

Eat Your Rice Cakes: Discovering Empowerment after a Life-Changing Diagnosis

Margaret Weiss

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Eat Your Rice Cakes is a practical health text that will be useful when it comes to identifying stumbling blocks to medical change.

Written for patients and health care providers, Margaret Weiss's personable health text *Eat Your Rice Cakes* forwards concrete advice about adherence, rather than compliance, to medical regimens.

Building from medical data, Weiss's personal experience with a Celiac disease diagnosis in the mid-1990s, and Weiss's professional experience as a dietitian, educator, and clinic coordinator, the book argues that patients should be empowered with logic. Its medical information is presented with clarity and is suitable for both patients and busy health care providers.

Weiss begins with a general discussion of how human beings experience change before considering the specific changes that may be required after a medical diagnosis. Her discussions of change are embedded in treatment narratives and reviews of behavioral and psychological theories, showing how attitudes toward change affect patient adherence to treatment recommendations.

This connection between narrative and theory is a particular and recurring strength of the text. An important distinction between "compliance," which privileges doctor's orders, and the less hierarchical and more patient-centered "adherence" is explained in clear terms, showing how language impacts provider/patient relationships. Weiss also argues that treatment should include attention to a patient's individual context and communication, while a cost-benefit analysis is used to demonstrate that adherence and patient-centered care save on medical costs.

Weiss covers several life-changing diagnoses in her discussions, though most of her examples are drawn from treatments of Celiac disease and diabetes, both of which require adherence to strict dietary guidelines to ensure a patient's optimum health. Her language is technical when it needs to be, but her paragraphs are still short and focused on single ideas.

The book's chapters progress from experiential narratives to more complex theoretical analyses. Graphics are used to illustrate some concepts, and each chapter ends with a bulleted list of highlights to reinforce its points. The rice cake as a metaphor for lifestyle changes is used as a recurring graphic and textual element for grounding. The tone is friendly, inclusive, and informative, and it is written with awareness that, in a world where economic concerns dictate how much time physicians spend with each patient, reliance on supporting medical personnel is critical.

This is a book that can help patients and providers make the most of their relationships, and that can ensure meaningful communication and effective patient education. *Eat Your Rice Cakes* is a practical health text that will be useful when it comes to identifying stumbling blocks to medical change.

MICHELE SHARPE (May 12, 2021)

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