



*Let their voices be heard.*

Quotations from life stories related to physical activity, food and eating, and body image

Betty Holmes  
Suzanne Pelican  
Fred Vanden Heede

“We now seem to be in the midst of an ‘epidemic’ of obesity that is as troubling as it is difficult to comprehend. . . . One of the great contributions of *Let Their Voices Be Heard* is that it allows us to see that we are not alone, and if many people are struggling with the same problem, then perhaps there is something more to the picture than the sum of individual failings.”

— **David Buchanan**, DrPH,  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst,  
and author of foreword for  
*Let Their Voices Be Heard*

“. . . fascinating reading . . . but much more than fascinating, it rekindled empathy and compassion in me toward my patients, and it motivated me to address the emotional barriers associated with lifestyle changes.”

— **Glen Revere**, MS,  
registered dietitian,  
public health nutritionist,  
and certified diabetes educator

*Male, mid 30's* – “Sometimes I feel that I’m the recipient of *that look*. That’s all it ever is. It’s just a look. People are far too polite to say, ‘Hey, can you go drop some pounds, fatso?’ . . . That is a pretty painful look to get . . . , especially having dealt it out.”

*Female, late 40's* – “I’m at peace with [my weight]. I don’t own a scale. I don’t need numbers to tell me that my body weight’s okay. I’m just okay with who I am. And I think that when I let go of worrying about what everybody else thought, *that’s* when I realized, I’m an okay person, I don’t have to be skinny. I’m healthy and . . . I’m at peace with that.”

*Male in his 40's* – “I always claim that when you become heavy you become invisible. You go in a room and you want to be social with people, [but] . . . you can’t because of [your] size . . . . You totally become invisible. . . . It’s not sociably accepted to hang out with people that are . . . obese.”

*Male, late 30's* – “[TV] became . . . an important part of my life. When you’re kind of a loner, it’s a bizarre form of human contact. You feel like you’re a part of something. You’re not, of course, but you feel like you are. So, . . . it’s very easy to abuse TV. I still love sitting in front of the tube and having something to eat. . . . I love doing it. . . . I don’t even have a kitchen table in my house. . . . [In front of the TV] is just kind of where I grew up.”

*Let Their Voices Be Heard* is a collection of quotations from narratives (or life stories) from 103 individuals who shared the challenges they have faced, the successes they have achieved, and the insights they have gained related to their experiences with physical activity, food and eating, and body image.

*Female in her 60's* – “I know that I use food as a tranquilizer. I’m very aware of that. . . . And I know that when I get really stressed, I want to eat. And I think that’s probably the biggest reaction of all normal people who are heavy—that food is their tranquilizer.”

*Female in her 20's* – “And then I started running with [my sister] . . . probably because I saw the change in her, not only physically but also I know that it made her happy and emotionally it made her focus.”

“ . . . this book will allow health promotion practitioners and public health policy makers in the U.S. and many other countries throughout the world to address the deeply complex experiences . . . that are so eloquently captured in people’s own words in this book.”

— **Lily O’Hara, BSc,**  
Postgraduate Diploma in Health  
Promotion, MPH, MAHPA, Faculty of  
Science, University of Sunshine Coast,  
Queensland, Australia

“ . . . it fills a void in the vast array of self-help books on nutrition, physical activity, body image, and overall health. . . . *Let Their Voices Be Heard* will also be extremely helpful to health professionals by opening the door to rich and honest dialogue with their patients. . . .”

— **Cindy Dallow, PhD,**  
registered dietitian and consultant,  
author, and speaker on nutrition  
and active living