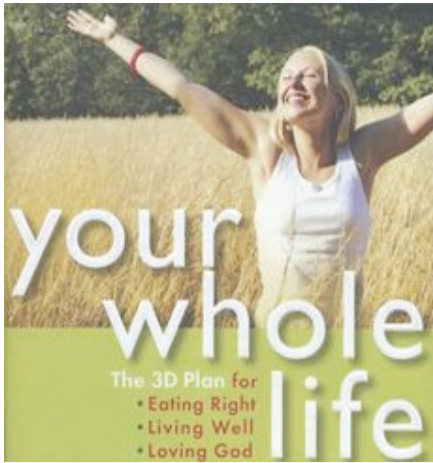


## Weight-loss includes spiritual element



Carol Showalter wrote the earlier version of this book 35 years ago. She decided to update it to include what she'd learned over the years.

**By Johanna Crosby**  
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If faith can move mountains it may budge unwanted pounds, boost low self-esteem and overcome other problems.

Carol Showalter thought it was divine inspiration when she noticed the sign "Smile, God Has the Answer" on a Sunday school bulletin board. The message moved her to create one of the first Christian-centered health programs in 1972.

The program was a general support group with other women at the Presbyterian church in Rochester, N.Y., where her husband was senior pastor. Word got around, and other groups formed in neighboring churches and around the country.

Her 1973 memoir, "3D: Diet, Discipline and Discipleship," describing her struggle with weight, self-worth and the demands of trying to be the "perfect minister's wife," sold more than 500,000 copies and gained national attention.

After 35 years, Showalter, now of Orleans, and affiliated, with her husband, with The Community of Jesus, decided to update her first book with current nutritional information. "Your Whole Life: The 3D Plan for Eating Right, Living Well and Loving God," written with Brewster nutritionist Maggie Davis (Paraclete Press, 280 pages, \$24.95), is more than just a faith-based diet program. It's a 12-week journey about living a whole life. The book's title was inspired by the Scripture verse Mark 5:34 in which Jesus tells a woman: "Your faith has made you whole."

Showalter, who still battles with her weight, consulted Davis six years ago for nutritional advice.

"I was a little embarrassed I needed help," she says.

Collaborating on the book was a "natural connection," says Davis, who's found many of her clients need a spiritual component to make crucial lifestyle changes. People who are successful in eating right and managing their weight, she says, bring their mind, body and spirit to the table.

"Our emphasis is not on getting thin or being successful," Showalter says, but helping readers find their true selves and knowing more about the love of God, no matter how much they weigh.

The word diet, the authors say, pertains not only to weight loss but also to how one eats.

The 3D diet plan of diet, discipline and discipleship blends nutrition and wellness advice with daily spiritual readings and tips for living well. There's an exercise plan, and readers are encouraged to keep a daily diary and use a companion journal.

Davis bases her tools for healthful eating on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, food pyramid recommendations and her practice of nearly 35 years.

"It's not about deprivation," she says. "There is almost nothing you can't eat in the right amount."

Showalter provides spiritual food for thought with her devotional readings and suggestion to memorize one short Bible verse a week.

Why a faith-based program?

"People have a hunger for spirituality," Showalter says. "It's the added ingredient that everybody needs." Yet there's nothing magical, she adds, about bringing God into a diet program. It takes discipline and discipleship (loving and following God) to lead a healthy, integrated life.

"God is the most necessary component of a whole life — and that is what the average diet plan misses," she writes.

Showalter began having problems with weight and self-worth in her mid-30s. Stressed out by the demands of raising four children and her responsibilities as a minister's wife, she started packing on the pounds.

"My personal struggle (has helped) me to help others," she says.

Her new book redefines the 3Ds with new insights.

"I had to accept that I may never be thin," she says. "At this point in my life my goal is health, and I know it will affect my weight."

Showalter, who wears a pedometer every day, lost 15 pounds last year and hopes to lose another 10 to 15 this year.

Despite its spiritual bent, the 3D plan isn't just for Christians. Nonbelievers can use the program, Showalter says, by skipping over the Scripture readings and inspirational thoughts.

No studies have been done, yet Showalter says the 3D plan "is as successful, if not more so, than any other weight-loss program." Some people follow it for life.

Readers can do the program on their own with online support at [www.3DYourWholeLife.com](http://www.3DYourWholeLife.com), or they can form a group for mutual support. Since the book came out, 75 groups of different denominations, including a group of nuns, have started around the country, Showalter says.

"It's so positive and inspirational," says Donna Richardson, of Harwich, who formed a 3D group at Brewster Baptist Church. She's shed 10 pounds since January.

The retired teacher tried other diet plans, including Weight Watchers 10 times, but the spiritual piece was missing.

"It's this bigger power that gives me strength," she says. "I'm not alone."

"This is a savior for me," says Chalise Dawnstar, of Chatham, who has fought anorexia for 35 years. "Other diets make you feel guilty for eating too much or too little," she says, but the 3D Plan "doesn't judge you."

Dawnstar likes the mix of nutritional advice with the spiritual dimension that was missing in her life..

"You can find a deeper meaning," she says.



Co-authors Maggie Davis and Carol Showalter blended their interests in nourishing the soul and the body to pen a new weight-loss and wellness book

## Tips for becoming whole:

Don't think thin, think whole.

- Make small, gradual changes every week.
- Prepare healthful food and exercise regularly. It's sacred work.
- Eat whole foods.
- Reduce intake of high-calorie foods.
- Increase vegetable consumption.

Source: "Your Whole Life," by Carol Showalter and Maggie Davis

## Food for thought

"Your Whole Life" contains numerous quotes that draw attention to the force of faith for human beings. Here are a few of them:

- "God always heals us, and with the most amazing gentleness over time. It does take time for us to heal in ways that will bring God the most glory, and us the most joy, forever." (Julian of Norwich, ca. 1342-1416)
- "I can will what is right, but I cannot do it." (Romans 7:13-25)

- "I know, O Lord, and do with all humility acknowledge myself as an object altogether unworthy of thy love; but sure I am, thou art an object altogether worthy of mine. Do thou then impart to me some of that excellence, and that shall supply my own lack of worth. Help me to cease from sin according to thy will, that I may be capable of doing thee service according to my duty." (St. Augustine, 354-430)
- "Change your thoughts and you can change the world." (Norman Vincent Peale, 1898-1993)