

Book Reviews

Fueling Body, Mind and Spirit:
A Balanced Approach to Healthy Eating
by Miriam Hoffer
Sumach Press, Toronto, 2003
Softcover, 156 pages

Lendon Smith, M.D., used to say that if your kids are cranky, don't spank them: instead, give them something to eat. Something good, that is. With my family, I used to tell my cantankerous teenagers that they had to "feed their furnace." We carbon-based heterotrophs need to eat. That is just the way it is. When you eat to feel better, well, you will. There is a good reason. A big part of mood and a big part of appetite is low blood sugar. When the blood sugar goes down, mood goes down, and appetite goes up. That's when we often reach for the nearest high-sugar, high-fat junk snack.

As comedian and health radical Dick Gregory has said, "Are you going to have food, or just something to eat?" There is an enormous difference, and many people need to be made more aware of it.

Fueling Body, Mind and Spirit is an apt title for a dietary guide. No, this is not a nutrition textbook, thank heaven for that. There are plenty of those. Rather, it is a practical and commendably brief guidebook for eating. As a culture, we surely can make good use of one of those. While the book is directed more to women, it makes serious sense for men and women to examine what they eat and why.

You should be so lucky to have a dietician like author Miriam Hoffer. With admirable simplicity, Ms. Hoffer presents common sense eating as the solution to an increasingly obese society paradoxically obsessed with an almost voyeuristic desire for unattainable skinniness. To exemplify this dilemma, there could not be a more apt illustration than the sumo wrestler. Ms. Hoffer writes that sumos, and people who look a lot like them, are "triangle eaters," eating like a skier going down a slope. This means that

they eat nothing at the start of the day, and after moderate midday munching, eat an enormous evening meal at the end. If you eat like a triangle, you get to look like a triangle. Says the author: "I've never met a woman who wants to look like a sumo wrestler. How strange, then, that so many of us mimic the way these wrestlers eat!"

Balanced "rectangle eating" is one answer. In other words, eat breakfast. Eat a good lunch, too. "Rectangle eating delivers fuel at regular intervals during the day, so when we practice it, we lose our cravings, bingeing comes to an end, and our nutrient intake and overall health improve."

Has Ms. Hoffer hidden a diet book within *Fueling Body, Mind and Spirit*? If so, it is done subtly. But the author's overall intent is clear: "We come in all shapes and sizes; the goal I advocate is health at every size."

I think if you eat right, weight control is a byproduct. A lot of people find this hard to believe, until they try it and see for themselves. There is no down side to eating right.

"Circle eating" is another easy-to-adopt eating plan, which many will recognize as a Canadian cousin to the US "Food Groups" approach. While far from earth-shattering news, the fact is that if everyone followed these most basic of dietary guidelines, we'd have a far healthier population. Grains, vegetables and fruits should make up the bulk of our daily diet, totaling between 10 and 22 servings daily. Some dairy is a good idea. Protein foods should be limited to only 2-3 servings a day, and meat alternatives such as eggs, beans, tofu and nut butters are included in that figure. Fad diets come and go but this is a truly healthy plan you can actually live with, and for a very long time.

The book recommends high-vegetable, high-fiber eating, as these foods tend to displace high-fat foods that people would otherwise wolf down. Fat, at least the right kind of fat (from fish and nuts),

carries the author's sensible endorsement, as does a daily multivitamin/mineral supplement. She offers ways towards "Overcoming Barriers to Good Nutrition," including practical commentary on taking time to eat properly, building self-esteem, managing family life and stress, and enjoying life. A substantial portion of the book is devoted to thoughts contributed by the author's clientele. All readers, women particularly, will feel right at home hearing these shared experiences.

Fueling Body, Mind and Spirit is easy to read, unpretentious, uncomplicated and non-technical. These are compliments. The graphics and drawings are so well done that I'd like to see the next edition of the book employ many more of them, along with adding an index. Including Internet resources was a good idea, and expanding the recommended reading list would be an even better one.

Some fifty years ago, Roger J. Williams, Ph.D., first presented the concepts of "biochemic individuality" and "nutritional insurance." Miriam Hoffer's new book is constructed on these sound foundations. Such uncommon sense will withstand the test of time, and perhaps even the diet industry.

—Andrew W. Saul, Ph.D.

Moving Beyond Depression. A Whole Person Approach to Healing

by G.L. Jantz

Waterbrook Press, Colorado Springs, CO
2003, Softcover, 178 pages

Depression, as I knew it in 1950, was not the same as the depressions we see today. In the past, depression was much more severe, carried a greater suicide risk and was narrower in range. Not as many people were caught in its diagnostic web. It was probably just as common but fewer people with depression thought it was a

disease or sought medical or psychiatric help. The patients whose disease was so severe they had no option found that treatment that was really effective was electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) recently introduced into psychiatry and given to patients who had been admitted to hospital. We had no antidepressant drugs. The only treatment that had widespread acceptance was psychotherapy which was rarely very effective but at least provided support to these patients until, by unknown natural recovery processes, they came out of their depressions. Many controlled studies had difficulty proving that psychotherapy alone was of any great value and it did not matter which particular type of psychotherapy was used. I remember one of my patients, a rancher in Saskatchewan, who was dreadfully depressed. I was then in my psychotherapy mode and in hospital saw him three hours each week. Nothing changed. I got tired seeing no response and I am sure he also dreaded it until one day I began to talk about playing bridge. He was a good player and that became the topic of our discussions. He began to improve and in one month I was able to discharge him. I still think that he was going to get well anyway and that I made it less tedious for him by talking about something that meant something to him. All that stuff about his childhood was meaningless to him.

We recognized two types of depression. Psychotic depression, for which ECT was the treatment of choice and probably still is, and neurotic depression for which psychotherapy was the treatment of choice. The vast number of people who now and then suffered moderate or severe depression was left undiagnosed and untreated and apparently they did just as well.

Psychoanalysis was considered an advanced form of psychotherapy and was widely used for dealing with depression. I was never convinced that it was helpful from what I had read and after hearing Dr.

Karl Menninger, the great American psychoanalyst, tell us at a seminar that in his opinion psychoanalysis was not a treatment but a research procedure. And even if it had worked it was only available in larger centers for the few who could afford the time and money.

The fact that ECT was effective for so many suggested that there was a physiological basis for depression. This was reinforced when the first serendipitous antidepressant was discovered. A drug used for treating tuberculosis also made many patients more cheerful. This led to the amine oxidase inhibitors which are still in use and later the tricyclics such as Elavil. These were followed by the modern drugs such as prozac which, in my opinion, are not generally any better but provide a much wider variety of choice for the patients who no longer respond to the older medication.

Between 1950 and 1970 psychological theories and treatment were so well engrained that companies advertising the new drugs insisted that they were there only to be used as adjuncts to psychotherapy. Looking back at that period I believe they were on the right track in making these claims. The new drugs, when they worked, were rapidly effective. It took a few weeks rather than months of psychotherapy. Eventually the emphasis was almost entirely on the use the drugs and psychotherapy, which was helpful, fell by the wayside. Psychiatrists still pay lip service to the need for psychotherapy but their behavior does not support this.

The physical/psychological dichotomy was replaced with a trichotomy by introducing biochemistry as another important aspect of depression. Orthomolecular psychiatry showed that there is no single disease called depression. The mood of depression, that terrible feeling of sadness, anxiety, futility and suicidal ideas, is the end result of a number of biochemical abnormalities, which had not been recognized. These include those depressions caused by food allergies, by vitamin

deficiency, by vitamin dependencies, by excess of some toxic mineral, by deficiency of zinc for example. What we now need is a different term for each one of these depressions. Why should a person depressed for years because they are eating a food to which they are allergic be labeled the same way as a person who is depressed because they have lost a loved one or failed in business, or are depressed because they are dying of cancer? We do not have these terms but we do know much more about these other factors that cause depression and which must be taken into account when treating these patients.

Moving Beyond Depression by Dr. Jantz is really holistic. He recognizes these factors which cause depression, as well as the psychosocial factors. Of the ten chapters the first six deal with the psychosocial factors such as pressure of life, family dynamics, relationships, and in the remainder of his good book he also deals with biochemical factors. He is practising orthomolecular psychology using the right diet, the correct nutrients as supplements and putting them all together with an excellent psychotherapy. For the novice in this integrated, holistic approach, the book has a very useful resource list.

I wrote a brief foreword which I would not have done had I not liked this book.

—Abram Hoffer, M.D., Ph.D.

The Mood Cure
by Julia Ross, M.A.
Penguin Books, London, UK
Softcover, 387 pages. 2002

Julia Ross has been using nutritional therapy at her California clinic for over 15 years with excellent results. She has developed helpful nutritional plans for depression, PMS, stress and SAD, using specific foods and supplements that can restore mood quickly. Ross' premise is that most depression is due to unmet nutritional needs.

The Mood Cure is arranged in a 4-step program. Step One teaches a new perspective on moods, and here Ross distinguishes between true and false emotional states. True emotions are genuine responses to unavoidable difficulties in life: grief, which moves us through loss; fear, which warns us properly; anger, defends us against abuse and shame which lets us grow. All are normal human responses to life. She contrasts this with the false emotions: suffering, for no discernable cause; anger, which is explosive and disproportionate to the offence, and pain, which never seems to heal. The primary cause of false moods, she explains, is an imbalance of four emotion molecules: serotonin; catecholamines; adrenaline; and endorphins. These are the molecules that mediate mood in the brain. A questionnaire which classifies the experiential aspects of daily life helps determine one's mood type, and gives an idea of which emotion molecules are likely out of balance. Often people describe themselves as exhibiting more than one subtype of false mood, in which case combinations of supplement protocols are suggested.

The four chapters of Step Two address the results of the questionnaire. The chapter "Lifting the Dark Cloud" deals with natural ways to recover serotonin production; "Blasting the Blahs" shows how we can smooth out catecholamine imbalances; "All Stressed Out" covers the ways we can control adrenaline and cortisol overproduction; and "Too Sensitive for Life's Pain" explains therapies to boost endogenous endorphins.

After using the guidance of Step Two to correct the immediate defects of molecular balance, Step Three consolidates this new stability into a long-term nutritional master plan which promises freedom from the effects of bad foods in the past. There's no gainsaying here, four "bad mood foods" must to be shown the door: bad starches and simple carbs; bad fats such as rancid oils or trans fats; bad wheat

products; and bad soy. Soy is a surprising addition but this so-called healthy food can often damage digestion and depress thyroid function in many people.

Step Three also instructs the reader on how to recognize the basic components of healthy food, gives recipes to create balanced mood-positive meals, and explains how to choose and take supplements safely and effectively.

Step Four deals with the more complex and chronic cases such as using *The Mood Cure* recommendations when medication is still needed; length and quality of sleep as a healing element; and nutritional "rehab" of various addictions humans destructively use to force their moods into viability.

Ross finishes with five tool kits that address valuable issues. The resource toolkit helps connect you with the burgeoning holistic mental health field, from finding practitioners, tests, and supplements, to special foods and services. Other tool kits show men and women how to test and rebalance the thyroid, adrenals and sex hormones, as well as a plan of attack for carbohydrate addictions, the pandemic addiction of our modern age.

Julia Ross' *The Mood Cure* is an information packed follow up to her first book, "The Diet Cure." This book provides the reader with insights won from Ross' years of clinical experience and provides a detailed and scientific description of how and why these moods develop and progress. An easy read with its positive and enthusiastic tone, *The Mood Cure* helps to transform the dark clouds, blahs, stress and sensitivity into a healthy, good mood.

—Greg Schilhab