

## Loving the Skin You're in *All Year Round*

**British Columbia** – Psychotherapist, author and educator Esther Kane, MSW, knows a thing or two about dieting and eating disorders – the topics she tackles in her latest and upcoming book, “It’s Not About the Food: A Woman’s Guide to Making Peace with Food and Our Bodies.” She’s battled with food and eating disorders herself for eighteen years and is candid about the cruel circumstances that led her down the thorny road of self-loathing, denial and life-threatening health choices. As the weather turns frostier all over the country, Kane wants women in particular to make a new New Year’s resolution- Don’t Go On A Diet! Why women in particular? Because 90% of those with eating disorders just happen to be women!

Dieting can become habit-forming and if you think that sounds like hyperbole, consider some the stats that Kane outlines in her book:

- At least 50% of young girls in Canada begin dieting ***before the age of nine***: 81% of 10-year olds diet and at least 46% of 9-year-olds restrict eating.
- The ***fear of fat*** is so overwhelming that young girls have indicated in surveys that they are more *afraid of becoming fat than they are of cancer, nuclear war, or losing their parents.*
- Eating disorders are now the ***third most common chronic illness in adolescent girls*** and have the ***highest mortality rate of any mental illness.***

So why is it that every New Year’s women in particular are constantly resolving to lose an inch here and a few pounds there? Kane suggests that due to the colder weather and an easing up on being physically active, coupled with the copious holiday festivities, the result can be 5-10 pounds of weight gain. Most women’s response according to Kane goes something like: “Come the end of December, we stand in front of our full-length mirrors full of self-recrimination at the fact that we look slightly ‘puffier’ than we did last summer. Then comes the inevitable pledge to ourselves- the dreaded “New Year’s Resolution” to lose X pounds by X date (fill in the blanks)... Then we enthusiastically (or solemnly) embrace the latest fad diet with intense resolve and determination; often starving ourselves until we’ve lost the amount of weight we set out to. We are pleased with ourselves for a short time at our accomplishment, only to be deflated of all hope when a few weeks/months later we’ve regained back all of the original weight plus more!” But as any serial dieter knows, diets don’t work! **95% of dieters regain all the weight lost plus add a few extra pounds each time they diet.** This is why Kane outlines a spate of good reasons why women should permanently give up dieting.

## **Here are Esther's Top Five Reasons for Giving Up Dieting (any time of the year!):**

**#1: Learning to love and accept yourself just as you are will give you self-confidence, better health, and a sense of well being that will last a lifetime.**

**#2: Diets are expensive.** If you didn't buy special diet products, you could save enough to get new clothes, which would improve your outlook right now.

**#3: Diets are not sexy and they don't make you beautiful.** If you want to be more attractive, take care of your body and your appearance. Feeling healthy makes you look your best. Remember this: 98% of women are not built like fashion models and come in a variety of shapes and sizes and the majority of these women are not thin.

**#4: Diets are boring.** People on diets talk and think about food and practically nothing else. There's a lot more to life than food.

**#5: Diets can turn into life-threatening eating disorders.** The obsession to be thin can lead to anorexia, bulimia, bingeing, and compulsive exercising.

"It's Not About the Food: A Woman's Guide to Making Peace With Food and Our Bodies" offers practical exercises, tips, and enlightening anecdotes to help you face your self-image healthily. As Kane herself says of her own battle, 'My healing has come slowly and not without bumps along the way. I envision my recovery as peeling an onion: each layer represents a new discovery about myself, and with each layer that I peel back there are tears. The tears are a way to let out my grief, the agony that comes from understanding why I nearly killed myself through an eating disorder.'" She understands the roller coaster ride of dieting and eating disorders and through her book, offers a safe and gentle way off the ride. No matter what time of the year.