

GUILTLESS GIRLS: UNPACKING 100-CALORIE SNACKS

By

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ABSTRACT

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The intended purpose of this paper is to consider how 100 calorie snacks are primarily advertised and produced for women. Little research has been done on 100 calorie snacks as they were introduced to the food market in 2004. Portioned control snacks came to be another way for the food industry to prey on women's insecurities about their looks and their weight. Although 100 calorie snacks are marketed as a sensible snacking tool they are geared towards women as a weight loss product. First, I examined what society believes is the "idealized" woman and how many women strive to become this "ideal". Then I looked how the "idealized" women led to the low-fat and non-fat diet craze of the early 90's and how the phenomenon manifested itself. Then I move on to examine the advertisements women view and how they affect the opinions women have about themselves. Likewise, I examined how food companies advertise their food and what their main objectives are when advertising. Finally, I look at 100 calorie snacks and their part in the diet craze of the new century called "healthy lifestyle." What exactly are 100 calorie snacks and how are they geared towards women? Also, what is the reality behind these 100 calorie snacks?

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Weight and body image are an issue that an American woman is subjected to everyday. There are many women who talk about weight loss with their friends, doctors, family, and think about it on a daily basis. A study conducted in 1997 found that 89% of women say they have a desire to lose weight (Garner 1997). Although some women are able to ignore what they see and hear from society, many women focus on it and cycle through several emotions in a day. These women who feel the societal pressures deal with the face-to-face truth of their weight, their physical appearance, and their eating habits. Women are bombarded with “ideal” images of women through television, magazines, men, and unfortunately other women. Models are continuing to get skinner year by year (Spitzer, et.al. 1999). These same women turn on the television, look in a magazine, or walk down the street, where they see other women with whom they feel they can never compare. Yet they feel the societal pull telling them, “This is who you should strive to look like.” More than four out of ten women say they feel insecure when faced with a fashion model on television (Garner 1997). Thin female models are drastically overrepresented in television and magazines so only a small minority of women actually have their body type (Fouts & Burggraf, 2000; Spitzer, Henderson, Zivian, 1999). Many American, everyday, women cannot achieve the thin “ideal” body type.

America’s social scene forces many women to think about their physical appearance everyday. When a woman wakes up in the morning, if she chooses to watch the news, she will probably see a commercial for a weight loss supplement, food, or drink. She might also see a commercial for a gym, exercise equipment or a very attractive woman who appears to have

flawless skin and a perfectly toned body. Whatever she might see on the television, she might then be led to think about what she looks like compared to what she “should” look like according to social standards. Women who internalized sociocultural pressures concerning appearance experienced greater body-focused anxiety following exposure to thin models (Halliwell and Dittmar 2004). Many other studies have been conducted showing that women who have been exposed to thin models are more likely to have feelings of body dissatisfaction (Groesz, et.al. 2002; Garner 1997; Halliwell and Dittmar 2004).

I recognize that not all women have a strong desire to subject themselves to society's standards and achieve a thin body or become modelesque. However, all women are subjected to society's standards for beauty. Some women are able to ignore society's standards and feel content with their physical appearance however they are still judged by societal views on women. Women will always be judged by societal views whether they choose to conform to their views is something different. Although a woman may not judge herself by society's views, society is judging her. “Normative Discontent” is a term which means it is normal for women to feel discontent and dissatisfied with their body or physical appearance (Rodin, et.al. 1984). Some women feel a constant nagging worry about their weight and dieting in our society. Much of this is based on cultural attitudes. Some have argued it is normal for women to begin having this “normative discontent,” beginning at age 8 and will continue to have it throughout their lifetime. They will worry about their body, try to change their shape, and avoid exposing their body to others (Grogan 2008). Some of the cultural attitudes that influence this “normative discontent” include: a common disgust for obesity, a common awe for attractiveness, beauty being feminized, thin is part of being attractive, and women have to change their bodies to achieve attractiveness (Rodin, et. al. 1984). Due to cultural ideals, some women feel a constant urge to look attractive. Therefore, many of these women are unhappy with their current appearance and want to change it.

With the thin “ideal” beauty standard in Western society many women struggle with their body weight. Women who struggle with their body weight are constantly focusing on keeping the numbers on the scale low in order to achieve the “supermodel” look. Many women in the U.S. have gone on a diet at least once in order to keep their weight down. Forty-five percent of women are on a diet on any given day (Smolack 1996). Many diets are available and with many women feeling they need to lose weight dieting appears to be a popular option.

Dieting became a popular option in the 1920’s when flappers came on the social scene (Mazur 1986; Grogan 2008). Flappers were youthful, vibrant and full of energy. They were the first respectful women to show their legs and they were tiny, thin legs. They had a flat abdomen, small hips and a small rear. Models began looking thinner after that by sucking in their stomach (Mazur 1986). Women wanted to resemble flappers and in order to do that they had to keep their youthful figure. They began trying to control their weight through any means necessary and many turned to dieting.

Now diets are so popular there are hundreds from which to choose from. You can watch television and learn about diets, read about diets in magazines and on the internet, and buy a book or cookbook to teach you about a diet. There are the more popular diets like Weight Watchers, Slim Fast, Jenny Craig, NutriSystem, and Atkins. However there are some lesser known diets like the cabbage diet, 3 day diet, grapefruit diet, fast food diet, and the Amish diet. All of the different diets claim they will help you loose weight. The “healthy” lifestyle came to life in 2000. 100 calorie packs made their debut on the food scene. The question is, “Why are 100 calorie packs created?” Are they for people training to maintain weight, lose weight, or just snack healthy. Are these snacks a healthy option? This paper will examine the idealized women, the diet craze and 100 calorie packs and the emphasis they have on the everyday women.

CHAPTER 2

IDEALIZED WOMAN

2.1 From Princesses to Models

Little girls grow up learning from society that their physical appearance is important. They learn this is something that is of value for a woman and something she needs to work at maintaining. Women begin to be exposed to this at an early age in Western societies. Most girls are given toys where the baby dolls and girls they are playing with are dressed up and have make up on. Ninety-nine percent of three to ten year girls in the United States own at least one Barbie doll (Rogers 1999). Barbie is a very physically attractive toy for young girls and she has all sorts of outfits that show off her body. Barbie is not only skinny but also has large breasts to accent her figure. Exposure to Barbie dolls among young girls has an increase in girl's body dissatisfaction (Dittmar, et.al. 2006). Girls also hear they are princesses. There is even a game they can buy called "Pretty, Pretty Princess." Unknowingly the little girl begins to arrive at pre-conceived notions of how society will view her. She begins to realize that being skinny, having her hair and make up done, and looking like a "princess" is attractive in this society. Although this might not be a direct idea taught to little girls they learn it from their toys, the shows they watch, and how adults interact with them. Many little girls begin to focus on their appearance and play dress up and use makeup to mimic the impression. This is reinforced most of the time by their parents and friends.

Fairy tales are popular bedtime reading for little girls when they are growing up. They hear about the beautiful princess and how she is saved by a wonderful prince. In all the fairy tales her beauty is described and the little girls learn what the beauty does for her. Her beauty

captures her prince's attention and saves her from her horrible fate. Because of her beauty she is saved from her death and lives happily ever after. The princesses would be lost if they did not have their beautiful locks of hair, their thin petite bodies, and their flawless faces (Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz 2003). Not only are little girls learning what the feminine ideal is for a woman but little boys also read these fairy tales as well and learn they want a girl just like the fairy princess. If the prince could have a princess why can't he? Many little boys then grow up holding women up to this beauty ideal expecting them to maintain this "princess" look.

Some little girls are taught early on about food, nutrition and dieting. Their moms may begin to diet and they learn what dieting means and how to lose weight. In a study conducted of college students, more women than men reported they received much of their nutrition knowledge from family members and friends (Davy, et.al. 2006). If college women are stating they learned much of their nutrition knowledge from family and friends this can be alarming. Friends of college girls were probably going through the same insecure times during their childhoods. They were both probably worried about their weight and learning to be concerned and focused on their bodies. Learning information from her family means she was taught at a young age to care about her nutrition. Girls learning more than boys from their family about nutrition, suggests there was a bigger emphasis in the home for girls to learn about nutrition than boys. This could be part of the reason why young girls believe they are overweight and are interested in dieting. A study conducted by Elizabeth Collins found that 68 percent of first through third grade girls wanted to be skinnier than they were. They were given model drawings that varied in size from skinny to fat and were told to choose what they looked like and what the ideal girl would look like. Sixty-eight percent of the girls chose an ideal girl that was skinnier than the figure they chose of themselves (Collins 1990).

The average woman is 5'4" and weighs 140 pounds. The average model is 5'11" and weighs 117 pounds. Most fashion models are thinner than 98% of American women (Smolack

1996). The average model is 20% underweight according to the Body Mass Index (Wiseman, et.al 1992). Models create a very high standard with which everyday women must compete. Many women cannot and will never be able to attain a “model” figure. Although many women may know that they will not look like a fashion model many will continue to strive to look like a model through dieting, plastic surgery, and other cosmetic tools. Some women strive for thinness as it is associated many times with success, happiness, social acceptability, and youthfulness in Western societies (Grogan 2008). The media allows almost any women in the U.S. to be exposed to models on a daily basis. Women are faced with those who hold an unrealistic ideal of thinness, are airbrushed to look flawless, and have other hidden media secrets at their disposal. There is a beauty and thinness “ideal” that has become of great concern for many because of the devastating links women will go to achieve this “ideal.” Some women exhaust themselves trying to achieve an “ideal” that for them is not plausible. In 1995, 50% of women surveyed said they were unhappy with either their weight, mid torso, or lower torso (Cash and Henry 1995).

In order to obtain this “ideal,” many women choose to diet or watch their weight. One of the new tools to watch your weight is to eat smart. Eating smart entails eating foods with “good” things packed in or added and less of the “bad” things. More nutrients are added into the foods and more of the preservatives, fat, calories, etc. are taken out. 100 calorie packages have less calories than regular individual snack packages and have filled the snack aisles in the 21st century. Many snackers have begun eating these 100 calorie packs viewing them as healthy alternatives to the snacks they eat. These snacks are advertised toward women to help them with they weight loss goals or achieve the “ideal” body their see in the media.

Although some women see these images in the media as flawed and know that they could never attain this “ideal” beauty or thinness, they are still bound to this image in society. Women who believe in this “ideal” as realistic and believe that as long as this cultural “ideal” of pure beauty and raw thinness are around, they will be held accountable to meet that standard,

they will try to do so even if they do not personally buy into the “ideal.” Each woman has a right to reject that ideal and standard and be her own person. However, this does not give her the right not to be judged by those standards set before her. Unfortunately, others can still choose to judge a woman by the social standards and most of the time she will be.

2.2 Why Women Maintain

The beauty “ideal” is constantly reinvented by the media. The media has many ways of getting the “idealized” woman across to the masses. Women, men, girls, and boys are all exposed to the media and see what the “idealized” woman is through magazines, television, movies, billboards, etc. Incredibly thin models are so prominent therefore exposure to them is almost unavoidable. This constant exposure reinforces the discrepancy for most women and girls between their actual body size and the “ideal” body. This shows men and boys what a woman can and “should” look like. The beauty “ideal” is not only perpetuated in the media but is also perpetuated by men and women themselves. Some men hold women up to this beauty ideal and expect women to constantly be concerned with their looks. Likewise, women hold other women accountable to these standards. Women begin to expect themselves to maintain this “ideal” and worry about their looks and focus on them. Eventually a woman’s looks become a separate entity.

Objectification theory states that a woman’s body is seen as a separate entity from herself (Fredrickson 1997). Her body is seen as an object by men and therefore will be an object of sexualization by the man. The woman is no longer seen as a woman but seen as her body. Although her body is only part of the woman it then becomes the entire woman. Unfortunately, many women then internalize this view and begin viewing themselves as objects who are subject to be looked at and evaluated by others (Fredrickson 1997). Women see themselves as commodities and their physical appearance begins to serve as an interpersonal currency (Rodin, et. al. 1984). Objectification could be one explanation why Western societies have a view of the

“ideal woman.” Men no longer see a woman for what she is but what she looks like. They in turn expect her to be the feminine “ideal” woman with a thin body and a beautiful face. Men no longer look at the woman as having feelings and emotions but look at her for her body, treating her body as separate from her. If this occurs, a self-concept problem is created. A woman then begins to notice men looking at her for her body. They check her out up and down on a daily basis and she becomes self-conscious. She worries about the way she looks. She wants to please them unknowingly and starts to view herself as an object. She will then begin to pamper herself and dress herself up for others to view. Consequently, she no longer sees herself as a woman but views her own body as an object to be viewed.

There are several other theories on why women are subjected to this idealized beauty standard. Jefferys (2005), attempted to gather several feminist’s viewpoints on feminine beauty and roll them into one theory which would cover several viewpoints. Although a woman recognizes that all feminist have a different voice and have different thoughts and theories, she attempts to wrap many ideas into a theory. Jeffreys (2005) believes women’s beauty ideals and practices are due to women’s inferior status and it signifies the differences between men and women in society. It also shifts the focus from women’s competencies to something as superficial as appearance. It undermines a women’s self-confidence, reduces women to sexual objects, and disperses their emotional and economic resources (Jeffreys 2005). Another theory includes the idea that men work to keep women below them socially, economically, domestically, etc. through the feminine beauty “ideal”. In order for men to keep women as inferior, they have to have women focusing on something other than successfully getting ahead of them. Women are subjected to an unrealistic beauty standard by men to force them to focus on achieving this unrealistic goal. This draws their attention away from their inferior status to men and focuses attention on superficial things. Women are under more pressure than their male counterparts to comply with this beauty standard in order to achieve social, economic, and career success as

they learn every facet of their life is affected by this unrealistic beauty standard they are held to (Mazur 1986).

Some women fear not progressing in life if they do not meet the cultural ideal of a woman. Although they may recognize that the ideal is utterly ridiculous, some women may end up trying to achieve it to be successful in this world. Engeln-Maddox (2006) conducted a study of undergraduate women who were asked to describe the cultural "ideal" woman according to the media. They were then asked to take time and reflect on how their life would be different if they looked like this "ideal" woman and to rate each change on a scale from 1 to 7. They found that all of the beauty ideals had descriptions surrounding around thinness although most other things varied. Most women stated the positive rewards or changes they would see in their lives if they were the ideal women were positive social attention (nonromantic), romantic success, and employment/economic success (Englen-Maddox 2006). Fifteen percent of women surveyed in *Psychology Today* reported they would sacrifice more than five years of their life to be the weight they wanted (Garner 1997). Englen-Maddox (2006), found many women felt if they were the beauty "ideal" they would achieve more employment/economic success could be interpreted to say that they felt their appearance (body or face) was holding them back from promotions or a successful career. These women, who were still in college and have not started their career, believe that they will be held back some time in their career due to the beauty "ideal". A career and beauty, which in most cases could not be more disconnected, in these women's minds were very connected. In addition, these women felt they would get more social and romantic attention if they looked like the beauty media ideal. Many women view appearance will help them achieve interpersonal and societal success it is not surprising women concentrate on appearance and weight and chose to make it a high priority in their life (Rodin et.al. 1984). Most of these women from the studies believed all of these things were very likely if they achieved the beauty "ideal".

CHAPTER 3

NON FAT AND LOW FAT TO THE HEALTH LIFESTYLE

3.1 Diet History

Since at least 1900, Americans have been searching for a safe and effective way to lose weight (Cleland, et.al. 2002). In 1918, Dr. Peters introduced the new word "calorie" in a book titled "Diet and Health, With a Key to Calories." People were unfamiliar with the word calorie however, her book sold more than 2 million copies and calorie-counting was established as the framework of good health (Rodriquez 2009). In the 20's, women began to diet to keep up with the fad of youthful flapper ladies. They wanted to make sure they appeared skinny like the flappers and would do so by dieting (Mazur 1986). The 30's brought about the Hay Diet which encouraged eating all your food groups separately as the body could not digest them when eaten together. Hays encouraged people to eat starches, meats, vegetables, and fruits all separately (Wolf 2005). In the 1940s, Stanley Burroughs, nutritionist, created the Master Cleanse, which consisted of a mixture of cayenne pepper, fresh-squeezed lemon juice, maple syrup and water that a dieter would fast on for several days to cleanse her body (Rodriquez 2009). During the 50's, rumors spread that famous Hollywood stars were taking pills that would help them get thin. These pills resembled the parasite tape worms that poor people suffered from often from eating uncooked meat. The pill would help stars lose weight by the tapeworm eating their insides (Wolf 2005). In 1960 the Stillman Diet, requiring eight glasses of water and filet mignon every day became popular. Weight Watcher creator, Jean Nidetch, started dieting discussion groups and the Atkins Diet was born in the 60s (The History of Diets, retrieved March 15, 2009).

In 1988, the Surgeon General made a call to America to begin eating reduced fat foods to decrease weight gain. The government noticed America was gaining weight and becoming unhealthy so they made an outcry to Americans to eat healthier with reduced fat foods (Surgeon General 1988). The government advised Americans how to avoid obesity. They could lower their fat intake, which would hopefully lower their calorie intake, and increase their fiber intake and complex carbohydrates. All of this combined would help America not become an obese nation. The Surgeon General was calling Americans to take an active stand, to join with him in action against obesity. As Americans heard this news, some began eating a reduced fat diet in order to avoid obesity. This worried the food industry. There were many foods that were being cut out of diets that were high in fat. Examples of those high fat foods were red meat, dairy products, and most junk foods. Food companies would lose money if people began choosing to eat healthy. People cut many high fat food products out of their daily diet and therefore food companies suffered financially. The food industry feared this would hurt their business. Instead of giving up, the food industry took advantage of the reduced-fat craze. Many food companies began to offer low-fat foods and were able to market off of this new school of thought. They were now making even more money (Le Berge 2008). Of course, many Americans had already been eating a low-fat diet. Low-fat was all over the media in newspapers and magazines calling people to make sure their diets contained low-fat foods (Burros 1985). The Surgeon General was making a statement about a reduced fat diet which the media had already begun capitalizing on. Studies were completed showing that a low-fat diet would decrease obesity, and many Americans were already on the low-fat diet bandwagon. Weight Watchers and other leading weight loss plans were created in the 60's to promote a low-fat diet for the purpose of reducing heart disease but as a double benefit would also help a person to lose weight (History and Philosophy 2008; La Berge 2008). During the 1980's the government strongly supported and encouraged low-fat diets to the American people as well as the media, physicians and the food industry (La Berge 2008). Low fat diets and people actively pursuing weight loss became more of an ideology in the latter half of the 1900's than in the earlier half. La Berge (2008) describes it as

a widespread faith inspiring and accepted belief that low-fat was good for all Americans. This began in the 1980's when the government, health officials, media, physicians and every day Americans began supporting a low-fat diet for everyday eating. They believed a low-fat diet was the only option to live a "healthy" lifestyle. From 1959-1988 there was a dramatic increase in the number of diet, exercise, and diet and exercise articles published in women's magazines (Wiseman, et.al. 1992). The diet industry boomed.

3.2 Low Fat Craze

In 1989, in North America, the market for low-fat food products developed quickly. The larger food manufactures introduced new low-fat and fat-free products. They started with salad dressings, cookies, crackers and ice-creams and consumers bought them all. Once the smaller food manufactures saw that the large food manufactures stepped out and were successful the small food companies did the same and developed their own low-fat and fat-free products (Dacko 2000). Many Americans jumped on the diet wagon and bought the hot new products. Low fat foods filled grocery store shelves. Many food marketers took advantage of this new phenomenon and made their own low-fat brands. Snackwells was one of the big names that made its debut in 1992 featuring a line of cookies that were all low-fat. They became so popular many stores sold out of them. Their sales, at their highest point, totaled \$500 million (Alexandar et.al. 2005). Snackwells creating low-fat cookies was genius. Most people on diets give up sweets and desserts but Snackwells created a way for people to have their cake and eat it too. They were able to be on a low-fat diet, trying to lose weight, and still partake in a light dessert. The dessert fit in with their low-fat diet. Americans no longer had to break their diet to eat dessert.

Snackwells and other low-fat foods advertised their products on television and in magazines. Not only did the advertising help but also the fact that all of the major health magazines and doctors were backing up the low-fat craze supported their sales. The best tasting

low-fat foods were also advertised in the 1980's and 1990's. What to buy and what not to buy. There were many articles in women's magazines telling women how to eat healthy utilizing these new low-fat and non-fat options (Applegate, 1990; Prager and Brainerd, 1990; Hurley, 1990; The new spa cuisine, 1990; and Ada and Patent, 1990). This ensured the manufacturers of the low-fat products that the food they created continued to sell off the shelves. Women picked up *Ladies Home Journal* and saw the low-fat foods advertised in addition to reading recipes of how to cook with them. They purchased them to maintain or obtain a "slim body."

3.3 Slimming Women

In 2002 there was a survey completed by the Calorie Control Council which found that 87 percent of those surveyed ate "lighter" versions of their favorite food (Low Fat Foods Find Little Favor Among Weight Loss Experts 2002). It is common knowledge that low-fat and fat-free foods are made with fat substitutes to resemble the fat taste. People buy the low-fat and fat-free products hoping to get a product that resembles the full fat product they desire but with less fat. People are choosing to eat the lighter version of the food but still wanting the same products they are use to. Their tastes do not seem to change much as they are only eating lighter versions of the same products many times. Food companies are able to make the original product and lighter versions capitalizing on both markets. Between 1989 and 2000, the US saw between 44% to 160% annual increases of low-fat/non-fat food products depending on the specific food product (Dacko 2000). Food manufactures continue to develop new lighter versions of their products and put them out there on the market yearly. Americans alone spend over \$40 billion on dieting and diet-related products each year (Smolak, 1996).

Many women choose to diet throughout their lifetime to lose weight. In 1991, there was a study conducted in the Midwest on working women and men. It found that of the working women, 75 percent stated they had been on a diet to lose weight at least once in their lifetime. These were working women in managerial positions, sales, and clerical positions. Twenty-five percent

were currently on a diet to lose weight (Jeffrey, et.al. 1991). For some women dieting is a lifestyle that they are never able to escape. Some women will diet their entire life depriving themselves of food in order to maintain a certain figure. For other women, dieting will be something that they will do every couple years when they feel they need to lose weight. For others, they may only diet once or twice in their lifetime never really benefiting from dieting. Other women may actually escape the turmoil by never dieting at all.

I would argue however, there are probably few women who actually do not ever diet throughout their lifetime. I find it hard to believe there is a woman out there that does not care at all about her weight throughout her life. In my personal experience, the women who say they do not care what they weigh eat very healthy most of the time. These women make sure what they put in their body is healthy and nutritious. They do not overindulge themselves with junk food or high calorie snacks. Although these women say they do not care what they weigh, they make sure they never weigh above their desire weight by eating healthy foods and exercising. It would be a real test if they developed a thyroid problem or other medical condition in which they had no control over their weight to see if they did not care about their weight. These women's eating habits are a diet for most other people. Another group of women who might propose that they do not care about their weight are generally very unhealthy and appear to only detract from their true feelings of unhappiness with their weight and appearance. These are the women who are overweight and will eat unhealthy. They may state they do not care about their body and appear to eat whatever they want; however, say those things to hide their true feelings of inadequacy and hatred about their bodies. Of course, there may be women who never diet or desire to lose weight throughout their lifetime, I just have never come encountered these women. Eighty-four percent of all women have dieted at some point in their life to lose weight (Garner 1997). Many women diet to lose weight.

I work with 14 women at a social service agency. We have no men that work in my office therefore, most of the women feel very free and open to talk about anything they want. Weight and body image seem to be a hot topic. We eat lunch together almost daily. We all bring our lunch or go get our lunch and sit in the office talking, sharing and laughing together. We have a stressful job so this is our time. It is our time to talk or vent about anything and everything we are feeling. Half of the women in my office bring their lunch most of the time. What they bring of course varies all of the time from sandwiches, soups, frozen meals, leftovers, etc. The other half of the office goes and gets their lunch almost every day. The places they go will vary but most of the time it is some variation of fast food. Most of the time our office does not go out to eat together but instead, everyone brings her own lunch to the table. Whether the women bring their lunch in or go out and get their lunch one topic seems to be a common theme among all of the women- Weight. "Why are we so fat? What can we do to lose weight? I need to eat healthier." These questions come up all the time. Invariably weight, exercise, body image, clothing on the body, food in relation to your health, etc. will come up at least 4-5 times a work week.

There can be several reasons why these topics seem to come up around lunchtime almost every day among a group of women. Maybe it is because it is around lunchtime and the girls are feeling guilty about what they are eating. Maybe it is because it is the only time in the day a group of women had to talk and that is the first thing on their mind to discuss. Possibly it is because one woman thinks it and gets the rest of the women involved. I believe it can be any one of these things or a combination of these reasons. I noticed it comes up every time one girl feels she is eating healthy and wants to draw attention to what she is eating. She then goes on to talk about the exercise routine she has been doing that week. Of course that is about as long as the exercising lasts because when you follow up the next week she has some excuse for not continuing: I have been too busy, I did not feel good, My husband stopped going, etc.

My work group decided to do a Biggest Loser competition replica. They got a group together and weighed themselves at the beginning of the competition. They each put \$20 in the pot and whoever lost the most weight would win all the money. About six women agreed to do this competition for a month. Within the first week, people were cheating. They would weigh each week and people were gaining weight. Of course the whole point of the biggest loser was to keep each other accountable which did not happen. They then decided they wanted to have a Weight Watcher group at the office. If they got enough people together then a person would come out to the office and hold the Weight Watcher meeting there. They wanted to see who all would join their group. They were a little agitated with me that I did not want to join. They finally asked me straight out if I wanted to lose weight. I told them that I would be happy with losing some weight however I know I am not motivated enough at this time to do Weight Watchers and will not attend meetings. Therefore, I will not join and claim to be on a diet. They seemed disappointed at first but they got their required number of people and then never called to set the meetings up.

Almost all but three women in my office have gone on a diet of some sort. Most of the diets I have seen have been Weight Watchers, Slim Fast, gastric bypass (now that's a diet), and cutting back on food. It has been successful on some level but not on all. One of my friends was eating fast food all of the time and decided she needed to lose weight. She will not cook. She hates cooking and does not go to the grocery store often. She cut down by eating basically one meal a day which was lunch. I did not feel this was healthy, but of course, she got results. She has kept her weight off as she is exercising, but she still does not eat three meals a day and does not try to eat healthy or balanced. Another person did Weight Watchers and lost some weight but gained it right back. The person who had gastric bypass surgery is doing well with her weight loss and she still cannot eat much. Altogether though, no one did weight loss healthfully and successfully in my office. They all want to lose weight and talk about it but they do not see dieting as a way to be healthy. Instead losing weight is something that needs to be quick and needs

beautiful, thin results. They want to look swimsuit ready or be able to fit back in their pair of jeans. They don't care if it is healthy.

3.4 OMG, Diets Don't Work!

A lot of people who eat low-fat and non-fat foods do not even think about if what they are eating is healthy. People who want to lose weight may not even consider the health risks involved in their decisions. When low-fat and fat-free came to stores many Americans were not even sure of what they were purchasing and putting in their bodies. They were looking for the low-fat name on the box and would buy it and then consume it. Some did not read ingredients, nutrition content, etc. As long as the food was low-fat they would consume it and not feel guilty about it. Scientists began to realize that many low-fat food options had just as many calories as their full fat counterparts. Just because they were reducing the fat did not always mean they were reducing the calories. Consumer Reports on Health in 1995, took many of the common low-fat foods people were eating and compared it to the full-fat product. They noticed that when the fat content was lower sometimes the serving sizes were smaller. Many times if a person ate the same serving amount of the regular product compared with the low-fat product the fat content would be about the same. Also, in many instances the low-fat product had the same amount of calories as the regular product. In many cases the sugar was higher and the sodium was about the same between the two products.

It appeared that although people could choose a lower fat product to consume they were not necessarily choosing a healthier option. They were choosing a name and not necessarily a product with healthier ingredients or more nutritious. Some people were on these low-fat diets but they were not losing weight. Obesity in America continued to get worse and studies came out which linked obesity with continuous dieting. How can that be? It was found that when people restricted themselves from certain foods they were more likely to binge eat later on (Desai, et. al

2008). Diets lead to more overweight people, how counterproductive. It appears in our culture that whenever one thing is not working Americans immediately find something else to replace it. Wansink and Chandon (2006), Geyskens, et al (2007), and Desai, et al. (2008), have all found that diets do not work. Weight Watchers slogan now is, "Diets don't work but Weight Watchers does." Many people ended up eating more of the low-fat or non-fat food because it is a low-fat or non-fat food. They think since it is a "healthier" option they can eat more of it. Actually, it has been found in these studies that having the word low-fat can lead to over consumption for many (Wansink, et al, 2006 and Desai, et al 2008).

Many people on diets eat more when they are dieting than when they are not. Therefore, the diet industry has not disappeared all together but has only changed their wording to make it more appealing to the American public. No longer are they the diet industry but now they are helping you with a "healthy lifestyle". While the advertisers might be saying they are helping you achieve a healthier lifestyle, they are still trying to sell weight loss. Likewise, they are still selling women the false idea that they are unsatisfied with their bodies. Weight Watchers, South Beach, Jenny Craig, etc, have all jumped on the band wagon of promoting a "healthy lifestyle." Many of them have not changed the food but only the names on the boxes. An example of this is from South Beach who is paired with Kraft to bring South Beach diet foods as a convenience in the grocery store. Kraft noticed diets were on the way out and sales had been decreasing steadily according to the Calorie Control Council. Kraft was selling their products associated with South Beach as South Beach Diet according to the labels on their products. In January of 2008, Kraft launched South Beach Lifestyle and rid itself of the "diet" word (York 2007). They wanted people to buy South Beach as part of a healthy lifestyle choice not only for diet times. This convinced America that now Weight Watchers, South Beach, Jenny Craig, etc. had changed their vision and their food when it was mere words that had changed. People believe what they are told to believe by the advertisements and by their culture. If diets are out and healthy lifestyle is in, then people begin using the new lingo and buy the "new" products. It is the same food, same boxes,

and same products, just new wording. The new words however make the American people feel better about their choices.

CHAPTER 4

100 CALORIE SNACKS

Eventually low-fat and non-fat fell out of popularity as being the new diet in America. Weight Watchers, South Beach, Atkins, Jenny Craig, Nutrisystem, just to name a few, all make different promises of how you too can lose weight and look good. A healthy lifestyle became the new fad in America and food companies had to come up with a new marketing approach. No longer was low-fat and non-fat products selling as well. They needed a new look for snacks. Consumer Reports conducted a study and found that when they interviewed overweight people and naturally thin people they found common threads when it came to losing weight or maintaining weight. They found portion control was important, in addition to limiting fat, choosing whole grains over refined, eating fruits and vegetables, eating at home, and exercising. They found over half of those surveyed lost the weight themselves and did not turn to a commercial diet program, a medical treatment, a book, or diet pills (Reduced-Fat Foods: Dieters Dream or Marketers Ploy? 1995). The new idea of portion control and not utilizing diet programs made the food industry take a new look at what and how they were marketing their products. Americans who reported they were on a diet decreased since the 90's by 10 percent. Americans are now screaming for foods with less "bad" things and more "good" things in it. Americans want the food they are already eating, only healthier (Americans prefer "better for you" foods to dieting 2008). According to the Institute of Food Technologies, 63 percent of all consumers want snacks with fewer calories (Marano 2008). In response to this demand, 100 calorie packs were created to give Americans less calories in their snacks in pre-portioned packages. This new idea gave food companies a new look. They offered an alternative to low fat food products. 100 calories is about the amount of calories in a piece of fruit or a half a handful of nuts; therefore, 100 calories seems

to be a good number for a snack. Hostess states they created their 100 calorie snacks for women who want to snack more sensibly (Leavitt 2008).

What exactly are 100 calorie snacks? For this paper, 100 calorie snacks are defined as pre-packaged snacks that are advertised and packaged which contains only 100 calories. These snacks are sold in packages with vivid advertising on their exterior and the contents inside are only 100 calories. 100 calorie snacks are pre-packaged and pre-proportioned for individual servings of 100 calories and come in many varieties. There include candy, cookies, bars, chips, jerky, yogurt, ice cream, and apple sauce. Grocery stores, convenience stores, specialty stores, etc, sell these snacks. They are not seen nor sold as a meal substitute but as the in-between meals snack.

Glassner (2007) discusses how people change their eating habits based on the media and nutritionists in their time period. He states that whatever new trend is popular at the time, advertised in the media, and discussed heavily among nutritionist, people become influenced by it and will change their eating habits accordingly. Snacking has become acceptable and a thing of today. No longer is it shameful to snack but now it is seen as normal for everyone to snack during the day (Americans love their snacks 2008). 100 calorie snacks became a wonderful new way to snack. They have become a \$200 billion industry a year (Goff 2008). Beverage Beat reports 100 calorie products seem to be a win-win situation for consumers and manufactures. They are healthier portions, convenient, portable and allow consumers to have what they want without really giving up their favorite foods. Manufactures win because this is another profit product and they are able to make money (Theodore 2005). 100 calorie snacks are pre-proportioned snacks so they allow the consumer to have a controlled portion. There is greater snacking control, resulting in growing intake awareness and shrinking waistlines (Rehan 2006). Hostess reported they began making 100 calorie snacks as the consumers asked for it. One

example is consumers were asking for a lighter version of the original Twinkie. Hostess took the Twinkie and turned it into three smaller portions for the 100 calorie snack pack (Leavitt 2008).

As mentioned earlier I work with several ladies in my agency. When they did chose to bring their lunch or a snack, 100 calorie packs always were included. There are so many varieties and I was able to learn about several different types of 100 calorie snacks while at my office. Actually, this is where I usually learned about the new 100 calorie snacks on the market. My co-workers were usually among the first to buy the new products. They would bring the chips, cookies, crackers, pretzels, fun fruits, candies, etc. with them to lunch. They always had 100 calorie packs stashed in their desk drawer for a snack in the afternoon. For lunch, though, one pack did not seem to be enough. Two of the girls who were on diets brought their lunches with the 100 calorie packs and always brought two, saying one was just not enough. If the point of the 100 calorie packs was to limit consumption, they were not doing the job. I asked them one day why they brought the 100 calorie packs instead of making up bags of snacks and they said they needed the snacks because they were convenient and they were only 100 calories. They ate their 100 calorie snacks with a sandwich they made at home, carrots, and some fruit, usually, which seemed healthy. They had their two 100 calorie snack packs. The two 100 calorie packs usually consisted of a salty pack like a chip or cracker, and a sweet pack like a cookie or candy. Were the ladies at my work doing ok even if they were eating two?

CHAPTER 5

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisements shifted in the 1900's from educational and informative advertisements to emotional advertisements. Men were the dominate audience for advertisements at the beginning of the advertising age (Parkin2006). Throughout the 1900s, companies saw a shift in the audience for advertisements from men to women and therefore shifted how their products were advertised. Women are more susceptible to advertising (Ewing et. al. 1999). Women were seen as emotional creatures who would act according to their emotions and impulse. Men were seen as rational and knowledgeable. Advertisements became emotional ads in order to reach women and influence their purchases (Parkin2006). Consequently, women became the dominant purchasers in the stores. They were the ones who went to the market and purchased food and household items. Since advertisers began to target women as their main audience, they have taken several different pathways to appeal to women. One way to advertise to women is to feed on women's insecurities (Parkin 2006). Advertisers believe they act according to how they feel and not always act according to logic. With this type of thinking, advertisers began to look at how women feel insecure. Advertisers assume women feel inadequate as mothers, a wives, friends, hostesses, and as workers. Advertisers market their products as helpful, useful products that are there to help women with their everyday lives. If a product is not useful then why would someone buy it? Companies market their products as useful for the everyday, ordinary women. The product they are advertising is promising to help women with many of their everyday tasks. It is sold as beneficial to them. Many advertisers play on women's insecurities.

The diet industry uses a variety of ways to entice people to try their products. They utilize testimonials and guarantee results the most often in their advertisements to get people to try their weight loss products (Cleland, et.al. 2002). The number of weight-loss advertisements in women's magazines increased significantly from 1992 to 2001 by 129 percent. Ads in magazines began using more customer testimonials to entice consumers into buying weight loss products (Cleland, et.al. 2002).

5.1 Marketplace

Many of the food companies are using a large amount of their marketing budget in retail sales promotion (Mohr and Low 2000). The food industry is trying to sell their products while the consumer is at the store. Not only do they spend money on advertisements on television and magazines but they also entice the consumer while they are shopping in her local grocery store. When a food company chooses to advertise in a retail store a common sense of trust has to go along with the agreement. The food manufacture will not be in the retail store to ensure that the food product is advertised appropriately therefore communication is key to a successful marketing campaign between the store and the manufacture (Mohr and Low 2000).

If choosing to advertise in a store many food companies chose to utilize a couple tools in order to enhance their products popularity among the customers. The tools best suited for food items in a retail store appear to be price based or price reductions like discounting, coupons, discount-linked point-of-purchase or end-of-aisle displays, combination and volume offers (Simpson 2006).

In a crowded marketplace, manufactures have to make their products noticeable to consumers in order to have a successful product. One of the most successful marketing strategies they can have is to market their product as reduced calories and portion control or

weight management. Above all else in the crowded marketplace, advertising that a product is low in calories and is portioned control will sell the best. Consumers want products that have a good health profile and appear to help them with their healthy lifestyle (White-Sax 2006). Women are the ones in the grocery store and the ones bringing home the meals for the family (DeVault 1991). As stated earlier, women are more conscious about their weight and will probably buy food products that state they are healthier and will help with the healthy lifestyle. The companies know that they can market this to women in the aisles of the grocery store, on television, in magazines and women while in the grocery store will continue to see the product make a profit.

Research has shown many grocery store purchases are unplanned (Narhinen et al. 2000). Many times a person will purchase a product out of impulse or because of the advertisements within the store. They will decide to try a new product based on the display at the store. The packaging is changing in stores, as well helping with sales. Food companies are always changing packaging to help with their sales based on consumer reports. However, most major food companies and even smaller companies have invested money into designing new packages and offering their foods in smaller portions for consumers. Food manufactures are changing what their products say on their packages. Now you see, no trans fat, made with whole grain, low in sodium or sugar, natural, or low calorie (Gates 2007). There has been a shift in the way snacking and eating is done. Now people worry about what they are eating due to their health. They try to make sure that even unhealthy snacks say something on the box that makes them feel a little better about what they are putting in their body.

5.2 Television

Recently, the Travel Channel aired a special on thrilling coasters throughout North America. During one commercial break I saw an advertisement for Nutrisystem, Weight Watchers, and 100 Calorie Oreo Cakesters all during the same break. Three diet food related

commercials in the same commercial break. All three of the commercials focused on women. The Nutrisystem commercial had a woman talking about how much weight she had lost on Nutrisystem. She showed a picture of herself right after she had a baby and said she had to lose weight and she did on Nutrisystem. She then went on to talk about all of their great meal options and the additional meals they have added. They showed pictures of these wonderful meal options. The Weight Watcher commercial has a woman who is going throughout a normal working day when "Hunger" steps in. "Hunger" is represented as a little orange monster. As she does something this monster, "Hunger" does something to tempt her with food. Of course, she is on Weight Watchers and is able to resist him. She is not hungry but fully satisfied because you are always full on Weight Watchers. On the Oreo Cakesters commercial it is the debut. Oreo Cakesters are new in the 100 calorie pack family. They recently came out as a snack item and have just now hit the 100 calorie family. The Oreo Cakester truck drives by and hundreds of women are screaming and running after the truck. Finally, the women catch up with the truck and have turned the truck over, ripped the packages open and are now devouring the Cakesters.

All three of these commercial focused on women. Not one of the commercials had a man in them. They showed women that they can control their eating and control their weight. Two were diet plans and the third told women they could control their food intake. At the end of the 100 calorie Oreo Cakester commercial it stated, "Goodies for grown-ups." It states that 100 calorie Oreo Cakesters are goodies for grown-ups; however, there are no male grown ups eating them. Only female grown ups are eating the 100 calorie Oreo Cakesters. In the regular Oreo Cakester commercial young boys are eating the snack. Even in this commercial, girls are not eating the full-fat snacks. It appears their commercials show who they are targeting. The regular Oreo Cakesters are for young boys who do not have to watch their weight and the 100 Calorie Oreo Cakesters are for adult women who have to watch their weight.

5.3 Websites

I researched Nabisco's website. Nabisco was the first company to market 100 calorie snacks to the public. I felt they would have an insight on whom the target audience was for 100 calorie snacks as they had been selling them the longest and have had the most success. On Nabisco's website for their 100 calorie snack packs, they have spotlighted 100 extraordinary women. These women are extraordinary all within their own right. They were treated to a red carpet event and were recognized each for their contribution to society. This website is primarily geared toward women not only by highlighting 100 extraordinary women but also by only allowing women to enter the contest. When you go to the site, there is a woman there to greet you with a slogan telling you about the 100 calorie packs (Nabiscoworld.com). Women appear to be Nabisco's primary target for their 100 calorie snack packs according to their web advertising. They praise women for their achievements and acknowledge them. They also display women on their website and do not have any men on the site. "Snack Purple" is the slogan for the 100 calorie packs which appears in front of a light purple backdrop with a flower design behind it (Nabiscoworld.com). The design of the website would be even more pleasing to a woman's eye than to a man's eye. Advertising on television, magazines, in stores, and websites, all tend to focus on women.

CHAPTER 6

THE REALITY

6.1 What 100 Calorie Snacks are Really Costing Women

Are 100 calorie snacks really working to help maintain a healthy weight and is it worth the cost? The first question is, “Are 100 calorie snacks meant as a weight loss tool or to help people maintain weight?” I would argue that this is a non-contested answer of yes. Putting food in a managed portion allowing someone to eat a certain amount is a form of helping someone maintain weight or control what they are eating. If these were only meant as convenience items, they could have come in individual snack packs as many snack foods before their time and sold in packs of 8-12 for adults everywhere. However, these snacks were chosen specifically to be separated from the other pre-portioned snacks and placed into bags with labels of “100 calories.” Some snacks had to be completely reformed in order to become 100 calorie packs. An example of this is the 100 calorie Oreo Thin Crisps. Oreo cookies could not be made into 100 calories very easily. Therefore, Oreo thin crisps were created. This offered an entirely new product for Oreo in and allowed them to sell to the 100 calorie market.

100 calorie snacks were designed to help consumers manage their portions. On Nabisco’s 100 calorie packs website part of their slogan states, “Just smart-sized portions of the snacks you love, helping you balance one amazing day after the other” (Nabisco world.com). Nabisco is clearly stating they created these pre-portioned snacks to help people balance what they are eating on a daily basis. Food manufactures are helping people balance their food intake. One issue with 100 calorie packs is they are not teaching or educating the consumer on healthy

snacks. First, the consumer is buying a pre-portioned snack and many times might not even pay attention to what size portion they are eating. Next, consumers need to learn about portion control in order to help maintain weight. Portions are a big part of maintaining weight and many consumers are unsure of what portion sizes are of many of their favorite foods. Lisa Young, nutritionist, says that 100 calorie packs, although convenient are not helpful. She feels these snacks are costly to the consumer and do not educate the consumer on portion control. Although it might give you a pack of 16 chips in a bag it is more educational for the consumer to measure out the 16 chips for themselves to see what the portion actually looks like and begin to relate it to weight loss (Goff 2008). Sometimes it is actually healthier to eat a serving size of the low-fat or non-fat option instead of the 100 calorie portion that the manufacturer has created. Many times there is lower fat and not too many more calories in the low-fat and non-fat option and the person can eat a larger portion and fill fuller longer (How to pick 100-calorie packs: beware: some snacks and cookies may have more calories than a bigger serving of a low-fat product 2007).

Another issue with 100 calorie pre-portioned snacks is most of the snacks consist of snack or junk foods. Some 100 calorie snacks consist of bread, yogurt, soft drinks, etc, but the majority of pre-portioned 100 calorie packs are snacks. These consist of cupcakes, cookies, crackers, chips, and snack cakes. Most of these snacks are not healthy and are usually considered “junk food.” These 100 calorie snacks are exactly that; they are snacks. They are not healthy choices. Many of the pre-portioned 100 calorie packs consist of products that have enriched flour, processed sugar, preservatives, and are low in nutritional value. They do not have much fiber, protein, or vitamins (How to pick 100-calorie packs: beware: some snacks and cookies may have more calories than a bigger serving of a low-fat product 2007). Ali VanGorden, registered dietitian for Penn Traffic Co., Syracuse, N.Y reported she feels portion control is essential for weight loss and maintenance. However she goes on further to state that many of the foods that have been reduced to 100 calories have little or no nutritional value (Gates 2007). Many researchers agree that eating smaller portions is the best way to lose and maintain weight.

They believe that eating low-fat, non-fat items will not help people lose weight but in many cases, gain weight (Reduced-Fat Foods: Dieters Dream or Marketers Ploy? 1995). I would go on to argue this could be true of the 100 calorie packs, as well. Although not enough research has been completed on 100 calorie snacks as they are new I would agree that much like low-fat food, 100 calorie snacks, might increase a person's chances in gaining weight. People tend to gain weight with low-fat food because they eat more of the low-fat food because it is low-fat. They do not pay attention to the nutrition values. I would argue it is the same of the 100 calorie packs. Many people may feel they are eating healthy because they are only eating 100 calories not realizing they are eating preservatives and empty calories. Some may not realize empty calories or preservatives are bad for you as long as they are only consuming 100 calories at a time. It is also likely since they are consuming empty calories that they will not stay full long and will hungry quicker than if they ate a snack with nutrients in it. When hungry people are more likely to go back for seconds.

Friedmann, a senior executive at Kraft, stated during an interview, that people expect food companies to deliver largely on taste but still make the product healthy. They want the food companies to take out what is bad for them and add in what is good for them. An example of this is to take out the calories and add in calcium or fiber in the snack. He also said Kraft did a study of 9000 people and they found people believe they know what a balanced diet is but do not put it into practice (Top of the 2006). This being the truth, many people may feel that the food company has already done the work for them on balancing their diet. They may feel they can eat more of the snack since the box says it has no trans fat but has whole wheat added in. The snacker then feels they are eating a healthy snack when in reality it is still not healthy. People feel this way when they are eating 100 calorie packages because they are just that, only 100 calories. Eventually though, this will lead to overeating of unhealthy items. As stated by Gates (2007) most 100 calorie packages are unhealthy.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

100 calorie packs are a new phenomenon to the snack and diet industry. I was interested in studying this new way of snacking as it is advertised as a healthy alternative to snacking. In reality, it is still snacking on many of the same snacks- just a smaller portion of them. It is advertised as part of a healthy diet but seems to be coming along a new era and wave of the diet and weight loss industry. No longer are women striving to stay on diets, but are looking to change their eating habits full circle and are hoping the food industry will help them do this by tweaking the common foods they eat. I found that most women still diet in some way. Studies mentioned throughout this thesis reveal that most women at some point throughout their life feel negatively about their bodies and want to change something about their physical appearance. Most women are affected by the media when it comes to how they feel about their physical appearance. Models make many women have a negative self-image and make them feel they must obtain a body that average women could never obtain. Women diet and strive to obtain this “perfect” image knowing all along it is inconceivable. Yet they never give up. 100 calorie packs are just another food manufacture’s ploy to play on women’s insecurities which in turn allows them to market their product.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Lauren London received her B.A in Sociology at Texas A&M University in December 2004. She went on to pursue a career in foster care and adoption and decided to go back to school and work on her masters part time in the fall of 2006. She is currently attending University of Texas, Arlington and working on her M.A. in Sociology. She plans to graduate in May 2009. Lauren will continue her career in social work and will one day pursue a teaching career. She is interested in cultural theory, gender studies, and media studies.