

Heather  
LAMPE

# Catwalk of tragedy

## Obsession with weight affects society's psyche



I looked in the mirror this morning and made the same promise I make to myself just about once a week.

"I will stick to my diet. I won't get upset. I won't beat myself up. I won't compulsively eat."

It's a war that I've fought with myself since high school, and it's a fear that I believe most American women have. It's a fear of gaining weight and a fear of being unaccepted.

I have dieted since I was 16 years old. I've been on juice diets, Slim-fast diets, pasta diets and vegetarian diets. I have popped diuretics, laxatives, herbal energizers and diet pills. I haven't ever made myself throw up — but it isn't because I haven't tried.

I've run. I've biked. I've lifted weights. I've purchased every piece of exercise equipment known to

man. My parents' basement looks like a miniature Gold's Gym.

At times I've succeeded in my quest for thinness, but more times than often I've failed. My weight has fluctuated like a giant yo-yo. And now I'm tired.

I'm tired of feeling obsessed. I'm tired of feeling ashamed. I'm an intelligent, educated woman who knows better than to be swayed by the picture that the media has painted for me. I know that I shouldn't care so much about the shape of my thighs or the size of my chest, but it seems that the rest of the world does.

You can not turn on the television, go to a movie or open a magazine without seeing the skeleton-like models that have become our motivation. If Marilyn Monroe was a movie star today, she would be considered fat. Jayne

Mansfield and Brigitte Bardot couldn't get a job.

We live in a country that successfully feeds itself and large portions of the world, but still we have thousands of young women starving themselves in pursuit of the perfect body. Anorexia and bulimia are 20th-century diseases that we've all had a hand in creating. We perpetuate the ideals set forth by Hollywood, and because of that, there are little 12-year-old girls making themselves vomit.

We lecture on how to stop racism and how to stop sexism, but we've yet to accept that we live in a society that hates overweight people. Our society sees fat people as lazy slobs.

Several years ago I watched an episode of Oprah in which she interviewed people on the street about what they thought of overweight people. It was the saddest

show I have ever seen. A significant number of the people said they thought fat people were lazy and that they smelled. People felt that because overweight people couldn't control their weight, then they couldn't control other aspects of their lives.

I come from a family of overweight people, and they are the most hardworking, hygienic bunch of people you will ever know. My father has struggled through two heart attacks and a life centered around weight control, and he has still managed to spend 20 years finding success in his career.

I recently read a book by Mary Pipher, a psychologist in Lincoln, called "Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls." It contains the stories of girls she has helped in therapy, and it is a sad commentary on women's lives in the

United States.

Pipher writes, "When I speak at colleges, I ask if any of the students have friends with eating disorders."

Everyone's hand goes up. Studies report that on any given day in America, half our teenage girls are dieting and that one in five young women has an eating disorder."

And if you think that this problem isn't prevalent in the Midwest, you must remember that Pipher practices in Lincoln.

Turning to the news, we see the public's outrage at the footage of little JonBenet Ramsey performing in child beauty pageants before her death. People are shocked that parents would submit their child to that kind of scrutiny. Yet, they look past the fact that our nation as a whole puts every young girl and every woman under that pressure to be beautiful.

Everyday life has become a sort of beauty pageant for women. The tragic part is that most of us are losing.

Lampe is a senior news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Steve  
WILLEY

# The last supper

## Garçon, there's a basset hound in my soup...



Anyone who has ever seen me from the shoulders down can probably make the easy assumption that I like to eat. Off the top of my head, the only thing I can think of that I won't eat is year-old cottage cheese.

(Spellchecker's note: Steve's phobia is no doubt the result of a gruesome incident in 1993 when he ate a package of cottage cheese he found in a discarded refrigerator behind the Federal building.

Doctors pumped his stomach for weeks but the rancid cheese had already done its damage. To this day Steve still can't look at cottage cheese without shrieking like a Rhesus monkey undergoing a hernia exam.)

I'm unscrupulous when it comes to eating. I'll fight a starving 3-year-old for government-provided peanut butter, and I've been known to attend the funerals of complete strangers.

You see, I don't view death as a sad and somber occasion. I see it as a new beginning for the departed, and a chance for the fortunate living to get lots and lots of free food.

"I don't care if they're feeding me antelope vomit — for \$75, I better get a crock pot full of it!"

MOURNER: (Crying) "I can't believe Frank's gone!"

STEVE: (Shaking head) "It's awful. Just awful ... say, could you pass me one of them there finger sandwiches? (shoveling in a spoonful of potato salad) You know, (swallowing) Fred was a fine man. A FINE man!"

But the thing I enjoy most about eating is dining out. You know, at a nice restaurant with a server who, if you give a big enough tip, will fork-feed the hamburger to you.

All college students are familiar with dining out. Since we don't have a lot of time to prepare meals, dining out is usually our best option, typically ranking a few notches above starvation but falling well below purchasing a plane ticket to Mama's.

Dining as a college student is much different than dining as a regular person. For example, college students' food must be cheap. Also, our choices are further complicated by the fact that we have to eat at places that serve lots of booze.

As you can no doubt see, we're already screwed because the only

place in the world that serves cheap food and tons of liquor is Boris Yeltsin's hospital room. (And we all know that's invitation only.) So where do we go to eat?

The first step is choosing a good restaurant. Experts will tell you to look for such things as quality of food, quality of service and belching policies before making a choice. But I think the most important aspect of a good restaurant is the portions.

Nothing's worse than going to one of those ritzy places, dropping 75 bucks and having them serve you a bouillon cube with a parsley leaf for supper.

I don't care if they're feeding me antelope vomit — for \$75, I better get a crock pot full of it!

After you've found a place with ample portions, the next step is making a reservation. (WHAT ARE YOU DOING YOU IDIOT? I WAS TESTING YOU! NEVER EAT SOMEPLACE WHERE RESERVATIONS ARE NEEDED!)

Once you arrive, it is important to be couth and instantly use your napkin properly — and here I'm not talking about placing it on your lap.

The proper way to use the napkin is to "snap" the tushes of your servers whenever you need a refill.

When ordering, try to avoid those menu items that have a heart next to them. In most restaurants, this heart means, "if you have a pulse, don't choose me." Instead, opt for items that have the regurgitating stick-figure next to them; they'll prove much more tasty.

Another important and often overlooked aspect of ordering is being especially polite to your waiter. Most servers are decent people and will work hard to please you, but you must be cognizant of the fact that you don't know what kind of day they're having.

For example, on any given day, your waiter could have been indicted for having "sexual relations" with a cantaloupe and could be looking at several years in a federal joint.

Or maybe he just lost his entire family after playing a mindless game of "tackle the lawn mower." You just don't know and the slightest hint of rudeness could set them off.

(My father could never under-

stand this concept. He's always rude to servers. To this day he still thinks chicken cordon bleu is SUPPOSED to have dish soap on it.)

Once you've eaten your meal, the final step is to tip your server. Generally, tips should range from 0 to 15 percent of your total bill — depending largely on the number of times scalding coffee was dumped on your crotch. For exceptional service — foot massages between courses — it is customary to buy your server a Porsche.

Here's a helpful guide I found on the Internet which covers how much you should tip:

■ Your server said you remind her of Brad Pitt. TIP: 87 percent.

■ Your server was attentive to your needs, efficient and friendly. TIP: 15 percent.

■ Your server was rude and often referred to you as "dipshit." TIP: 5 percent.

■ Your server was a basset hound with a tray strapped to its back. TIP: Kick it down a flight of stairs.

I hope this brief guide will offer some assistance during your next dining experience. This advice has always worked for me, though I should point out that most of it was fabricated. As long as you stay away from year-old cottage cheese, you can't go wrong.

Willey is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.