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MELBOURNE WEIGHT LOSS GURU REVEALS SECRET TO SUCCESS

More than half of Australia's adult population is overweight or obese and, in a culture that increasingly values a prescribed notion of physical beauty, there is growing pressure on Australians to change this statistic.

But, as new Melbourne author and weight loss guru Sigrid de Castella will tell you, there is no such thing as a quick fix.

Australians are suffering from an information overload when it comes to their weight, health and fitness. With more than 2,307 weight loss companies in Australia alone, it can often be hard to cut through the clutter and recognize who is being genuine.

An ever-growing amount of consumer spending is being directed toward efforts to get thinner and healthier, too. In 2011, Australians spent \$789.6 million on counseling services*, low-calorie foods and shakes, diet cookbooks, weight loss guides, dietary supplements and even surgery in their quest to slim down. But we're not getting any thinner.

de Castella explains why, "Virtually all weight loss companies only focus on diet and exercise which is simply insufficient. It's the mental battle that is the third and most crucial spoke in the weight loss wheel".

Australia's collective waistline continues to expand and the debate around our health as a nation is a constant reminder of what is to some, a daily struggle.

"When I stood on my scales and overloaded them I knew I had to take action. All I knew was that I weighed more than 143 kgs and I was on the fast track to disease and death. I decided to change my destiny and over the next 20 months I shed more than 70kg, half my body weight, without "dieting" or surgery," explains de Castella.

ABS data suggests that 62% of all adult Australians are overweight or obese, up from 54% just three years ago.

The Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute declared that in 2008 Australia had become the world's fattest nation and that the health system was sitting on an obesity related time bomb that will cost billions in health care over the next two decades.

But de Castella believes the solution can be more simple. She believes weight loss is a process of education and realization about the combined mind, body and spirit – and the journey starts with cleaning out your physical and mental surroundings."

"The word "diet" has a quick fix connotation that is not only unachievable and unsustainable long term, but actually does more harm than good to your body. We all know that realistic eating and exercise plans are part of the solution. But the truth is achieving your ideal size is virtually impossible long-term without implementing a lifestyle program that includes comprehensive mental reconditioning. Only then can you achieve lifelong health and vitality."

“Fad diets simply don’t work – if they did they wouldn’t need to keep reinventing themselves. You might have some short-lived success for a few weeks, but sure enough, that weight keeps coming back, and often with a little more each time. Yo-yo diets not only place a huge amount of stress on the body and its systems, it’s mentally very stressful, weakens the immune system and slows down the metabolism making it harder each time to lose weight.”

More than 60% of Australian women are now seeking alternative therapeutic solutions to their health problems with the Australian natural health industry generating over \$2.3 billion a year.

de Castella’s approach harnesses that light bulb moment with the decision to not just lose weight, but to change the direction of one’s life.

Her new book, *‘Half the Woman I Was’*, acts as a map to the minefield that is the mental and physical battle of weight loss.

*According to IBISWorld’s Weight Loss Services market research report.

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