Clarion Review

Health & Fitness

The Transform Diet
Brett Salisbury
iUniverse
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★★★☆☆
(January 2009)

“High-protein diets may promote loss of kidney function.” “During a three-year period when the use of treadmills increased by 900 percent, obesity doubled.” “In a university study, many popular brands of bottled water actually had a higher bacteria count than tap water.” In *The Transform Diet*, Brett Salisbury debunks many such myths about diet and exercise before outlining his own plan for getting into shape in twelve weeks.

The trouble with most diet books, the author says, is that while they’re “filled with information on how foods affect our internal body,” most people diet and exercise for external results: they want to change the way they look. The “Transform Diet” is a prescription for doing just that. The book’s emphasis on appearance is underscored by a quirky final section of grooming tips that cover everything from halitosis to excess body hair.

Salisbury, a sports nutritionist and former professional football player, served as his own laboratory for fine-tuning the menus and exercise plans outlined here.

“At six-foot-two and nearly 260 pounds,” he writes, “I had uncontrollable belly fat, but also the full knowledge of how to change my body.” In ninety days, he says, he reduced his waistline from forty-four to thirty-four inches. Readers might wish that the book included some professional endorsement other than the author’s.

An enormous amount of research went into this book. Beginning with a dissection of some of the most popular diet programs of the past decade, including the South Beach and Atkins diets, Salisbury patiently examines what works and what doesn’t—and why. Some of his analogies are striking: for example, in a chapter on drinking water, he invokes the corrosive effects of tap, mineral, and spring water on car batteries to make his point. “We are willing to

not jeopardize the car battery with tap or spring water and only add distilled because the experts tell us it's the 'only water' we can put in our car battery?" he writes. "Yet every day, we continue to drink bottled spring or tap water?"

Unfortunately, Salisbury's passion for his subject is not matched by ease of expression. *The Transform Diet* cries out for a professional editor. Too often, mixed metaphors, infelicitous word choices, and poor grammar derail its sentences.

A competent editor could also have called attention to a more serious problem: inconsistent citations for sources. When Salisbury quotes from journal articles, he sometimes references the name of the article and sometimes only the name of the publication; in a few cases, he cites only the author's name.

These are more than editorial concerns; they weaken the book's authority. In a book that depends so heavily on scientific evidence, full references in footnotes or chapter notes are a necessity. A bibliography might also have been helpful. Lacking the attention to detail Salisbury demands of his clients, *The Transform Diet* is unlikely to morph into a lean, mean bestseller.