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**Hungry For Overkill**

**By David Leonhardt**

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I don't have much time to watch television. Being the lazy person that I am, I usually let other people in the family do my watching for me.

But some events are just so important that I have to watch them myself. Such was the case with the finals of this year's American Idol. The space shuttle Columbia crash in Texas earlier in the year was another event that (sadly) I just had to watch. And I certainly did not want to miss the thrill of seeing the America's Cup sail into Switzerland.

Of course, I regularly turn on the tube whenever a George Bush invades Iraq. Hopefully, this one will soon finish invading; my electricity bill is suffering.

The latest must-see event is the Michael Jackson arrest, an event of such momentous importance that all news shows, gossip shows, comedy shows and just about everybody else is offering wall-to-wall coverage. It has been estimated that 37% of the American population has been interviewed by the media for their inside-knowledge of "the pop superstar's" personal life.

So I was most shocked when I flipped to a channel that was not helping me track down the most fascinating intimate details and most intriguing and succulent minutiae of all things Michael Jackson.

"What?!" I demanded. "This is impossible. What is this trash?"

"That's Touched by an Angel," my wife offered. "It's one of your favorite shows."

"That's no excuse," I blustered. "The network should be hot on the Jackson case. How could this be? I'm calling the cable company to complain."

"But dear ..." my wife tried to interrupt.

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"It's no use," I insisted as I dialed. "My mind is made up. Don't try to stop me."

"But dear ..." my wife tried to interrupt me again.

"I am sorry. There is simply no excuse for airing pure entertainment when there are important details about Michael Jackson to be uncovered."

"But dear ..." my wife tried once more.

"Hello? Cable Company? I want to lodge a most serious complaint."

"But we don't get cable out here," my wife broke in. "We have satellite TV."

"Oh."

"Look. There are some 395 channels, and at least 70% of them are airing Michael Jackson stories. Don't you think that's at least, oh, let's say, 70% overkill?" my wife asked.

"You don't understand. This is important. The whole world is watching. This man has changed the face of music."

"Yes, that's what some of his celebrity colleagues are saying", my wife rolled her eyes. "As if people who change the face of music have all been vaccinated against child-molesting."

"That's not the point. There are so many details to uncover. We know he likes Kentucky Fried Chicken, but does he eat quiche? Everybody knows that real men don't eat quiche. Could that be his problem?"

"Let it go, Happy Guy," my wife advised. "It just doesn't pay to get so caught up in all the TV drama. Besides, this is a serious investigation with a serious charge and it should be left to the authorities."

I sank down into the couch. My wife was finally starting to make sense. "What are you going to do now?" she asked.

"I think I'll watch Touched by an Angel."

"Ah, that's the husband I know and love."

"Right now Michael Jackson could use an angel, and so could all those kids. I mean, what can one little district attorney do?" I moaned.

My wife moaned, too. I was amazed that she would suddenly show such support.

"I know," I said, lighting up. "Never mind the cable company. I'll call Tess. She can set Michael Jackson straight."

The author is David Leonhardt. Sign up for his weekly satire column up at

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### **What You Need to Know to Lose Weight Without Dieting**

**By Michelle May M.D.**

#### **What You Need to Know to Lose Weight Without Dieting by Michelle May M.D.**

If your commitment to eat right, exercise, and lose weight always seems to lose its steam, you are not alone! Weight problems are not just about what you are eating, but why you are eating in the first place.

To see what I mean, ask yourself these questions. Do you think about food and eating more than you think you should? Do you feel guilty when you eat certain foods? Do you have trouble passing up tempting food even if you aren't hungry? Do you often eat when you are bored, stressed, lonely, or angry? Do you eat differently in private than you do in public? Do you fluctuate between dieting and eating too much?

If you answered yes to most of these questions, you have probably discovered that dieting hasn't really solved the problem. To help you understand why, let's take a look at three different eating styles: Over Eating, Restrictive Eating, and Instinctive Eating.

In "Over Eating" people eat because it is mealtime or because something looks good – whether they are hungry or not. They may also eat to distract themselves or cope with stress and emotions. They may reward, comfort, or entertain themselves with food. Their weight tends to go up and down depending on whether they are off or on their diet.

In "Restrictive Eating," a person controls his or her weight by dieting. They decide when, what, and how much to eat based on the rules of the latest diet they are following. Since diet rules are always changing, they sometimes feel confused about what they should eat. They think of food as either "good" or "bad"—and they think of themselves as good or bad, depending on what they ate.

Now think about someone who doesn't struggle with his or her weight. If you are having trouble thinking of someone like that, think of a baby or a young child. I call this "Instinctive Eating." These people just seem to know when, what, and how much food they need. When their body needs fuel, they get hungry, triggering an urge to eat. They simply stop eating when their hunger is satisfied. Most of them really like to eat and seem to be able to eat whatever they want. However they will turn down even delicious food if they aren't hungry.

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You might believe that a person who eats instinctively has been blessed with willpower and a great metabolism. But the truth is, we were all born Instinctive Eaters. It's just that many of us "unlearned" our natural ability to know how much to eat. The good news is that you can relearn those skills if you are willing. I did! Here are some important steps to get you started.

1. Let go of the idea that there is a perfect diet that will finally solve your problems. The answer lies within you.

2. Whenever you have an urge to eat, instead of focusing on the food, first ask yourself, "Am I hungry?" Remember that hunger is a physical feeling. It is not the same thing as appetite, cravings, or the desire

to eat.

3. If you are hungry, remember that there are no "good" or "bad" foods. You are less likely to overeat certain foods if you know that you can have them again when you really want them.

4. Stop eating when the hunger is gone but before you feel full, even if there is food left. Give up your membership to the Clean Plate Club!

5. If you are not hungry, ask yourself if something in your environment triggered your urge to eat and what you could do to reduce the trigger or distract yourself from it. For instance, could you put the candy dish out of sight or do something else for a while until you are actually hungry?

6. If there was an emotional trigger, ask yourself what you could do to better cope with that emotion. For instance, if stress triggered your urge to eat, could you try a relaxation exercise instead?

7. Don't expect yourself to be perfect—it is not possible or even necessary.

By relearning to eat instinctively, you will see that eating to satisfy hunger is pleasurable and that it is good to eat foods that you enjoy. You will find that meeting your other needs in appropriate ways will bring balance and joy to your life. By learning these important skills, you will reach a healthier weight and a healthier lifestyle—without dieting!

Michelle May, M.D. is a practicing Board Certified Family Physician with expertise in the cognitive-behavioral aspects of weight management. She is the author of *Am I Hungry? What To Do When Diets Don't Work* in collaboration with a Registered Dietitian and Psychologist. Visit her website [www.AmIHungry.com](http://www.AmIHungry.com) for more ideas on managing weight without dieting.

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