

SUCH A PRETTY FACE: BEING FAT IN AMERICA BY MARCIA MILLMAN

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Fat in
America**

MARCIA MILLMAN
with photographs by Naomi Bushman

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About the Author

Marcia Millman is a professor of sociology at the University of California at Santa Cruz. She received her Ph.D. in sociology from Brandeis University. She is the author of *The Unkindest Cut: Life in the Backrooms of Medicine*, *Such a Pretty Face: Being Fat in America*, and *Warm Hearts, Cold Cash: The Intimate Dynamics of Family and Money*.

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We are a fat-obsessed society. Four out of every ten Americans are clinically overweight. Being fat, especially for American women, holds a special significance and is laden with symbolism. Low-fat foods, dieting programs, and diet books, few of which make a lasting difference, are the basis of a multibillion-dollar industry.

Yet, despite this obsession with weight control, there is little serious discussion of the deeper meaning of obesity. In a way, obesity is as powerful a taboo as sexuality was for the Victorians.

This book argues that the effort to lose weight should be secondary to an understanding of the mythology of fat. Being fat is seen as much more than a physical condition. Fat women are stereotypically viewed as unfeminine, either in flight from sexuality or sexual in some forbidden way, intentionally antisocial, out of control, hostile, aggressive.

Using case studies, moving, sometimes painful, autobiographical accounts, and observing such organizations as a fat rights society, Overeaters Anonymous, and a children's diet camp, Marcia Millman reveals how people live with the burden of these stereotypes and explores the truth or falsity of them.

This book proves the humanness, the defiance, vulnerability, self-doubt, courage, and even the beauty of those who violate our arbitrary standards of physical beauty. It sees them as whole people, to whom attention must be paid.

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of Medicine, Such a Pretty Face: Being Fat in America, and Warm Hearts, Cold Cash: The Intimate Dynamics of Family and Money.

Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Title Misleading

By S.A.H.

While the book is interesting the title "Being Fat in America" is rather misleading as the majority of the interviews and in depth dialogue is not with fat people, but with thin people who are afraid to be fat or who have eating disorders. While these people have an interesting story to tell it is not the story of being fat in America.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

This book is a good read--I should know--I AM ON THE COVER!

By Diane Devoe

I was looking over my "saved" items on Amazon and this book was the last item I had listed! Just looking at the title made me smile (and I needed a smile today!). I am ON THE COVER of this book! My sister & I were at a party of an organization that used to be called NAAFA (National Assn to Aid Fat Americans!). Most of the people in NAAFA really disliked the name! Oh well!

At the gathering (in fact I think it was part of a convention) there was an announcement that, in the people milling about, were the author and camera people. We were told that if we wanted to tell "OUR" story about being FAT in America we could and it would be appreciated! So I told 1 of my many stories and I think my sister did also although I would have to check the chapters to see if she did get hers in print. My story is one chapter in the book but its been so long ago that I do not remember what it said or what it was titled! We were also asked if they could take a picture. Back then I thought I was looking pretty good for myself (a long time ago!) so we agreed. We were never contacted again and wasnt even alerted that we made the cover or were in the book! Didnt even get a free copy! I dont think I ever signed a release for the pictures! How crazy was that? Anyhow--its an interesting and insightful look into a part of the lives of different people of size from the 70's or 80's!

Diane from Brooklyn NY 11224

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