

The Philosophy of Overweight

For all brain types

Attie Dotinga

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The Philosophy of Overweight

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Inhoud	9
Intro	9
Overweight.....	19
Fatties	25
Power supply	30
Food as spiritual nourishment.	35
Eating with Memories.....	40
Inner voices.....	43
Lies and social games.....	49
Lose weight.....	53
Losing weight always took so much energy from me that I started to believe something had to be wrong with me.	53
Not being able to begin to change.	56
Starting a diet was always incredibly hard for me. ..	56
So, what does the struggle to get started look like for a neurodivergent?.....	58
What is the difference in the waste process?.....	61

It is often impossible to stick to a diet.	66
What helps to start a diet?	69
Summary:	74
Understanding the relationship with food through past events.....	77
So, hunger meant fear of death.	78
It scared those who loved me when I lost weight.	81
.....	88
Fighting for a slimmer body.	89
The battle was fiercer than ever.	98
Working on myself	109
Gastric reduction	111
And now?.....	119
Hormones that Influence Your Appetite	120
Leptin	120
Movement and Being Watched	132
Walking Straight.....	134
Observing Myself While Mindfully Approaching Eating and Movement	141
The Intense Urge to Eat and the Trauma Behind It	147

Day 2.....	159
How the Reward Center Works.....	167
Overlap in Brain Function Labels	175
Overview of the Overlap Between ASD and ADHD/ ADD.....	177
Gastric Sleeve Surgery	180
Creation.	185
The Foundation.....	190
Connection with my body.....	197
Grounding.....	220
Manifesting.....	228
That is why I am writing this book.....	233
Emotions	235
What to do?	241
The Fear Mechanism and the Journey Within	249
Weight, Struggle, and Understanding Message	253
Epilogue:	274
Acknowledgements.....	277



Intro

My whole life, I have struggled with my weight.

There were times when I was simply "chubby," and other times when I battled serious obesity. But looking back now, I realize that the struggle was far more than just a physical challenge. It was a battle that didn't only take place in my body, it had rooted itself deep within my psyche. It shaped my thoughts, distorted my self-image, and influenced how I moved through the world in every possible way.

My weight was never about what I saw in the mirror.

It cast a shadow over everything I did. It shaped my choices, my relationships, and most of all, my fears. It felt like I was constantly under the grip of an invisible force whispering that I wasn't enough — not lovable enough, not capable enough, not worthy enough in the eyes of others. My body, my weight, became the measuring stick for my self-worth.

It extended far beyond physical. It wasn't just about the numbers on the scale — it became the very foundation of my identity. My beliefs about who I was and what I was worth were entangled with the idea that I needed to change in order to be "better." That feeling of imperfection clung to my thoughts, constantly reminding me of the "flaws" I had. Every time I looked in the mirror, I saw a girl who didn't live up to what the world expected of her. And that began to influence the choices I made.

This battle became my identity.

My weight became the lens through which I saw the world — and how the world saw me. Every interaction was colored by the belief that I wasn't good enough, that I had to *do* something to be accepted. The shame I felt wasn't only physical; it was deeply rooted in how I saw myself. It changed how I approached relationships, how I presented myself to the world, and it held me back from taking steps I longed to take — simply because I wasn't worthy.

What I didn't realize was that the real problem wasn't my weight. It was the beliefs I had built around beliefs that grew stronger over the years until they defined who I was. In my mind, my worth was inseparable from the size of my body. And as long as that belief remained, the struggle with my weight would never truly end. Because

it wasn't just a fight to lose pounds — it was a fight to accept myself as I was.

Over time, I began to understand that true change wouldn't come from changing my body.

It only began when I started asking who I was without the weight — what I had to offer apart from the image I had created of myself. I began to realize that my battle with weight was symbolic of a much deeper battle within. And once I saw that clearly, something shifted: the key to freedom wasn't losing pounds, it was losing the belief that I wasn't enough.

Today, when I look in the mirror, I no longer see a reflection filled with shame and insecurity. I see a woman who knows her worth, who has discovered her strength, and who has stopped fighting to meet other people's expectations. My body isn't perfect — but it's mine. And that is enough.

The battle with my weight is no longer a battle with my body —
— it has become a journey toward self-acceptance. And in that, I've achieved the greatest victory I could ever imagine peace with myself.

Throughout the years, I've walked down nearly every path ever suggested to me as a solution to my weight problem.

Doctors, dietitians, self-proclaimed gurus, well-meaning friends, and strangers who suddenly appeared as the new face of "success" — they all seemed to glow with the certainty of having discovered the secret to being slim. They shared their advice with such confidence, and each time, I felt like I was falling short — as if I had missed something essential. As if they had cracked a code that I simply couldn't understand.

But as a neurodivergent person, I wasn't content to just follow the advice blindly. I'm not someone who accepts surface-level solutions. I dug deep. I researched, I read everything I could get my hands on, I analyzed, experimented. Of course, I quickly came across the usual suspects listed in every self-help book and diet plan: overeating, lack of exercise, emotional eating, stress. None of that surprised me—I knew all that already.

But every time I thought I understood it, I was reminded of my supposed failures by health campaigns, professional advice, and social pressure. It felt like the whole world had an opinion about what I needed to do—as if the only thing I had to do was “just eat less and take more walks.” Simple, right?

When I threw myself into those strategies, I did lose weight—temporarily.

The kilos would drop—only to creep back again, often bringing extra baggage with them. It was as if my body was a magnet for weight, desperate to return to some default setting, as if an invisible force were determined to undo all my progress. The most frustrating part was that the amount I was eating often didn't justify the weight I gained. It just didn't add up. Yet the assumption always was that it must be my fault. Because that's the dominant narrative around weight, isn't it? Got a big belly? Well, then—your fault, your problem.

Still, deep down, I knew the question “why do I struggle with my weight?” already contained the beginning of the answer. But that answer wasn't simple, nor straightforward, and definitely not one you could squeeze into a few neat steps. It wasn't just “eat less, move more.” There was so much more going on—and I knew it. But even with that understanding, I often strayed from the path. Sometimes out of exhaustion, sometimes out of despair, and sometimes because the truths I uncovered were just too painful or confronting to face.

And yet, no matter how hard it got, the question never left me. It stayed with me, like a constant echo reminding me that I couldn't stop searching, couldn't stop exploring.

Even when I lost hope, I kept returning to the journey.

The journey toward the answer I knew was there — just not always easy to find. And that is the path I'm still walking today: the path of self-discovery, self-acceptance, and the ongoing quest to discover what *truly* works for me — what my body genuinely needs to be in balance. It's not a simple journey, but it's *my* journey. And it's one thing I want to walk with all my heart and soul, until I finally find what I've been searching for all along.

In this book, I want to share the path I've taken — and continue to take.

Because this is not a story with a clear beginning and end. It's not a closed chapter where you can finally say, "Now I've made it." This is a journey, a continuous process of growth, of falling down and getting back up again, of learning and re-learning who I am.

Everything I've encountered along the way — the highs, the lows, the questions, and the insights — together they form the story of who I've become. It's an unfolding process.

It's not just about kilos, body fat percentages, or the outward appearance of health. It's about something much deeper.

It's about how weight becomes intertwined with your identity, how it affects how you feel about yourself, and how you move through the world. It's about the way the outside world looks at you, how those stares and expectations shape you — and how you, in turn, are shaped by the unspoken norms that society imposes on you.

Overweight is rarely just a physical issue — it touches your identity, your self-worth, and your place in society.

It's important to understand that what you see is not always the full picture. What your eyes perceive is only a fragment of what's really going on. In this book, I want to show that it's not just about what you do, but also about how you experience the world. Whether you have a neurotypical brain or a neurodivergent brain like mine, your perspective is fundamentally different. It's not better or worse — simply different. The way my brain processes stimuli and emotions isn't like most people's. That doesn't make my journey any easier, but it does make it unique.

There's always some overlap — people sometimes recognize themselves in the way I think or respond and say, "But I feel that way too sometimes, so you can't really be neurodivergent." And I get that. Of course we share common experiences — we're all human after all. Each of us has our own lens, our own story, and that's what makes us unique. But what often gets overlooked is that behavior alone doesn't tell the whole story. It's not just about what you do, but why do you do it. The origin of your behavior — that's where the real difference lies. For me, that deeper layer lives in the way my neurodivergent brain works. Emotions, social signals, physical sensations — even the tiniest stimuli — are internalized, felt, and processed differently.

What feels natural or easy for most people can be a challenge for me, something I need to overcome. But it's precisely by embracing those differences that I've found new ways to live with myself and relate to the world around me. I'm not better or worse than anyone else — I'm just different. And there is strength in understanding that difference. We're all part of the same human race, but within that shared humanity, there are countless nuances.

The way we perceive the world, how we communicate, how we deal with pain and celebrate success — those variations are vast.

And within that diversity lies a treasure trove of insight — both into ourselves and into others. Our strength comes from our differences, not from making everyone the same. True growth happens when we create space for each person's unique way of being.

This book is my invitation to embrace those differences — to understand the path I'm on, and maybe even to reconsider your own. Because in the end, it's our diversity that enriches us, that gives us strength, and that enables us to truly see and accept ourselves and others for who we really are.

Perhaps that's the biggest difference:

In a world obsessed with control, structure, and clarity, we're expected to fit into certain boxes. It gives people a sense of certainty — and in uncertain times, that need only grows stronger. Certainty feels safe. It offers comfort, something to cling to when the rest of the world feels chaotic and unpredictable. But here's the question: how safe are you really, if you've been placed in the wrong box?

When you're forced to fit into a framework or label that society has created for you, don't you end up losing parts of yourself? What happens to your inner freedom, your truth, when you're constantly holding back just to meet expectations that aren't your own? It's easy to believe that finding the "right" box will protect you from the world. But in reality, the box itself can become a prison — a limitation on who you truly are.

I've always felt that the system of boxes doesn't work for me. As someone with a neurodivergent brain, I know better than most what it's like not to fit into standard structures. The world seems so neatly organized, so clearly defined — and if you don't fit the picture, it feels like you're doing something wrong. But by refusing to accept that box, I've discovered there's far more freedom in not fitting in. Because safety doesn't come from living up to other people's norms — it comes from

within, from accepting yourself as you are, rather than forcing yourself into a role that was never yours to begin with.

When we find the courage to reject the boxes, we discover space to be who we truly are. And in that space lies real safety — not in fulfilling others' expectations, but in staying true to yourself. Maybe that's the greatest gift you can give yourself: the freedom to escape the limitations of the box, and the courage to walk your own path.

My brain works differently.

And if that's true, it only makes sense that my body reacts differently too — because I am one whole being. Body and mind aren't separate — they're woven together, like threads in the same tapestry. You can't understand one without acknowledging the other.

That's why weight loss has never been a simple matter of eating less or moving more for me. It's about so much more than a diet, a pill, or even a procedure like gastric surgery — which I did undergo ten years ago, by the way. It wasn't a miracle. It wasn't a permanent solution. Because real work lies deeper.

Overweight isn't just the result of poor choices or lack of willpower. It's often the physical expression of internal beliefs, old wounds, unspoken fears, and unresolved emotions. It tells a story — not only of what hasn't been let go, but also of what's become deeply anchored: a way of being in the world, a survival strategy, a form of protection.

Sometimes it's also about taking up space — literally and figuratively. Showing the world you're here, despite everything. Your personality, your unique way of perceiving and reacting, your life lessons — they all shape how your body forms and manifests. In that sense, being overweight is also a posture, a way of standing in the world. And it has nothing to do with the stereotypes society likes to throw at you: lazy, dumb, greedy, ugly, undisciplined.

More often than not, it's sensitive, loving people who carry this weight. People who not only process their own pain but often take on the pain of others too. People who long to be seen and understood but also hold back out of fear of judgment.

They deserve compassion, not contempt. They deserve space, not shrinkage. And above all, they deserve recognition — for their strength, their resilience, and their unique way of facing life on *their* terms.

I wish you an enriching reading experience, and I sincerely hope the insights in this book help you not only to understand your weight better, but also yourself. Whether you have a neurodivergent or neurotypical brain, what matters most is knowing who you are, what your story is, and how you take your place in this world.

It is my deepest hope that you will learn to stop seeing your weight as something to hide, a battle to fight, or a problem to fix. What if it's simply a part of your unique journey — a chapter in your personal story — one that you can embrace, instead of resist?

This process is not just physical — it's emotional and mental, above all.

It's not about how the world sees you — a world that so often judges based on appearances, without taking the time to truly see who you are inside. These quick judgments and surface-level reactions can trap us in stories that were never ours to begin with. We're often pressured to tell a version of our lives that doesn't reflect our truth, simply because others aren't willing — or able — to look any deeper.

But you have the right to be the author, the director, of your own story. You get to decide what you do with your body, your life, and your truth. Don't let anyone else write that script for you. You have the right to choose how you view your body, how you treat yourself, and what actions you take for your own well-being. It's a powerful and liberating

realization: the authority over your life doesn't lie in the expectations or opinions of others — it lies within you.

So don't fall into the trap of fighting against yourself.

Embrace who you are — in both body and mind.

Because only through that acceptance can you access the true strength that lives within you — a strength that's not defined by dress sizes, numbers on a scale, or anyone else's opinion.

It's defined by your ability to understand yourself, to love yourself, and to walk your path with the deep knowing that your worth is not measured by how the world sees you — but by how *you* see yourself.

Overweight

People always assume that being overweight is your own fault. As if it's simply the result of bad choices, laziness, and a lack of discipline. That idea is deeply embedded in sayings like “every ounce goes in through the mouth” — a phrase that may seem harmless at first glance but is in fact judgmental and stigmatizing.

In our society, being overweight is often equated with stupidity, laziness, or a lack of willpower. Because of many reasons: who would *want* to be fat? If you can't control your weight, there must be something wrong with your character or intelligence. As if you're unfit to manage other areas of life simply because you can't manage *this one thing* — your body.

But what if it's far more complex than that? What if being overweight isn't a sign of weakness, but of depth? Of survival, coping, protection? What if the body sometimes speaks where words fall short?

You're a glutton. Antisocial. You spend your days hanging around the fast-food joint stuffing yourself with greasy food. At least, that's what people love to believe. (Though to be honest, I see more slim people there than fat ones.)

In our society, being fat is automatically equated with being ugly, lacking manners, or being weak. There are countless negative assumptions tied to weight, which easily harden into deeply held beliefs. These assumptions are echoed by people who don't know better — but judge loudly anyway. And the more often these judgments are spoken, the more likely you are to believe them — as an outsider, but especially as the person they're aimed at.

But what *is* “fat” anyway? It’s a relative concept. One person’s “fat” is another’s healthy, strong, or even beautiful. In one culture, your body might be labeled heavy; in another, it might be seen as a sign of status, wellness, or fertility.

That shows us that the judgment of what’s “too fat” is completely dependent on the eye of the beholder — on their norms, fears, and beliefs. Which means it often says more about *them* than about *you*.

Whether you’re ten kilos overweight or 30 — extra weight can carry many kinds of heaviness. Physical, mental, emotional. Still, it’s a mistake to think everyone walks the same path or needs the same strength to let go of weight. Someone who drops a few kilos and calls it a heroic feat can barely imagine what it’s like to battle chronic obesity for years, with deeply rooted pain and patterns underneath.

It shows a lack of empathy to equate those two journeys. As if weight loss is always the same process, regardless of your starting point, background, or emotional baggage. If you’re patting yourself on the back for losing a few kilos — while judging someone else who’s still struggling with much more — that’s not strength. That’s just trying to make yourself feel bigger at someone else’s expense.

So, what kind of achievement is that, really? Is it truly a victory if it costs respect, compassion, and humanity?

And what is that person really saying?

Judgment can come from many directions — and interestingly, it’s not always from slim people. On the contrary. Plenty of fuller-bodied women (and men) are quick to make condescending remarks about those who are heavier than they are.

Why? Because it deflects attention from their own bodies.

If they point at *you*, they don't have to look at *themselves*. By labeling you as "worse" or "fatter," they create a false distance between their discomfort and your existence.

And if you stand there — visible *and* comfortable in your body — then you become a mirror for their fear. Because if *you* aren't ashamed, what does that say about *their* struggle? If you don't feel the need to fit into the box of "normal," then they'll need to work even harder to convince themselves that they *do* belong there.

That projection isn't a true rejection of you — it's a defense mechanism against their own internal conflict.

They symbolically pass their pain, judgment, and fear onto you — and for a moment, which feels like relief.

And that's exactly why letting go of weight isn't just physical. It's not there for no reason. It's tied to pain, protection, patterns, and old beliefs. Only when you understand *why* it's there, can you begin to release it with love — at your pace, in your own way.

In earlier times, fuller women were actually celebrated — seen as beautiful and prosperous.

Fullness represented fertility, health, and even status. But nowadays, the bar seems to be getting lower — or rather thinner. The pressure to be slim is greater than ever. Of course, social media plays a big role in amplifying this ideal, but the trend is nothing new. It has always existed — just in smaller circles and often closer to home.

The media, with its enormous influence on our collective consciousness, has long contributed to tearing down people with larger bodies. The belief that "fat = bad" is deeply rooted in advertising, fashion, and pop culture. And the government? Often adds fuel to the fire — whether through policies that

stigmatize people with excess weight, or dietary guidelines that wrongly suggest that being overweight is always a result of laziness or lack of control.

Stories shared by society are often deeply discriminatory — but when these stories become *profitable*, no one seems to care. The narratives that glorify thinness and demonize fatness aren't just consumed — they're actively promoted. And when these stories generate profit for companies or reinforce certain ideologies, they quickly become normalized, even when they're harmful. There was even a time when the government considered charging higher health insurance premiums for people with obesity — based on the assumption that they would be sick more often. A claim that ignored the reality that there are *healthy* overweight people, just as there are *unhealthy* skinny people. A person's health is far more complex than the number on a scale. It involves genetics, lifestyle, mental health, and thousands of other factors that determine true well-being.

When everyone keeps telling you that your weight is something that makes you unworthy, something that excludes you from the “herd,” something that makes you socially unacceptable — then you'll spend your whole life trying to fix it. You'll try everything: diets, pills, drinks, creams, patches, hypnotherapy, and so on. These methods often offer only temporary solutions — but *that's* the business model for the so-called “experts” — the people who claim they've discovered the secret to being slim because they've “done it themselves.”

But then there's another group: the ones who know exactly how to exploit those insecure feelings to enrich themselves.

They master the art of manipulation by convincing you that you *need* their method to become a better version of yourself.

You pay — repeatedly — hoping to finally reach your goal. But the results are often temporary — a few kilos lost, only to gain back them again. And that reinforces your belief that you're weak, that you lack willpower, maybe even that you're dumb — because who *wants* to be fat?

And so, you spin in the same vicious cycle your whole life. You try over and over to lose weight, hoping for the fix that finally works, but in reality, you stay stuck in the same pattern. While you wrestle with your body and the beliefs you hold about yourself, others profit from your pain. From the diets, pills, and therapies you try, to the ongoing sale of the idea that you're not good enough as you are.

Your overweight body becomes not just your personal struggle — it becomes a market commodity, in which your belief in your own inadequacy is exploited.

This entire industry survives on the belief that you always need to change something, to fix something, because who you are right now is never enough. And the more you believe that idea, the more you're pulled into their system.

But in the end, the result stays the same: you wrestle with the same feelings of failure and dissatisfaction, and the cycle keeps turning.

Summary

Negative societal views on overweight not only influence how people with excess weight perceive themselves but also how others judge them.

These views are deeply rooted in cultural norms, social expectations, and often unfairly generalize what being overweight truly means.

While many people without weight issues base their judgments on superficial assumptions — such as the idea that excess weight is simply the result of poor habits or a lack of discipline — there is rarely attention paid to the deeper, underlying causes that differ from person to person.

These societal norms lead to discrimination, not only through harsh statements and overt judgment but also through subtle forms of exclusion.

This creates an environment in which people with overweight feel not only physically but also emotionally and mentally treated unequally.

It becomes a vicious cycle, where those affected are confronted with negative perceptions that undermine their self-image, often resulting in feelings of inferiority and self-doubt.

Moreover, the culture we live in plays a major role in how we perceive weight.

In many cultures, thinness is equated with health and success — and those who don't meet that standard are often seen as "less." This not only leads to unfair judgment, but also creates a society that offers little space for the diversity of body shapes and sizes, even though every person has their own unique experiences and genetic makeup.



Fatties

Many of the people I know who live with excess weight share several inner qualities:

- They are often gentle by nature. They tend to be kind to others, even at their own expense.
- They frequently push past their own boundaries to give others the joy they themselves deeply long for.

The Philosophy of Overweight

- They often love animals and nature, which brings them both strength and relaxation.
- They are highly attuned to their surroundings and tend to be especially sensitive to atmosphere and energy.
- They possess a strong sense of empathy.
- They are deep thinkers and tend to adapt to others.
- They try to compensate for the “problem” their weight poses to others by being extra kind, often feeling they are not good enough.
- They carry the belief that something is wrong with them — that they are weak and have little value.
- Many have been bullied, excluded, pointed at, or laughed at because of their weight.
- They often bottle things up, afraid to make another mistake that others might use as a reason to tear them down further.
- They have a soft-hearted temperament.
- They are usually calm and thoughtful.
- They try with all their might to create a mask that aligns with the world around them.

It’s important to emphasize that this description is not limited to people of a certain weight.

There are certainly slim individuals who experience the same internal dynamics.

Likewise, not every characteristic attributed to those with a heavier body applies universally to every person in that group.

The point is: the slim person is often just the other side of the same coin.

Where stress might lead some to overeat, it may cause others to lose their appetite entirely — even becoming underweight.

Stress affects the body in various ways, and the ability to eat can

be diminished or disappear entirely due to the psychological pressure someone experiences.

Ultimately, it's essential to understand that every person, regardless of body type, navigates life through the same fundamental processes.

What differs is how those processes manifest.

Everyone has their own defense mechanisms, and the way the body responds can vary greatly.

While one person might turn to food for comfort, another might feel their body shutting down.

It remains crucial to acknowledge that the experience of stress, fear, and other emotions is universal — but the ways we cope with them are as diverse as humanity itself.

It is this very diversity that makes the human experience, and our emotional coping mechanisms, so fascinating.

A monkey moves effortlessly through the trees — its natural habitat — while a fish glides through water, where its body thrives best.

It would be absurd to expect a fish to climb trees, as that simply goes against its very nature.

Such an attempt would be doomed to fail.

But imagine a fish that spends its entire life believing it *should* be able to climb trees, simply because that's what it keeps being told.

Maybe it never got the chance to truly explore its own abilities.

What if it follows that path because the monkeys around it — and the media shaping its world — keep insisting that it belongs with them, and should be able to do the same things they do?



This scenario raises an important question:

What happens to an individual who constantly measures themselves against standards that don't naturally fit them?

When the fish compares itself to the monkey — not because it wants to, but because it has been taught to — there comes a point when it begins to see itself as lesser.

It keeps trying, but every failure only confirms the belief that it's not good enough.

It forgets that its true strength lies in the ocean, not in the trees.

In our society, this concept manifests in many ways: the pressure to meet expectations that are not our own, but imposed from the outside.

The desire to follow in someone else's footsteps can easily obscure our own path.

It's essential to recognize that — just like the fish and the monkey