

the real skinny *on losing it*



*True confessions
& divine revelations
of a former yo-yo dieter*

michelle mckinney hammond



Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois

Visit Tyndale's exciting Web site at www.tyndale.com.

Visit Michelle McKinney Hammond at her Web site, www.michellehammond.com.

TYNDALE and Tyndale's quill logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

The Real Skinny on Losing It: True Confessions and Divine Revelations of a Former Yo-Yo Dieter

Copyright © 2010 by Michelle McKinney Hammond. All rights reserved.

Cover illustration by Ruth Berg, copyright © by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

Author photograph taken by Stephen Vosloo. Copyright © by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

Designed by Jennifer Ghionzoli

Edited by Katara Washington Patton

Published in association with the literary agency of Alive Communications, Inc.,
7680 Goddard Street, Suite 200, Colorado Springs, CO 80920,
www.alivecommunications.com.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the *Holy Bible*, King James Version.

Scripture quotations marked ESV are taken from *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version,[®] copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the *Holy Bible*, *New International Version*,[®] NIV.[®] Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc.[™] Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

McKinney Hammond, Michelle, date.

The real skinny on losing it : true confessions and divine revelations of a former yo-yo dieter / Michelle McKinney Hammond.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-4143-3383-0 (sc)

1. Christian women—Religious life.
2. Self-perception in women—Religious aspects.
3. Reducing diets. I. Title. II. Title: True confessions and divine revelations of a former yo-yo dieter.

BV4527.M423 2010

248.8'43—dc22

2010036327

Printed in the United States of America

16	15	14	13	12	11	10
7	6	5	4	3	2	1



the real skinny *on losing it*

contents

acknowledgments vii

Introduction ix

1. Looking in the Mirror 1
2. The Real Issue 7
3. Naked and Ashamed 13
4. A Shadow of My Former Self 19
5. Putting Away Childish Things 27
6. The Heart of the Matter 35
7. Attitude Check 43
8. From Your Lips to Your Hips 49
9. What Have You Got to Lose? 57
10. Going Nowhere Fast 63
11. The Truth about Fasting 75
12. Extreme Makeovers 85
13. Who Ya Gonna Call? 91
14. Eenie, Meenie, Minie, Yo-Yo! 99
15. What's Really Eating You? 109
16. Empty Calories and Other Unnecessary Evils 117
17. Apples, Pears, and Other Body Types 125
18. Finding the Perfect Combination 133
19. The Right Foundation 141
20. The Ultimate Love Affair 151
21. All Things Are Lawful 161
22. Move It, Sister! 171
23. Making Peace with Your Thighs 179
24. Forever and Ever Amen! 185

A Few Recipes to Boot 195

Notes 205

Recommended Reading 207

About the Author 209





acknowledgments

To all those who love food as much as I do and more . . .

Ah well, here's to making a peace treaty with our hips and our lips. Ladies, pass the salad, please, and lift a water toast to totally losing it and living to see the dream of a svelter you come to life!

Carol Traver, I haven't decided if I should hug you or get you for sending me on this journey. ☺ Katara Patton, you are a bad mamma jamma. Thanks for making me read well. Thank you to my Tyndale family for allowing me to spread my wings and discover new territory. But most of all thank you for supporting my efforts.

introduction

I believe there is a hormone specifically in women that scientists haven't discovered yet that has everything to do with our weight issues and our inability to resist temptation. I also believe that a crafty serpent in a lovely Garden long ago was smart enough to recognize this issue and capitalize on it. Small wonder that the first sin had to do with eating. Yup, from the time Eve took a chunk out of that piece of fruit (no one knows what it really was—apple, pear, grapes, figs, whatever the fruit), humans have struggled with what goes in and comes out of their mouths.¹

Sigh! It is true I am a blatant offender; even as I watch my hips spread, I struggle with this thing inside of me crying out for more—more cream puffs, more cupcakes loaded with frosting, more of anything that will fight against my desire to be a perfect size eight.

Oh, rest assured, I've done the size-two thing and still wasn't satisfied. Nooo, I couldn't leave well enough alone. I had to *gain* weight. Twiggy hadn't made thin fashionable in my neighborhood when I was a teenager and in my early twenties. Back then, I wanted curves like my peers. So I ate. And ate. And ate. To no avail. I gained nothing. Nothing but a voracious appetite! And now, decades later when size two is only a memory, I am still battling that appetite I developed. (Oops, I just spilled ice cream on my keyboard.)

Anyway, as I was sharing, girlfriend, this whole diet thing is more than a notion. When my cute little svelte publisher approached me about doing a diet book, I didn't know if I should be offended or not. I mean, what was she trying to say? Was she suggesting I needed to lose weight or something? I talked the idea over with my mentor, who said, "You know, if you write that book, you're

going to have to live it!” Aaargh! Would I be biting off more than I could really chew?

As you begin this book, I want to make sure you understand that I am not a nutritionist, okay? At the end of the list of all that I do—author, speaker, television cohost, relationship expert, empowerment coach, singer, blah, blah, blah—I am simply a woman who has called everyone from Jenny to Nutrisystem, joined the Weight Watchers of the world, been to South Beach and back. When it comes to diets, I’ve done them all. I’ve had successes and failures in various numbers and dress sizes. I, probably like you, have at least three sizes hanging in my closet for whichever direction I swing, but frankly I’m exhausted from the constant volleying—and I need more closet space.

So I decided to rise to the challenge to share with you what I’ve learned about the *D* word. Mm-hmm, it could be called the most maddening thing next to men—dieting. I’m going to share with you the real skinny on losing it, how to deal with whatever it may be that is keeping you away from the size you want to be, and how to win the battle with your hips and other body parts you don’t like once and for all. Some of my observations may surprise you. This is more about getting to the heart of the matter than experimenting with temporary tricks. We are going to settle this weight thing for good. Tackle it to the floor and kill it. Free at last, free at last, yes, you are going to be free at last! Trust me—I’m going to push some buttons you may not want me to push. But if you’ll be honest with me, I’ll be honest with you, and we’ll master this struggle together. Who knows, we may make it to the Oprah show (before she goes off the air) or one of those “new you” shows yet!

—Michelle McKinney Hammond

Looking in the Mirror

I WAS IN CRISIS, and I knew it. Pure envy and a smidge of hatred (did I say pure?) had filled my heart. There is nothing like being in a changing room filled with skinny little models to highlight your cellulite and take what your thighs really look like to a whole other level.

Here I was, modeling for a fund-raiser for my girlfriend, renowned designer Barbara Bates, and having a weight crisis before hitting the runway. I was one of the “celebrity models.” Meanwhile, the real models, little waifs with absolutely no body fat, paraded around in their thong underwear with no bras, naked and unashamed, while I bolted to the darkest corner I could find to try on my ensemble. Yes, I admit it: I looked. I stared. I swallowed the lump in my throat and thought back to when I had been that size. Then I headed for the table laden with a spread of hors d’oeuvres and reached for something with cream in it. Hey, my motto is If you can’t join them, eat something.

The words from one of the millions of diet books I’d read came back to me: *Observe how skinny people eat and imitate them.* Those skinny little nymphs never went near the table of hors d’oeuvres.

The one that finally sidled over to peruse the spread settled for one pitiful little grape. One grape! What was that supposed to do? One grape wouldn't know what to do in my system; it would have too much room to float around. It is a horrible thing to feel trapped in one's own body and not know how to get out. Watching what skinny people ate was not working for me; it only made me frustrated. And yes, observing thin people's eating habits made me eat more while my body image plummeted to even greater depths.

Oh, I knew how to dress up my weight issues. I cleaned up well, believe me. I knew every trick in the book, from my scientifically constructed undergarment foundation that had promised to take me down three dress sizes in three minutes (and did) to wearing the right colors and lines to appear smaller than I really was. Even as others looked me up and down, approvingly cooing, "Ooo, did you lose weight?" I knew the real deal. The minute I unsnapped that bad sister (my undergarment), the awful truth would once again explode. The truth of the matter was that I was naked and *very* ashamed. I was fat! Quiet as it was kept, after all the sucking it up and dressing it up, there was no way around what my mirror and I intimately knew.

Now most people would say, "Michelle, what is the big deal? You're not really fat. You are the average size of most of America! Men still think you are fine. When they stop looking, you're in trouble, but until then, get a grip, girl!" But in my mind I was fat, and that is all that mattered. Because I was used to being so much smaller, weight and size were all relative. You have to understand that I graduated from high school weighing 103 pounds. Did you hear what I just said? 103. That is one-zero-three. Many moons and many pounds later, I can tell you that 103 is a very vague memory. And though you live in the skin you're in, you never get used to the new you. Your mind keeps reminding you of "the way we were."

I could sympathize with Princess Diana, who went to extremes to lose weight after deciding she didn't like how she looked on camera. I could second that motion. Trust me, for every woman who has ever said to me, "Oh, you are so much prettier in person! Did you lose weight?" I cursed the camera that added ten pounds, and then I cursed myself for not getting rid of the ten pounds that would make me look on the screen the way I did in person.

Image is everything. It defines us and validates us, or so we think. It affects our self-esteem, our moods, the way we carry and present ourselves to others, and even the way we interact and love. It can make or break a relationship. It's true. I recall meeting this cute French man one Christmas holiday. He thought I was the most beautiful woman in the world until my own self-loathing drove me to show him photos of a much thinner me, just to prove I was really cute, in case he didn't think I was beautiful enough. His encouragement for me to diet didn't do a lot for the relationship, I can tell you that. Though I was the perpetrator of his desire to see a smaller version of me, I held it against him and no longer felt comfortable or beautiful. Did it make me stop eating? Absolutely not. I got rid of him and kept the food. It was more comforting. It loved me back . . . or did it?

As I stood in front of the mirror looking at my lushness in all its glory, berating and insulting myself, it was as if my supersonic spiritual hearing were open. I heard the voice of God. I am not lying to you. He said, "Michelle, if you were at an art museum looking at a painting and the artist were present, would you talk in negative terms about what he had created?"

"Of course not!" I answered.

"Why not?" He asked.

"Because I wouldn't want to hurt the artist's feelings?" I muttered.

“Well,” He said. “I am the artist of you, and I’m standing here with you. I created you fearfully and wonderfully. You were good and perfect in My eyes until you got ahold of yourself. Don’t insult My creation. The parts that you don’t like are the works of your own hands, so do something about it.” Talk about a slap in the face! He was right. I was the one who had added stuff to the canvas that He had not put there. It was not my body’s fault it looked the way it did; it was my fault. I kept feeding it. It simply complied to all my offerings. There it was. The cold, hard facts. The ugly truth. Ah, but the truth can set you free if you let it.¹

I don’t know about you, but God talks to me a lot when I’m looking in the mirror, perhaps because that is where victory will always begin. One of my favorite songs by Michael Jackson says exactly that. I have to look at the woman in the mirror and decide to make the change. It begins with me. It begins with you. We’re making a simple decision and remaining committed to our commitment. Sounds simple, but it’s not that easy, and we all know it. A lot of things stand in the way of us and our commitment. Throughout this book, we’ll take a look at those things one by one. But in the meantime, it’s time to get real with yourself once and for all.

KEEPING IT REAL

- What do you think of yourself? How do you really feel about your present state of being?
- How does your physical image compare with the image you have of yourself in your head?
- How driven or motivated are you by other people’s opinions of your image?
- What needs to happen to make you reconcile where you are to where you want to be?
- What is a realistic goal of what you would like to look like?

DIVA REFLECTIONS

My girlfriend Vanessa always says, “I’m not fat. I’m just fluffy.” Sometimes when you’re not happy with where you are, a little humor goes a long way until you get moving toward your goal.