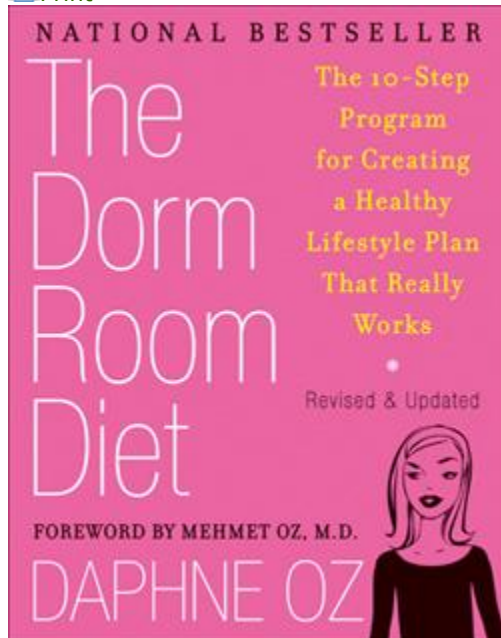




Q & A with The Dorm Room Diet author Daphne Oz



August 24, 2010

If you're about to head back to college, consider adding Daphne Oz's *The Dorm Room Diet* to your fall reading list. This recently updated 2006 bestseller includes easy-to-digest info on everything from how to avoid packing on the "freshman 15" to exercises you can do in your dorm room, from a crash course in supplements to how to re-evaluate your family's food habits. What's new in this fall's edition? Plenty of dorm room friendly vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free recipes and a healthy serving of "conscious eating" knowledge.

Oz, a 2008 graduate of Princeton University comes from a lineage of health crusaders. She's the daughter of—you guessed it!—cardiac surgeon Dr. Mehmet Oz of the daily talk show *The Dr. Oz Show* and holistic nutrition advisor Lisa Oz, and her grandfather and grandmother were also a cardiac surgeon and a holistic nutrition advisor, respectively. But Daphne is on a mission all her own, a mission to educate youth audiences about health access and food politics in America via TV, print, web, and public speaking. She also works with [HealthCorps](#), a non-profit founded and chaired by her father that provides after-school programs in nutrition and exercise in 50 schools across the country and blogs for [Oprah.com](#) and [HuffingtonPost.com](#).

Q When you speak to younger audiences, you get them thinking about their food choices by asking powerful questions like "How can a bag of chips cost less than an apple?" What reactions do you typically get?

A When you pose simple questions like that one, it plants a seed that grows on its own. What's most important is giving students action steps. They start to realize that they are voting three times a day with what they eat, voting for what our food system looks like long-term. They begin to think, "If I started asking for healthy food, then maybe healthy eating in this country might not be so difficult and I could have an impact." The game is rigged for us, and it's rigged so that we're unhealthy. They see it as their chance to give back and set the country up for success.

Q Can you tell me about some of the most exciting food programs in American schools today?

A The best program out there is the [Yale Sustainable Food Project](#). They received upwards of 300 applications for 15 spots for people to literally go and dig dirt. It's a completely sustainable program that costs the schools nothing and supplies the school cafeteria. There are great farm-to-school programs all over the country. I think it's the way of the future. It allows us to eat more locally.

Q What are some simple steps students can take to promote food activism in their schools?

After I leave, I'm sure they stay interested and involved, but there is no one there to carry on the movement on campus. Here's what they can do:

1. Find like-minded students, and decide how often you want to meet. 2. Do your research; figure out if there are local farm-to-school programs you can get involved with. 2. Go into the cafeteria and talk to the people who work there. If you'd like to see chickpeas in the salad bar, ask for them. If you can avoid having to go to the upper level, usually your success rate will be high. 3. Ask for meetings with school administrators, and be sure to demonstrate that there is student interest—you could do a petition.

In high school, I put in a Fresh Samantha juice bar. I met with my principal; it was a three-month long process to bring it into the cafeteria. Within a month we were doubling our shipments, and we had our own refrigerator!

Q What makes the transition to college life so challenging for students seeking healthy eating habits and what's your best tip for success?

The change in environment—it's such a dramatic change in scenery that you have a tremendous opportunity to fail or to fly. It's a complete upheaval of what is normal and regimented, and now you are in charge of what, when, and where you eat, and with whom. And you're living with thousands of people just like you— with your peers—so there can be a lot of pressure to eat like everyone else.

Eating healthy requires preplanning. If you know you have early classes three days a week, stock up on healthy snacks like organic yogurt, baggies of a granola that's not loaded with sugar, fresh berries or hard fruits, carrots and peppers, Soy Crisps, or even 100-calories snack packs. As my father says, "People don't plan to fail, they fail to plan."

Q It's great that you made a point to include vegan and gluten-free recipes in the new edition of the book. Can you share a few extra special tips for students who are heading off to college on specialty diets like these?

A That's really when it comes down to being self-sufficient. You just can't be 100 percent sure of what you are eating in a cafeteria that doesn't list ingredients. That's the reason I included the recipes. I felt a fear of going in the kitchen...these simple recipes help students realize "Maybe I can cook a lot of my meals!"

Q What can parents do to help their children maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle once they are "out of the nest"?

What your kids need most when they're away at college is independence. This is their chance to experiment and figure out what their bodies can and can't handle. For that reason, you have to be the constant loving and supporting person on the sidelines. You can send care packages of foods that help to crowd out the bad stuff (like walnuts and almonds or Soy Crisps) and gift cards to health food stores in the area are great! Ultimately, you should trust that if you've set them up with healthy habits, then all of that should come to fruition here.

—*Jolia Sidona Allen, Associate Editor and Web Editor*

Comments

By Adelle on Aug 25, 2010:

I enjoyed this fresh approach to college dorm living, attitude will take you a long way in your study habits, when you are feeling your best in a healthy environment.

By Turk on Aug 26, 2010:

Very positive and great comments..

Add a comment



Community

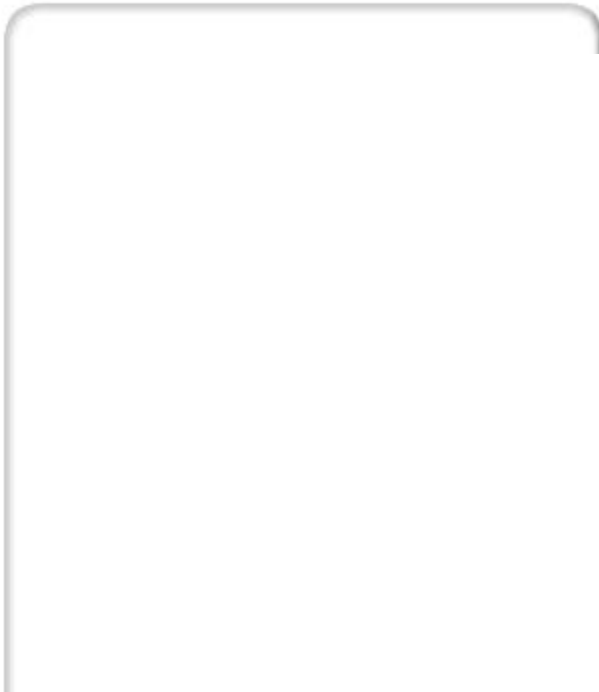
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