



It's All in Your Head
Q&A with Joseph D. Pianka, M.D.

1. What does your book say that thousands of others like it don't?

I speak to the majority of individuals who struggle in this space and the many who don't relate to fitness or find it intimidating as opposed to the motivated minority who have already succeeded and advanced beyond the fundamentals. I am a real person in a stressful profession and a healthcare expert with 52 years of life experience and endless practical advice to share.

2. In the world we live in, why would an audience choose your advice as opposed to a young, seemingly perfect fitness model adorning magazine covers or showing up on social media?

Because as good as they look, their advice isn't working, just look at the statistics. It's time to think outside the box or differently than what may be popular or trending. The health of our society depends on it. It boils down to the old obnoxious saying, "How are those other programs working out for you?" If they're not, maybe you should give something else a shot.

3. Do genetic factors influence obesity? What is your opinion on "It's not all our fault" arguments?

There are many counter positions to weight gain or the inability to maintain healthy weights, such as having a strong genetic predisposition, which I agree with to some extent. However, data continues to suggest a much larger behavioral component. I am wary that blaming genetics and waiting for a magic pill is a risk for supporting these behaviors—another way of staying in comfort zones—and will not address many of the behaviors that make us less healthy and keep us from living our lives to the fullest.

4. Are all people with high body mass indices (BMIs) necessarily unhealthy, and do they need to lose weight?

No. I believe in the term "Best Weight" (rather than "Ideal Weight") based on the Edmonton classification scale, where low scores are not considered unhealthy. However, I am concerned that without addressing these issues, lower score individuals are at risk of progressing toward higher scores over time. I also don't value weight alone, but overall health and fitness. I fully disclose in the beginning of *It's All in Your Head* that if individuals are satisfied with where they are, congratulations! But my practice experience with many patients has been that relatively few overweight patients are truly satisfied and most acknowledge that they want to make improvements.

5. Are people considered to be obese discriminated against in society and the medical profession? Does this book suggest individuals are obese because they don't try hard enough, making them feel worse about themselves rather than inspiring them?



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Discrimination absolutely exists, but this book is based on positive reinforcement, energy and growth. An entire chapter is dedicated to this concept.

6. There seems to be some vanity and self-indulgence in your writing. Are these good or bad things?

Anything acting as positive reinforcement is beneficial. Anything detrimental to self esteem and body image is negative, and I absolutely trash "Fitspiration" type images in the book.

7. You seem to endorse particular products heavily, is there some incentive for you to do this?

None whatsoever. I simply speak about and endorse what has worked for me and many of my patients who I have real life experience with. I consider myself an expert in the programs I endorse.

8. Why did you choose to self-publish rather than seek a traditional publisher?

I'm a busy physician who plans to keep his day job, and the content was somewhat time sensitive, so I couldn't spend time searching or waiting for a bite from an agent or publisher. I never thought I would get as far as I did, and, good or bad, learned a tremendous amount about the industry and the publishing process in general. It was a valuable experience, and I just hope I can help a few people.

9. Do you consider yourself a writer?

Heck no! I don't even believe I write particularly well, but that doesn't mean I don't have something to say or interesting stories to share that many individuals may relate to.

10. What did you ultimately hope to achieve by writing this book?

I never intended to save the world, but I hope to initiate some incredibly necessary conversations, perhaps inciting others, led by individuals more capable than myself changing the trajectory of humanity. As I look at society and the world around us, someone needs to.