

## 9 | WHY ARE FAT WOMEN FAT?

It's a mystery,

Oh, it's a mystery.

**Toyah Willcox** 1958- English actress and singer: 'It's a Mystery' (song, 1981)

As an overweight man, I have accepted for many years the relationship between my 200-pound weight and my fondness for good food, beer and wine. Other fat men of my acquaintance were equally accepting of the relationship. Last year at the age of 52, on my doctor's advice, I embarked on a programme to lose weight and reduce my blood pressure. I cut down my calorie intake and undertook more exercise: two games of pool a week, nothing too onerous. Over six months I lost over 50 pounds. My blood pressure fell to target levels.

Women's weight problems appear to be different to men's weight problems. I never cease to be amazed at how many fat women believe there isn't a direct relationship between the calories they consume, and their weight. A fat woman recently declared to me, 'I only have to look at a chip to put on weight!' The next day I saw her in a local carvery, where customers can eat as much as they like. With a plate heaving with high-calorie food items she should have changed her plea to, 'I only have to eat ten roast potatoes to put on weight!' Half an hour later I was at the bar when she ordered a drink: Diet Coke.

With impeccable man logic I've sometimes pointed out to overweight ladies that every atom in their bodies was either present when they were born, or had since been ingested. With peccable lady logic they always beg to differ, but to date none has yet come up with a working hypothesis on womanly weight gain. Some years ago a woman told me, 'I'm overweight because of my hormones.' Quick as a flash I replied, 'Oh yes,

the hormones that make you eat family-size pies!' I woke up in hospital two days later.

So it falls to me to introduce a theory which I confidently expect to land me the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. A simple observation was the key to solving the riddle of why fat women are fat. Fat women often have fat children, and their fatness generally stays with them into adult life. Their fat sons obviously eat and drink too much, but what of fat daughters? Might there be a genetic component to their weight problems?

I haven't ironed out all the details of my theory yet, but let's accept, for the sake of argument, that some women *are* genetically predisposed to putting on weight, regardless of what they eat and drink. The most obvious scientific explanation for this phenomenon is that the women are photosynthesising. The tissues under their skins contain carotenes.

Carotenes (a family of chemicals in plants which account, among much else, for the colour of carrots) contribute to photosynthesis by transmitting the light energy they absorb to chlorophyll, enabling plants to gain mass by converting carbon dioxide from the atmosphere into organic compounds, especially sugars.

Evidence to support my theory includes the fact that many fat women – in England at least – are orange.

In September 2011 a feminist emailed me about the cover of *The Glass Ceiling Delusion*, complaining that it played to the stereotype of feminists being unattractive.

In an effort to 'disprove' the stereotype she then bizarrely emailed me a photograph of herself, but being conscious that in the photograph she was very overweight, she informed me of a book which 'proved' that for many women obesity was the result of neither excess calorie intake nor inadequate exercise. We then had the following email exchange:

Self: Every atom which is present in obese people, as in non-obese people, was either present at birth or was ingested later.

Feminist: You're wrong. You need to read the three books by this author which TOTALLY discredit the calories in/out model of weight gain.

Self: I lost over 50 pounds over six months simply by reducing my calorie intake and taking a little exercise.

Feminist: As a man you don't have the hormonal problems women have with respect to weight control.

Self: It can have nothing to do with hormones, unless they induce you to eat and drink too much, or exercise too little. The claim of there being no link between calories in/out and weight control is an absurd denial of two fundamental laws of nature, the Laws of Conservation of Energy and Mass.

Feminist: You're a f\*\*\*ing endocrinologist and a physicist now, are you? Typical arrogant man! You misogynistic pig!!!

Self: Thank you. I've much enjoyed our chat, but I must dash.'

In early October 2011 I had an exchange of emails with an authoress who wanted some advice on publishing her forthcoming book on dieting. She'd lost 145 pounds in weight 'and I've kept it off for a year so far'. She wrote:

'I'm quite excited about my book <title redacted> and can see lots of spinoffs with this – maybe change my focus onto health as losing the weight has certainly changed my life. I used to say I was happy fat – I lied! It's fantastic to be able to wear normal size clothes and to have so much energy, and apparently men like my new bottom! There's something on Facebook with a picture of a chubby woman who says she is so large because of all the wisdom that can't fit in her head!!!'