



The Pleasure Trap: Mastering the Hidden Force That Undermines Health and Happiness

Douglas J. Lisle , Alan Goldhamer

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The authors offer unique insights into the factors that make us susceptible to dietary and lifestyle excesses, and present ways to restore the biological processes designed by nature to keep us running at maximum efficiency and vitality. A wake-up call to even the most health conscious people, The Pleasure Trap boldly challenges conventional wisdom about sickness and unhappiness in today's contemporary culture, offers groundbreaking solutions for achieving change, and provides a fascinating new perspective on how modern life can turn so many smart, savvy people into the unwitting saboteurs of their own well-being. Inspired by stunning original research, comprehensive clinical studies, and their successes with thousands of patients, the authors construct a new paradigm for the psychology of health, offering fresh hope for anyone stuck in a self-destructive rut.

The Pleasure Trap: Mastering the Hidden Force That Undermines Health and Happiness Details

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Maura says

Much of this book is material that your average college-educated newspaper-reading/podcast-listening person is already well aware of.

I did, however appreciate being reminded how most of society is slowly killing themselves with their knives and forks. One analogy was that it's as if we're in a society full of heroin addicts who think their addictions are completely normal and healthy.

I also liked the idea of compiling a weekly menu and shopping from the corresponding grocery list consistently each week. Also, the attention to the fact that many of us who believe we have no time to cook healthy foods could actually afford to hire a cook was nice. Our prioritization of big homes and nice cars over the expense of a cook for healthy foods is worth examining.

Cynthia says

I concur with most previous reviewers. I also was introduced to the author Doug Lisle by watching "Forks Over Knives." It helped me understand why so many of us (including me) have so much difficulty restraining our self-destructive appetites, and gave me some helpful ideas about how to restructure my environment and retrain my palate. I have become a convert to following a plant-based diet, but this book did not persuade me to follow the extreme dietary prohibitions Lisle recommends (i.e., giving up coffee, salt, all dairy, all alcohol, etc.), nor do I believe that water-only fasting is a particularly helpful or healthy exercise.

Kelsey says

I'm about 1/3 into this. It's shallow and very disappointing. I'll update when done, but already I can confidently say I don't recommend this unless you get it from a library and are *completely* new to basic concepts of survival of the fittest, reward mechanisms, etc.

Edit: I've finished it and my review is unchanged. Not a good book.

Anna Cordova says

In a nutshell, The primary sources of pleasure are food and sexual activity. These activities are biologically expensive and designed to only last a few minutes, not several hours. Modern society has made it easy for us to make these pleasurable activities a trap. We can achieve health by eating a diet ideal for human consumption, emphasizing adequate rest, exercise, and also occasionally fasting. This book has a unique way of using scientific and historical evidence to arrive at these conclusions. Truthfully, I had read most of these ideas before, with the exception of the part on fasting, just never presented in this manner.

Pragati says

.. I liked it but I thought it was incredibly dry! The way the book is written made me want to skip over sections ... maybe its because of my chosen profession, maybe its because I'd already read some of the books discussed in detail within the text of this one. I wish it was a little more captivating ... I'd recommend it to someone new to a plant-based diet, but will probably not go back to it for reference as I do with most other books I've read on the subject!! Only 2 stars in my opinion!!

Margaret Longstreet says

I read this because of the Forks over Knives movie. It takes the Whole foods diet a step further in understanding. I was especially interested in the Fasting chapter. I liked the fact that it was written from a psychology perspective.

Maggie says

I read this book after watching *Forks Over Knives* and reading *The China Study*, so did not read it to be persuaded to adopt a plant-strong lifestyle. What I took away from this book is the psychology behind the poor choices most Americans today make concerning food and exercise, and how to avoid those pleasure traps on the road toward health and wellness. Lisle argues that the motivational triad that suited our ancestors so well does not work at all in today's society, and we must force ourselves to go against our natural instincts. The tips and tools offered are nothing new, but I did walk away with a greater understanding of the power of our natural instincts in our daily lives. I didn't at all understand the purpose of including the chapter about water-only fasting. I really think Lisle could have left that out completely. It was interesting, don't get me wrong, but seemed superfluous.

lalala Vegan says

Read book over again when ever I need inspiration. A important book to read if your starting a plant based diet.

Mary says

I've been on and off a vegan diet for 20 years. This book got remotivated and back on track

Robin Tierney says

Makes important biological processes clear. Examples of points made:

* Nature designed pleasure circuitry and biochemicals to help us survive, thrive and reproduce. Corporations and legitimized drug dealers have used science to hijack the brain's pleasure pathways.

* The controlled exploitation of animals in agriculture had a high price: The major killers of humanity since 8500 BC have not been starvation, warfare, accidents or large predators. The major threats to human life since 8500 BC -- microorganisms and viruses such as smallpox, influenza, tuberculosis, malaria, plague, measles and cholera -- have been literally invisible. These infectious agents which we may refer to as "micropredators," all have something of importance in common: each evolved from a disease in domesticated animals that then adapted to, and infected, human societies.

For example, many more Native Americans died as a result of European animal-based diseases than were ever killed in armed combat.

* Beyond infectious diseases were a new class of diseases. For the first time in history, people began to suffer the effects from a previously unimaginable problem: getting too much. The diseases of kings. Primarily animal flesh and organs, eggs and dairy.

Sue says

This was a very interesting book--relating early man's "needs" to our current "desires" and how the food culture has helped us all fall into the "pleasure trap". Interesting references and easy reading--not written like a science manual, but as information for the general public to understand and utilize in our daily living.

Yitka says

I was a little disappointed by this book. The idea behind it was very compelling to me - how pleasure (in-the-moment gratification, triggering dopamine release) differs from happiness (longer-lasting sense of well-being and progress toward positive goals, triggering serotonin release). I'm fascinated by humans' common propensity toward self-destructive and addictive behavior, and the analogies that can be drawn between addiction to cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, etc. and addiction to sugar and processed foods. There were some unexpected and surprisingly thought-provoking sections on the history of humanity, and the ways that different innovations (agricultural developments, the light bulb, etc.) throughout time have affected the way humans live - both for better, and for worse. Unfortunately, the writing itself was a little meandering at times, sometimes repetitive, and often felt like a poorly executed college student's essay, rather than a highly researched, articulately written, and tightly edited book. While there were some studies cited in footnotes, a lot of the book made broad conjectures without really backing them up. Many of the biological reasons given for our behavior seemed mostly based on assumptions that weren't 100% thought out or based on well-rounded examination...all interesting ideas, but not necessarily presented in the most convincing way. The final chapter on fasting was interesting in terms of its reference to patient success/testimonials, but it seemed random and out of place - like it should have been its own book, rather than a part of this one. Overall, not a bad read, but not exactly a must-read either.

Stella says

Good stuff, but somehow the flow of the book was all over the place. This book wouldn't have converted me to whole food plant based diet. I don't think it was even clear in that message. But as I am a convert already

I had fun with bits and pieces of it and esp. the chapter on benefits of prolonged only water fasting. I may try that some day.

Julie says

This book is fascinating. Well . . . I found that it was anyways. He discusses the human motivational triangle and why we do some of the things we do that damage our bodies. He talks about how in caveman times it was okay to follow our instincts because it was a matter of survival. Now, we live in an artificial world (food, drugs etc.) That trick us and we fall in to "pleasure traps." He talks about the cycle of addiction and recovery and how most of our society is addicted to food from a young age. This book may be offensive to some people. There is one sentence especially I would have gotten made at if I hadn't changed my eating habits recently. He openly laments the fact the americans, are using too much tobacco, alcohol, caffeine, meat, dairy, oil, processed foods, chocolate, and getting too little sleep.

I actually learned a lot though. I learned tons about sleep and the importance of getting enough sleep. I learned how to deal with social situations when it's obvious to people I won't be partaking of certains dishes, and I came away feeling empowered over how to overcome the natural man in me. I wish everyone could read this book with an open mind and humility. Great book!

Elyse says

I know this book 'well' -[I saw DebbieCat reading this now]- I read it when it first came out -- I know both doctors. I've a lot of history with 'the history' of this clinic -- the fasting/healing program --- (I went to a similar fasting clinic for 30 days in Dessert Hot Springs --ate 'no' food --the first year of my marriage -- another time when I was sick -- long story --but it 'did' work -- I was well for about another 10 years until all the problems started to return --

Interesting that this book came into my space 'today' of all days..(when I saw a rheumatologist for autoimmune disorders)

...I recently called this clinic a few weeks ago -- and looked through my book again --'considering going and the high price to boot' -- It would be a last resort --

I prefer to work with doctors here where I live --

but for people who 'need' this program --its 'not' crazy -- but should be under doctors care.

Its radical to 'not' eat for a few weeks -- The body needs to 'rest' during that time...when not eating of course. Its also not easy!

I lost about 20 lbs in a month when I did it years ago - weight I didn't have to lose. The weight came back -- (weight loss was not the purpose) -- I was healing my colon -- (not letting food pass was a fast way for it to heal) ---

I take 'all' these type of books with a grain of salt --

Quality of living --free choice counts for something too!!!!!! (Fun Counts)!!

