place right now.

You weigh more than you would like. You feel uncomfortable, afraid for your health, and/or you don't recognize your body or yourself anymore. You can't control your behavior with food or your weight. You're confused about what to eat or don't take time to care for yourself with the foods that are right for you. You also feel frustrated, even angry at the weight loss programs that didn't work, and at yourself for the time and money you've wasted. You feel embarrassed about how your body looks and ashamed of your lack of willpower. You are tired of trying and feel helpless or downright hopeless about losing weight for good. This is particularly depressing because time is passing as you

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“weight” to fully participate in life, love, or acting on what really matters to your deepest heart.

You are capable in other areas of your life, and you wonder:

‘How did I get here?’

‘I know what to do. Why can’t I get myself to do it consistently?’

‘How could a smart woman be so stupid in this part of my life?’

‘What’s wrong with me?’

There’s nothing wrong with you and you’re not stupid. I know because that’s exactly how I (and the hundreds of women I’ve worked with) felt before we discovered what you’re about to learn for yourself.

If this is where you are, and perhaps where you’ve been for a very long time, I want you to know that it doesn’t have to be this way. There’s another way to live, another way to be with yourself, your body, and food. And it doesn’t require you to hold a beach ball under water for the rest of your life, as Sarah did.

You have tried a lot of things without success if you are like most women who eventually find this program. It makes sense if you’re skeptical. I would be surprised if you weren’t, after all you’ve been through. However, because you’ve never done a program like this before, there is also good reason to be hopeful.

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It’s a natural fact of human development that when we come into adulthood our identity – our self-perception or who we take ourselves to be – is made up of both

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accurate and inaccurate information. Some of how you see yourself is true, which aligns you with your optimal life, and some of how you see yourself is false, which creates barriers to your optimal expression in the world.

The more accurate your self-perception the more you are taking your true shape. The more inaccurate your self-perception the more you are taking a false shape. While the ratio of true to false varies based on numerous factors in your development, you and everyone else believes your false self-perception to be true until you are confronted by life in ways that push you to explore it directly. The patterns and life experiences that are most troublesome and confounding to you are, in fact, beacons of light from the Divine inviting you to see through what's false in you. While they've likely felt like a burden or an affliction, your issues with food and weight can be your most powerful portal to taking your true shape when you learn to engage with yourself in a way that helps you digest what's false to reveal what's true.

Almost all humans have a very limited perception about what it really means to be a psycho-spiritually mature human being and as a result take a false shape in the world in some way. So, taking one's true shape is relevant to everyone, whether they have weight issues or not.

However with weight issues, what's false in you fuels the emotional eating that literally creates a false physical shape, providing a direct and symbolically rich pathway for your transformation when you learn how to tap this potential. Unfortunately, the way you've been taught to lose weight is the opposite of how to take your true shape. Rather than the mysterious and information-rich point of intersection between spirit and matter that it is,

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the weight loss industry has taught you that your body is (and by association your hungers are) dumb, wild, and animalistic and need to be controlled at all costs.

The truth is your food cravings represent deeper hungers that can and will lead you toward taking your true shape when you learn how to interpret their symbolic language. As a pioneer in understanding the psycho-spiritual dimension behind obesity and emotional eating, Marion Woodman has shown that transformation happens through metaphor because it bridges the gap between spirit and matter – the invisible and visible realities of being human. Metaphor frees energy that is unconsciously locked in repetitive patterns such as eating when you're not hungry.

For example, a common metaphor in obese women reveals the relationship between their personal power and the symbolism of fat in the body. From a biological perspective, body fat is simply energy in reserve stored in the body. However, it can also be a metaphor pointing to hidden truth. As a somatic dance therapist, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, observes with her clients, "Static fat is stored as repressed or unacknowledged potential power and creates a sense of heaviness and lethargy. Fat that is mobilized expresses strong primordial power and a sense of graceful fluidity. Fat that is embraced offers nurturing and comfort."

All of the women I've worked with are holding back their true power, the loving force of their authentic selves, in some way. They are "weighting" to express their true shape in the world in at least one area of their lives. Trapped in false beliefs that keep them comfortable (though frustrated) with their familiar sense of self, their behavior with food and excess weight is pressing them to a deeper truth and their authentic shape. However,

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discovering the deeper truth requires being with themselves, including what they don't like, in a new, more open, conscious, and direct way – a way that runs counter to the dieting mentality.

Embodying greater nurturing and comfort by embracing fat sounds scary and ridiculous to those who've spent their lives trying to be thin. Culturally, we demonize fat and are hell-bent on getting rid of any trace of it. We look to the diet industry to tell us how. Over and over again, after each failed attempt, we return to this multi-billion dollar industry looking for a solution. What we find are quick fixes like dieting, pills, and liposuction, which never work in the long run because they don't touch the inaccurate beliefs that keep our false shape in place. This is why over 90-percent of the people who lose weight will gain it back in the long run. Our bodies will snap back like rubberbands to match our unconscious self-perceptions – the invisible blueprints on our souls for emotional eating and excess weight – until we learn to be with ourselves in a way that dissolves what's false at the core. What we learn from the dieting industry doesn't work to help us take our true shape. However, you are about to discover what does.

Taking Your True Shape works at the depth of your being to dissolve what's false so that what's left is the true you. This powerful yet gentle process fans your personal spark of the Divine into a flame that aligns your choices and decision-making with what is optimal, beautiful, and fulfilling for the unique being that is you.

True Transformation

Taking Your True Shape literally makes over the way you approach yourself, lose weight, and live life. You will shift from a disconnected, mind over matter weight loss approach to a connected, compassionate, and powerful approach that leads to True Transformation.

True Transformation is experiencing change in yourself in such a way as you are unable to go back to the way you were. Like the impossibility of a butterfly returning to it's life as a caterpillar once it's been through the process of transformation, it's simply not possible for you to gain the weight back or rage out of control with food because who and what you are has changed at the level of your identity.

Taking Your True Shape will teach you what True Transformation really is. It will walk you step-by-step through the process of opening to it in every area of your life. Taking your true shape – including permanent weight loss – is a natural by-product of True Transformation.

Your True Transformation with food and weight is not only possible, it wants to happen. As much as you want to feel aligned and at home in your body, it wants you 1000 times more. The problem is, as you'll see in the next chapter, everything you've learned from the weight loss industry has pointed you in the opposite direction of where your resolution lies. You have adopted perspectives and strategies that actually push what you want further and further away from your experience. This book will help you unlearn what's been keeping you stuck and bring you into greater and greater alignment with the optimizing force of life.

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As you align with the guidance of your deepest nature, your growth and development will take on new momentum and meaning. You will directly experience the aliveness, freedom, peace, compassion, and awareness that liberate you from the suffering of obesity, once and for all.

When I use the word *obesity*, I mean not just the often painful experience of being overweight, but the even more devastating consequences of self-disgust, hopelessness, and impaired self-trust that come from years of failed weight loss attempts. These losses in self-esteem deeply impact your identity and potential, causing you and others like you – some of our most beautiful, powerful human beings – to restrict your full engagement with life.

The fat advocacy movement is a noble effort to reverse the loss of self-esteem and marginalization of fat people. And, while I wholly agree with efforts to improve the quality of life of our massively overweight fellow humans, I see acceptance of size as a critical stage of development in the journey of True Transformation, not as its end point.

True Transformation is not pretending to feel good about yourself while your health deteriorates, nor is it weight loss in the way you usually think of it. True Transformation is what happens when your consciousness is engaged in a way that it evolves and develops in the embodied knowing of what it really means to be human.

A tiny percentage of the world population really understands what constitutes True Transformation – even fewer know how to bring it about. I am dedicated to bringing this knowledge and experience out of the shadows and into the hands of the millions of people on our planet suffering with emotional eating and excess weight.

How Taking Your True Shape Works

In three fundamental ways, Taking Your True Shape departs from weight loss as usual, and provides a final solution for your difficulties with food and weight. First, this approach is Balanced, as you use both hemispheres of your brain and develop both feminine and masculine aspects of your nature to support your transformation. Second, the approach is Aligned with the natural evolutionary force of life and your optimal unfoldment. Third, Taking Your True Shape is Comprehensive, including the mental, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual aspects of resolving issues with weight. Let's explore each of these three areas more deeply.

The traditional approach to weight loss is a left-brained – cause and effect, structured, logical, problem-solving – endeavor. As a result, the masculine qualities of independence, dominance, and control of feelings and behaviors are revered. While the left brain and masculine qualities are beautiful and crucial to our functioning as a whole person, without the right brain and feminine qualities we find ourselves terribly unbalanced. Like walking only with our right leg. For women with a feminine sexual essence who thrive in relation to sensuality, connection, and love, approaching weight loss from a strictly masculine perspective feels dry, cold, and depriving. For both men and women, incorporating the right brain capacities of understanding feelings, relating parts to the whole, and problem-solving through pattern recognition are essential in transforming issues with food and eating. Almost everyone needs to develop and incorporate their right brain and feminine skills and capacities into how they approach changes with food and weight. Therefore,

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Taking Your True Shape practices emphasize both the right-brain/feminine development and integration of left/right brain and masculine/feminine balance.

The human soul – the place on which our inaccurate self-perception is imprinted – is traditionally referred to as feminine because she is changeable, impressionable, in constant movement, and connected with everything in a fluid, holographic way. Therefore, to know their depth, both men and women must learn how to embody the conditions that allow his or her soul to unfold her mystery. The Taking Your True Shape practices align your consciousness with the natural, evolutionary force of life, giving your transformation a sense of flowing with the river of optimal change (instead of fighting against it). Participants feel their transformation move in magical ways as though their development is supported by the whole of life. And so it is.

All parts of you will be attended to in this comprehensive approach – surface to depth. The mental aspects of your trouble with food, including negative patterns of thought, false beliefs, and self-criticism, will be understood and released. Your emotional life and your historical relationship to food as love will be welcomed for the tender treasures they will reveal. Your unique physiology – your brain chemistry, metabolism, blood sugar, and hormonal system – will be attuned with precisely the foods and supplements you need to experience natural harmony in your relationship with food and eating. The social and relational aspects of your patterns with food will be explored while you develop powerful new communication skills and a support circle for your success. In addition to aligning yourself with your optimal unfolding, you'll reclaim lost qualities of your true self through symbolism and clarifying aspects of your false self that have been mimicking what's real.

The Taking Your True Shape approach, technologies, and practices work together to power your embodiment of your true self. However, “it” can’t work unless you engage the process in a skillful way. Here’s how.

Your Participation

In order for you to successfully participate in this course, we must first shine a light on something you, and most people, take for granted. How you learn.

In Western culture, you have been trained to participate in your learning in a very particular and limited way, both by the diet industry and the educational system. This traditional learning focuses almost exclusively on the intellect or the mental channel for increasing your knowledge and understanding. Traditional learning environments ignore the equally valid, and for some people more powerful, creative, social, physical, and spiritual channels for developing knowledge.

The student’s role in traditional learning is as an empty receptacle to be filled with information by knowledgeable others. You are rewarded for accumulating concepts and facts through memorization. Your direct, experiential knowledge is often excluded or at least minimized in comparison to the knowing of the people designated as teachers or experts.

While traditional learning is a powerful and valid method for increasing knowledge, its limitations – the exclusive focus on the mental channel, the emphasis on what was learned in the past, the disregard for the student’s direct experience, and the devaluing of the beginning knowledge of the student – have profoundly undermined your ability to

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resolve your trouble with food and weight. When you approach learning how to lose weight with the same level of participation as a student within a traditional learning system – as an empty receptacle waiting to be filled – you will fail. As a traditional student, you assume you have no valuable knowledge to start with, you look for experts who know more than you, you mentally learn what they teach, and then you try to remember to feed yourself from the knowledge you've accumulated.

Not only does this not work (as you know from your own experience) it teaches you that you cannot trust yourself, your embodied knowledge, nor your body. You come to believe that you will resolve your trouble with food by using your mind to control your body. You come to disregard what you've learned about how certain foods impact your unique body and believe you must look outside for all the answers. You rely on your memory about what you should and shouldn't eat because you don't trust your body's natural rhythms, sensations of hunger, and need for certain foods. Sensing yourself, contacting your inner experience directly, is trained out of you, taking you further and further away from your true shape.

Dieters learn to chew their food a certain number of times, to eat so many times a day, to eat only so many calories, or not to eat whichever foods are on the bad list this decade – carbs, fats, starches, etc. You've been systematically taught to favor your mind and ignore yourself and your body – especially the interior – from the neck down. The results, evidenced by the growing obesity rate, speak for themselves. Nothing in nature likes being ignored. Like a forgotten child, what's out of our conscious awareness will go to great lengths to get our attention.

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Giving yourself the attention you need to take your true shape will require you to learn how to be a different kind of student in a different kind of educational system. In this course you will be learning how to develop embodied knowledge – the direct, experiential understanding of who and what you are through mental, emotional, physical, social, creative, intuitive, and spiritual channels of learning. Mental knowledge can be remembered or forgotten but often has little impact on our habitual behaviors. Embodied knowledge feels like getting something in such a way as we can't forget it. It's like someone had told us a million times before and we understood the words, but when we got it in our bodies, our lived experience finally changed. Embodied knowledge is cultivated by taking responsibility and being present for whatever's happening in your experience in an immediate, open, curious, and nonjudgmental way. This stance aligns you with the natural unfolding of what's true and dissolving of what's false.

Your true transformation requires your full participation in the experiential learning process. Experiential and embodied learning require practice, presence, patience, and persistence. So your participation is four-fold:

- 1) practice daily what you are being taught in each lesson
- 2) do your best to be present to whatever is happening in your own experience
- 3) be patient with yourself in your unique process with it's own right timing
- 4) persist in your commitment to your own transformation no matter what

How Long It Takes to Take Your True Shape

While Taking Your True Shape – embodying the truth of who and what you are – is a lifelong process, how long it will take you to be free of emotional eating and excess weight depends on primarily three factors: your readiness, your soul’s unique timing, and your level of participation, as explained above. If you work through each of the lessons as instructed, your relationship with yourself, your body, food, and eating will improve dramatically in 11 weeks. Some women take more time to work through the lessons and feel complete in a year. Statistically, if people maintain significant weight loss after five years, they have the highest chance of keeping it off for life. This is a good marker. We need time after the high and positivity of weight loss to know for sure that we have developed the presence, attunement, and self-love we need to handle anything life brings without needing food (or alcohol, drugs, sex, relationships, work, plastic surgery) to cope. We need time to know we’ve landed in our true shape and that nothing can trigger the emotional eating and self-abandonment that caused us to get bent out of shape in the first place.

In each chapter I have Accelerator sections where I highlight the most important teaching in that lesson for accelerating your transformation. As in life, there is no such thing as perfection in your process, so sometimes you will embrace the accelerators and sometimes you won’t. Patience and persistence are much more powerful in this work than perfection as you will soon discover.

Whatever your unique timing turns out to be, the process is gentle and proceeds at your soul’s own pace. You never get more than you can handle.

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Resistance to leaving your comfortable and familiar relationship with food is both welcomed and expected in Taking Your True Shape. In fact, there's a wealth of gold to be discovered about your false self-perceptions in your resistance that never gets mined in the usual approach to weight loss. Ignoring or pushing through resistance delays your transformation. Resistance naturally dissolves and speeds your progress when you directly experience the truth, that rather than some devastating loss or difficulty, there is more love, truth, and beauty outside your comfort zone.

Are You Ready?

Imagine for a moment all the energy, time, and money you've put into fixing your trouble with weight. How much of your precious energy is spent thinking about, worrying about, and trying to change your body and behavior? If you're like most of my students, it's a ton.

Now imagine you are no longer struggling. You have a satisfying, healthy, and positive relationship with food, your body has taken its authentic shape, and you're finally at peace. What would you do with all the mental, emotional, and spiritual energy you freed up? How would you choose to spend your time and money? (After buying new clothes of course!)

Again, if you're like most of my students, you will do an amazing thing. Quite simply, a woman who takes her true shape brings more of what and who she is – love, truth, beauty, strength, joy, power, kindness – to the world in ways that are authentic and aligned with her deepest knowing. Her partner, family, home, career, community, and

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world benefit from her development in small and large, simple and profound, and concrete and mysterious ways.

What will you bring to life?

Our world – near and far – needs all of us to embody our true selves. Our world needs you. Not in the self-forgetting or self-sacrificing way you've been trained to respond to the needs of others, but from the fullness of your Being. As more of us free up our precious energy from the hamster wheel of the false self, the more our world will change.

The love and understanding you develop in the process of taking your true shape will not only change your life, but it will impact the lives of many others – some of whom you know and most of whom you will never meet.

It's that powerful.

You are that powerful.

When we know ourselves to Be the love, truth, and beauty we seek, our actions come from a different source. Our consciousness aligns with the creative force of the universe and uses our lives to bring more love, truth, and beauty into the world we share. We discover that our perfectly imperfect authentic selves are more than enough to live with grace, brilliance, and purpose.

Taking your true shape does not require you to be model thin. It is the process by which you consciously become uniquely you. Like flowers in nature, we are all supposed to come in different sizes, shapes, and colors.

As you may be recognizing, Taking Your True Shape is much more than just realizing your self-determined right body size, although that is certainly part of it. Rather than the

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superficial, over-simplified cultural notion of forcing yourself to change from fat to thin, the permanent weight loss process is really the heroine's journey from immaturity, difficulty, and ignorance of who you really are to embodying and expressing your true value, your love, your gifts, and your feminine radiance.

In the next chapter you will finally understand why your attempts to end emotional eating and lose weight have been so frustrating, seemingly impossible, and painful. You'll also learn how to step off that crazy train and into a beautiful process that awakens your radiance, calms your relationship with food, heals your relationship with your body, and makes you magnetic to your true shape and your authentic life.

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