

BRIGHT LINE EATING— THE GAME CHANGER

Hot off the press is *Bright Line Eating* by Susan Pierce Thompson, Ph.D. Get ready to take back control of your body and brain, and to thrive through: “The Science of Living Happy, Thin and Free!”

BLE is based on cutting-edge research that explains how brain chemistry and emotional hormones together can block the process of proper weight, and blood-sugar regulation in your physical body. If you are in an arm-wrestling match with your body chemistry and hormones, who do you think is going to win? By working with four clear boundaries, Dr. Thompson shows us how to rewire and heal our brain chemistry. Her program will guide you into a mode where you are ready to shed pounds, release cravings, and stop sabotaging your body. Best of all, it is a program that understands that willpower cannot be relied upon. Rather, it sets you up for success regardless of the power of your personal will to stick to a diet.

Susan’s BLE program describes how the body, mind and emotions can come together and work as a team to achieve your weight goals, and then maintain them, happily, one day at a time, with freedom from food obsession. BLE gets you off those roller-coaster mind games, brings an end to cravings, and frees you from that constant, soul-sucking loop in your head about food and calories and pounds.

The first half of the book describes Susan’s personal journey. On a scale of 1 to 10 in terms of food addictions, Susan described herself as an 11—off the charts. At age 21, she overcame heavy-duty drug and alcohol abuse. Ten years later, standing on a hillside overlooking the university she was attending, she looked down at her once-again overweight body. She felt as if she was poisoned, barely able to move her feet, yet carrying marshmallows in her pocket that she couldn’t stop eating. Her passionate overcoming with food would become her greatest discovery. Along with her story, she outlines the science of our brain’s chemistry and its reactions to the drug-like foods that have overtaken our eating lifestyles.

The second half outlines the benefits of BLE, her life’s work, connecting the dots through her ever-driving scientific mind to figure herself out. Now, with her book and online boot camp (already with thousands of case studies and research with students and clients), the science is in a format we all can follow.

How does BLE work? “Bright lines” is a term borrowed from lawyers. That’s how they refer to simple, unambiguous rules. No more fuzzy boundaries, but for BLE, this also means zero toler-

ance—total abstinence, with no exceptions, anytime! In Susan’s words, the way out is to give up sugar and flour completely, getting them out of your system quickly. (Some of you may already be thinking of throwing this magazine across the room!)

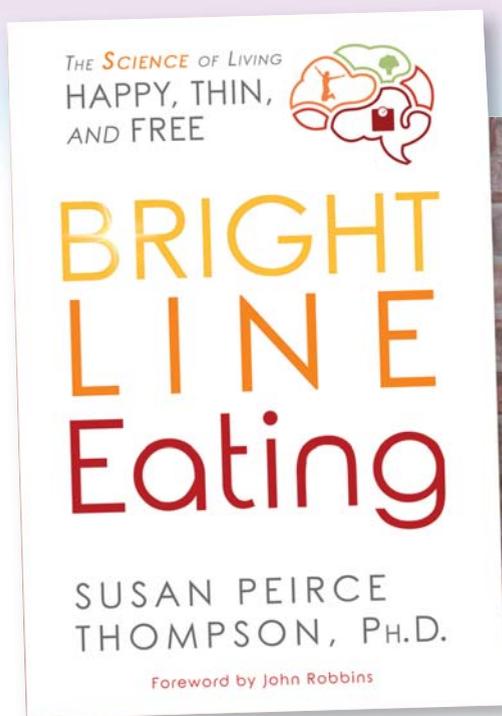
Susan’s viewpoint is, “I’ll tell you what’s extreme... each year in the US alone, 70,000 people get a limb amputated. They eat their sugary junk [until peripheral diabetic neuropathy sets in] and they have to lose a limb. That’s how powerful food addiction can be. Giving up these processed drug-foods isn’t extreme. What’s extreme is the way our society eats and then tolerates these horrific consequences! Of course, the answer is to QUIT! If you are losing lung function because of smoking two packs a day, you aren’t told to moderate your smoking—you’re told to quit. While cigarettes are easy to avoid, white flour and sugar are legal for all ages, and they’re everywhere!”

If the thought of quitting these death-foods puts you in a state of panic—that’s understandable. It’s actually coming from the dopamine receptors in the nucleus accumbens of your brain. They are about to get their supply cut off and they don’t like it. It takes about eight weeks for the cravings to be gone, so that’s how the BLE boot camp is structured. Your taste buds will change. Your cultural understanding of being overweight and having addictions will change. Rather than willpower deficit or a moral shortcoming, it’s about your brain being hijacked by modern foods.

Susan’s four bright-line guidelines are the same for quitting all addictions, including foods, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or whatever. First, set clear boundaries—you don’t compromise with addictions; you quit. This is the heart of the matter. This will bridge the willpower gap. Be firm about what you can and can’t put in your mouth/body. Your eating choices then become automatic. There’s no thinking or obsessing about it. There’s no decision to make.

The four bright lines in her boot camp are: sugar, flour, meals and quantities. Let’s take a closer look.

1) SUGAR. Take all added and processed sugars (white, brown, synthetic, etc.) out of the equation. Too much sugar (and overeating) elevates base-line insulin, which blocks leptin (a hormone in the brain that tells the body that you’re full; no more cravings; you can now go out and do things). The hypothalamus is also an important command center in the brain that secretes hormones. It controls hunger, body temperature, sex drive, thirst, circadian rhythms (sleep patterns), and fatigue. The hormone leptin affects the hypothalamus’ ability to keep our eating in check. When you reach the point of leptin resistance, the brain thinks it’s perpetually starving. Activating this “leptin switch” is the missing link in our society’s feedback mechanism. The brain stem, the most primal part of our brain, is not getting its hormonal cue that we’re full, so we keep eating, reaching for the man-made, addictive foods that keep our insulin elevated (i.e., hypoglycemia). Sugar keeps pounding our dopamine receptors, leading to down-regulation, insulin resistance, and



overpowering cravings.

In 2014, research finally discovered that artificial sweeteners (aspartame, sorbitol, etc. in diet sodas, sugarless gum, etc.) cause glucose intolerance by altering our gut microbiota. This mimics a starvation state in the brain, leading to a 50% increase in food consumption.

The “sweet news” is you can eat what Mother Nature intended all along—fresh, whole, organic fruit—just not fruit juices. The fructose in fruit doesn’t impact the brain like refined or synthetic sugars, due to fruit’s soluble and insoluble fibers that slow the absorption of the natural sugars, blunting insulin and dopamine responses.

2) FLOUR. Processed and refined grains, devoid of their natural, complex-carb-fiber and whole-food state, become like drugs in the body due to the surface area of the minute particles of the grain, which is multiplied exponentially. Our digestive enzymes have a field day accessing the quick glucose, which hits the system too fast and hard in a full-body assault. Flour is known to raise insulin levels. People rate pizza as the #1 most addictive food—it’s the flour!

Both sugar and flour are the two main culprits causing our host of degenerative diseases and obesity today. They don’t even resemble their original food forms. If you could just implement the quitting of #1 and #2, and close the book, you would have success on this plan. For long-term results, let’s continue with #3 and #4.

3) MEALS. We are creatures of habit, with regular meal-times set aside. You’re body adjusts, getting hungry at that time, and taking the burden off of willpower. Eating only from 7 am to 6 pm increases the fasting window to 13 hours at night, which can be used for fat loss, energy restoration, cell repair, and a better night’s sleep.

Eating at consistent times improves insulin sensitivity,

lowers cholesterol and supports burning fat, among other things. Eating a prepared menu of foods helps you eat the right foods automatically, while you more easily pass up on the wrong foods in between. You are well fed regularly, instead of binging or grasping for anything because your blood sugar just dropped. You wouldn’t go to work in the morning with an empty gas tank. Planning ahead works great for your body, too.

4) QUANTITIES. Susan uses a scale to know exactly what is needed at each meal, taking the guesswork out of the picture. I learned years ago that the palm of your hand is the right portion size—a handful of nuts, one fish/chicken/meat patty, and one fresh fruit. For fresh greens, though, whether raw in salads or steamed or sautéed, you can eat all you want! Just leave out the potatoes, as they are pure starch and act like flour in the body. Being more conscious with your portions (eating less being the rule, leaving the table slightly less than full) will shrink your stomach and lead to a host of health benefits.

You are not alone. Susan’s book and online boot camp is already working for thousands. Now is the time—since tomorrow never comes. With these simple steps, mostly by throwing out today’s “poison foods,” you can be the best version of yourself, able to pursue the lifestyle you may have long abandoned. Bright Line Eating can be the game changer for you. The junk-food game is no longer funny—or fun! ■

Susan Thompson is an Adjunct Associate Professor of Brain and Cognitive Sciences at the U. of Rochester and an expert in the psychology of eating. She is president of the Institute for Sustainable Weight Management and CEO of Bright Line Eating (BLE) Solutions, a company that helps people to achieve long-term healthy weight. For more info and interviews, go to BrightLineEating.com.

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