

THE
UNHEALTHY
TRUTH

How Our Food is Making us Sick—
And What We Can Do About It



ROBYN O'BRIEN
WITH RACHEL KRANZ

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Robyn O'Brien is not the most likely candidate for an antiestablishment crusade. A Houston native from a conservative family, this MBA and married mother of four was not someone who gave much thought to misguided government agencies and chemicals in our food—until the day her youngest daughter had a violent allergic reaction to eggs, and everything changed. The Unhealthy Truth is both the story of how one brave woman chose to take on the system and a call to action that shows how each of us can do our part and keep our own families safe.

O'Brien turns to accredited research conducted in Europe that confirms the toxicity of America's food supply, and traces the relationship between Big Food and Big Money that has ensured that the United States is one of the only developed countries in the world to allow hidden toxins in our food—toxins that can be blamed for the alarming recent increases in allergies, ADHD, cancer, and asthma among our children. Featuring recipes and an action plan for weaning your family off dangerous chemicals one step at a time The Unhealthy Truth is a must-read for every parent—and for every concerned citizen—in America today.

The Unhealthy Truth: How Our Food Is Making Us Sick And What We Can Do About It Details

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Lisa says

I feel conflicted about this book. I think it brings up important, urgent issues, but the way O'Brien presents the information is torturous. Maybe I just have an aversion to her writing style: unnecessary repetition (I heard you the first 10 times!), persistent self-congratulation, mommy martyrdom, scapegoating, misrepresenting data to make her point, focusing on hearsay & anecdotal evidence, and using emotionally-charged/hostile language. At best, this book will inspire people to do their own research and draw their own conclusions. I'd give it 1 star for presentation and 5 stars for the relevancy/value of the topic.

Side note: as a result of reading this book and researching GMOs, I will no longer eat anything that has any ingredient that has been genetically modified (typically corn, soy, canola) - including animals that have been fed these products. In the spirit of Michael Pollan's latest manifesto, I will "vote with my fork" and choose sustainable, local, whole foods that are free of pesticides, additives, preservatives, added hormones/antibiotics, artificial colors/flavors, fillers, and modified DNA.

Zelda says

How, with a helper author, did this book turn out so crappy? Self-centered writing, that's how. There isn't a single tone of self-important, resentful whining that doesn't appear in this book. Give us your background in the first chapter, hon, and then get on with the facts. The entire food industry doesn't revolve around martyr-you and your daughter Rory, the blown-up snubs you received from other organizations, and the persecution you've risen above oh-so-look-at-me-nobly but somehow can't stop griping about. Not only did i despise the author by the second chapter, but i ridicule her publisher and editors for allowed the book to come out in this awful state. It destroys the credibility of every thing she claims. I think the book would be half the size or smaller if all of the inappropriate griping and "why me?" crap were taken out. The editing is a shame, because it sounds like her efforts to bring childhood food allergies into the light were beneficial to many parents.

Tiffany says

This book was boring at times, and if I had a dime for every time the author talked about her "Mama Guilt"...

I did learn why there has been such an increase in the number of kids/people affected by peanut, dairy, and other allergies. SPOILER: Over the past 10 years there has been a rise in the amount of genetically modified ingredients/organisms (GMOs) found in our food. 80% of the corn we ingest is GMO corn -- and we know that corn is in EVERYTHING processed these days (p.s. did you know that the wax on your cucumber comes from corn, too! ugh). Anyway when they genetically modify peanuts, for example, they do so by splicing manmade and foreign proteins into the DNA of non-GMO peanuts. Allergies are merely a reaction to foreign protein, add to that a foreign protein that people are never generally exposed to in nature and voila! You get major allergic reactions because it's exposure to entirely new junk. Hmm...haven't we also seen a large increase in the number of diagnosed cases of autism over the past 10 years?

The book also goes on to talk about how rBGH (growth hormones) are given to cows to help them to produce more milk; causing mastitis quite frequently in industrial dairy cows. The industrial farmers continue to hook the cows up to the machines for milking despite these infections, so what you get is infection and pus in the milk that we are drinking. AND then there's the cancer issue. There's little research showing proof that rBGH causes breast cancer -- though we're pretty sure it does -- because the company that manufactures these hormones and GMOs is worth \$72 billion. Monsanto basically thwarts any and all efforts to research and find any harmful effects of their products. Buy organic rBGH-free milk and you don't have to worry about the pus and hormones.

Much of what I read in this book was not new news to me, it disgusted me all the same. We are forced to ingest these chemicals because the FDA is making sure not to piss off these large corporations that make large political contributions and have lobbying teams.

Read this book if you want to learn how to avoid eating lots of the garbage out there.

P.S. Stay away from soy, too. The plant estrogen is bad news.

Colette Martin says

I am rating this book a 3 primarily because I support the cause to understand more about our food supply and how it is making us sick.

Despite this message, I found the book tedious, hard to read, repetitive, and not always entirely accurate.

The author relies heavily on this story line:

My child ate something I thought was food. Something bad happened. I thought about it and realized it could be the food. When the dust settled I went to the internet and did some research. I discovered something that no one had discovered before – there is something wrong with that food. Wow, I must be a genius – how come the doctors don't know this? Oh wait, I did more research on the computer late at night and found out they do know. They just didn't tell us. How come they didn't tell us? So maybe I shouldn't feed that to my child...

This story line is repeated over and over again with different children and different foods. Along the way there are constant reminders that the author has an MBA and is a trained researcher and analyst.

The author's constant state of shock and incredulity is emphasized by a writing style where – in some lengthy passages – more than 50% of the sentences end with a question mark. An example of this style would be:

Didn't the author have an editor? Was the period on her keyboard broken, or was the use of incessant question marks intentional? Doesn't her publisher have editorial guidelines? If so, why weren't they followed? Do you see how annoying that is? I could easily have summed up this entire paragraph with one sentence that ends in a period:

There were too many questions and not enough straight facts.

The "they" that the author so frequently refers to includes corporations, government officials, the FDA, the

EPA, doctors (usually researchers), pharmaceutical companies, and non-profits. While I am not defending all of these organizations, there was too much bashing and not enough problem solving.

Among the many concerns I had were:

The author's implication that any time a doctor on FAAN's medical advisory board was involved with a study or a paper that that information should immediately be shared by FAAN to their community, shows a lack of understanding that a medical advisory board plays for a non-profit. The bashing of this well-respected organization was disconcerting.

The implication that a doctor shouldn't be part of a pharmaceutical company's speaker's bureau for epinephrine – a life-saving drug that is seriously under-prescribed and under-used – is ridiculous. Getting the word out on epinephrine is one of the most important initiatives on food allergies, and who better to talk about it than doctors?

The food recommendations that the author makes in her too-brief "solutions" chapter are overly reliant on (still) processed foods. For example, instead of choosing Diet Coke, the author recommends original Coke. (I think she must not have read the label.)

The author and I agree on a few things; we both want to know exactly what's in our food, we are concerned about genetically modified foods and what they are doing to us, we want clear labels, and we want legislation that will protect our food supply and our children.

Maria says

Anyone who has paid attention to recent (within the last 10 years) information about GM food or who has watched any number of documentaries about American food (Food, Inc., Fast Food Nation, etc.) and the problems created by large companies like Monsanto, will not be "shocked" by anything presented in this book. The author uses the word "shocking" multiple times in a way that makes it seem that her research is new; it's not! But to her, because it was new, she presents it as such. That said, what she does share is good info for any novice researcher who hasn't paid attention to what chemicals and GM does to food. Her casual voice may annoy some, but it does make the info easier to swallow than a strictly academic voice. I found her strident, self centered, and annoying (mostly because I couldn't believe someone could be this ignorant about so many things), but I cut her some slack for her efforts to spread a good message.

After developing an argument on why we should avoid certain foods, she loses ground. The last chapter in this book is laughable. After preaching about how bad food is, she offers solutions that include simply eating less of the harmful food (despite earlier claiming that even a small portion is detrimental to health). Rather than advocating total avoidance or a change in lifestyle and diet (the only way to really avoid "bad" foods), she seems to slip from her position and give in to the argument that convenience really does win out in the end.

Shannon says

In the past ten years, I have been diagnosed with several food sensitivities, including milk and soy. I was very interested in reading this book, but it turned out to be a big disappointment. Most of the problem with this book was the author's emotionally charged arguments and lack of rational thought. After reading this, I am quite certain that she is the type of mother to rush her child to the E.R. and demand stitches for a paper cut just to avoid the "Mama Guilt" and to be the overprotective "Mama Bear." She would have had a much better argument and leg to stand on, if she would have removed her own outrageous thoughts and opinions from the book and stuck with facts.

The other major problem with the book is the author's conclusion that GMO's have caused food allergies. She sites several sources (some very valid, others I'm skeptical of) to prove her point. But, she misses the main thing that although there is correlation between the GMO's and food allergies, there still isn't any evidence that one leads to the other. There is also correlation between food allergies and the use of cell phones, internet, computers, etc. There has been a long list of things that have been on the rise in the past 15-20 years, such as autism, ADHD, and depression. But, nothing has proved, including this book, that those things are related to GMOs. I'm not saying there isn't some form of a link (big or small), but there is no proof only correlations.

I also find it highly appalling that the other believed that feeding her children Mac-n-Cheese, frozen waffles, dinosaur shaped chicken nuggets, and other highly processed food was healthy. Isn't it common sense that those things AREN'T HEALTHY? I thought it was fairly universally realized that people use them simply because they are convenient and it saves time not because they were nutritious. Ms. O'Brien is like the lady that sued McDonalds because her child got fat after eating a happy meal every day.

Despite all the things that irritated me about this book, I did have to give it two stars because she does make some valid points. I do believe that a lot of our health problems can be cleaned up by eating more natural (not necessarily organic), unprocessed foods. I am a big believer in cooking from scratch, growing your own food, and knowing what exactly goes into your mouth. I do support the organic industry (verbally, not with my own dollars), and think there needs to be more clear delineation and labels between what is organic and what isn't. That said, I supported GMOs before my food allergies, and I still support them today. I think there is a lot of benefits that can be derived from GMO foods and I appreciate the fact that we have yummy corn on the cob to eat, a bountiful supply of rich wheat that feeds the world's population (even though that's one food I can't eat), and lots of other wonderful crops that come from the evolution of seeds and the alterations thereof.

Karen says

I would give this 5 stars for the incredible job the author did of researching the history and political information on our food system, and exposing all the backhanded ways that the FDA uses to allow unsafe products in the market. It was very eye-opening to read how much stricter nearly every other country in the world is compared to the US. In fact, major companies like Walmart, McDonald's and Kraft, adhere to much

stricter regulations overseas than in our own countries. It hasn't seemed to hurt their businesses - they were told to conform or else get out, and guess what? They did. For example, Kraft Mac-n-cheese -the fluorescent orange wonder on most kids' favorites list? In the UK, it has none of the nasty artificial yellow dye! Coca-cola - after a huge study (Southampton) showed that the combination of artificial coloring with sodium benzoate had a definitely negative effect on children's behavior and learning ability, those chemicals are not in the UK versions of Coke. But they are still here in the US.

The reason I held off on the 5th star is that near the end the author gives many examples of how she's modified her family's meals to avoid chemicals, GMO foods, etc. I realize she is striving for "better" not "perfect" and doesn't want people to give up simply because it seems too hard. However, I would love to see her move on from the white bread ("buy it at the supermarket bakery instead of off the shelf and you avoid the preservatives") and rice and beans ("cheap easy meals") to real food like meat and fresh, green vegetables. Her shopping list only included 2 vegetables, carrots and tomatoes. And hopefully she'll start looking into how nutritionally poor grains are in general, especially modern wheat. Since she already has kids with food allergies, going grain-free might benefit them even more. Maybe in her next book :)

Sophia says

The Unhealthy Truth is written by a mother of four. Her youngest child had a severe allergic reaction to eggs and it started her on a search for answers that she documents in her book—why are so many children developing allergies these days, what has happened to our food supply in the last few decades, and why is American food not as safe as that found in other countries like Japan, Australia, and those in Europe? At first, I was hesitant to read a book written by “just a mom.” What were her qualifications? I’d much rather read a book by a scientist, doctor, or some other highly educated, qualified person. But I have to say that the author’s role as a mother made her book very accessible and easy to read. It was also great to relate to her as a parent. And in the end, I think more people will enjoy a book like this than books written by Ph.D.s and MDs, as I, a recovering scientist, do. After all, this book is about as close to a page-turner as you can get while still delivering as much information as it does. I honestly read the first half of it in about 24 hours.

Here are some startling statistics found in the book:

- * The most recent statistic on the number of Americans affected by food allergies is from 2002, when an estimated 7 million Americans suffered from them. The author, Robyn O'Brien, says that this is part of the problem. Virtually no research is being done on how much food allergies are increasing in the U.S. or why or how we can prevent it.
- * The prevalence of peanut allergies among children doubled between 1997 and 2002. In that 5 year period, allergies increased 20% each year. Wouldn't it be nice to know what's happened in the last seven years??
- * The only food allergy study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the last eight years shows a 265% increase in the number of hospitalizations related to food allergies.
- * Asthma is also on the rise in the U.S. A 2005 report from the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology found that approximately 20 million Americans, or about 10% of the population, has asthma. One in eight children in the U.S. suffer from asthma.
- * According to author Joel Fuhrman, MD, about 80% of the calories in a typical American's diet comes from white flour, sugar, and oil, while about 60% of calories come from processed foods. Only 4% of the average American diet consists of “real food,” which includes vegetables, fruit, nuts, seeds, beans, etc.

Robyn O'Brien believes there are four major reasons for why immunological disorders, like food allergies

and asthma, are on the rise. One, our environment has shifted from natural to more industrialized. Two, we are exposed to excessive amounts of antibiotics, both from prescriptions and increased consumption of antibiotic-laden meat, dairy, poultry, and eggs. Three, we have recently experienced a rise in pollutants and environmental toxins. And lastly, our tendency to eat more processed foods filled with chemical additives and preservatives, while eating fewer natural whole foods.

After O'Brien elaborates on the rise in allergies and what may be contributing to it, she goes on to examine other problems in our food supply—specifically the prevalence of soy and the health problems it may cause, the abundance of recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH) in our dairy and meat, the problems with food corporations like Monsanto and the disturbing connections they have with regulatory agencies like the FDA, how common genetically modified (GM) foods are in our food supply (corn, soy, and potatoes, unless organic, are most likely genetically engineered), and probably most upsetting to me, how other industrialized nations are exposed to much fewer additives, preservatives, and GM foods than we are in the U.S. It's alarming to read that major corporations have taken food colors and aspartame out of European versions of their products, but left them in the ones sold in the U.S. In Europe, any food containing more than 0.9% GM ingredients must be labeled so. In the U.S., we only label organic foods and non-rBGH foods (to say that there's no difference between rBGH treated cows and those without artificial growth hormones). By the end of chapter 7, it's evident that our food supply is unhealthy and that our regulatory agencies are failing the American people. Why are foods deemed dangerous in other countries readily available in American grocery stores, and without proper labeling so that we can avoid them if we choose to? As an American, I'm insulted and angry!

O'Brien points out that many of the countries with stronger regulations and more responsive corporations have government-provided health care. This means that the government is more interested in keeping their people healthy as they will foot the bill for any illness that arises from poor quality food. In the U.S., no one is really motivated to keep Americans healthy—not the food industry that wants to make food as quickly and cheaply as possible, no matter what the hidden costs, not the drug companies that benefit when more people need allergy medication or EpiPens, not the government that is so clearly entangled with the food and drug companies, and not the scientists and doctors whose research is often funded by the corporations who need certain results (O'Brien notes that 100% of industry funded studies on aspartame found it safe, while 92% of non-industry studies raised safety concerns.) The American public has a hard time knowing which studies to be concerned about as funding isn't often fully disclosed. Our opinion on things like food colors, aspartame, and GM foods is more gray because the research seems inconclusive. But if we knew who funded what studies, perhaps we'd see that the research without food industry ties was finding some of our food unsafe, and then we'd be able to react to it. Then maybe the food corporations would listen and respond to us, as they have done in other countries.

The section on GM foods is especially important for Americans to read. We have a right to know what's happening to our food supply and how a single corporation, Monsanto, is benefiting while we may be suffering. I would like to include many of the startling facts from the book here, but I think you're better off checking the book out yourself and reading it in its entirety. O'Brien quotes a prominent European scientist, Arpad Pusztai, who researched GM foods as saying "the situation is like the tobacco industry. They knew about it but they suppressed information. They created misleading evidence that showed that the problem wasn't so serious. And all the time they knew how bad it was. Tobacco is bad enough.... The size of genetic modification and problems it may cause us are tremendous." O'Brien also raises an important question for American parents to address: "If Europeans are still hesitant to put GM seeds in their soil or feed GM crops to their cows, and if they continue to insist on labeling GM ingredients at levels of less than 1%, then what in the world are we doing here in the United States feeding unlabeled genetically engineered foods to our children?"

Unfortunately, the strength of the book dissipates by the final chapter, at least in my opinion. In chapter 8, O'Brien discusses how parents can make changes in their children's diet. After all the alarming information she shares in the previous seven chapters, I was discouraged to see how weak her recommendations were. I realize that she believes parents are too busy, or can't afford, to make the changes necessary, but I wish she has set the bar a little higher. For example, she recommends replacing Cheetos with Fritos, Diet soda with regular soda, strawberry ice cream with vanilla ice cream (apparently to avoid the food coloring, but what about the rBGH-laden milk and cream, or non-organic ingredients in vanilla ice cream?). I find many of her recommendations don't jive with the rest of her book and her repeated comments on how organic was just too expensive for her family was frustrating. After all she had said about genetically engineered foods, I would have expected a full endorsement of organic products, since organic foods by law may not be genetically modified and since organic farmers do not represent or support the monstrous corporations that produce typical industrialized food. In all fairness, she does offer an appendix on organic foods. But it would have been nice if her convincing arguments in chapters 1-7 were followed by some advice for serious change, not minimally inconvenient, affordable, time-saving change. It was as if she failed to realize that the American demand for fast, convenient, cheap food that our picky children would eat was exactly what got us into a place where corporations were genetically modifying our food, then adding preservatives, colors, and other synthetic additives to keep it fresher longer, cheaper, and more appealing. Healthy, wholesome, and nutritious are not usually synonymous with quick, easy, and convenient. Maybe that's why Europeans have a safer, healthier food supply than we do. Not just because their government is organized differently and they have less confusing research taking place, but because they have an innately different relationship to food than we do.

But I don't want that final chapter to overshadow how wonderful the rest of the book is. Americans have the right to know what's happening to our food supply. We have a right to know who is funding the research that shows these chemicals in our food are safe and muddles the true, unbiased results that beg to be heard. We deserve to know that the corn and soy and potatoes we eat now contain pesticide genes in them, thanks to genetic engineering, and that one of the only human trials on GM foods found that this DNA never seen in food before may be transferring to our guts. We deserve to know that our doctors, who may be downplaying the importance of information like that found in this book, have their research funded by the maker of EpiPens, or companies that make pharmaceuticals for allergies, or companies that fund genetic engineering or biotech corporations. Americans should get full disclosure! We need to demand it. And this book will do a great job of showing you how you are being lied to, how you are being manipulated, how corruption is prevalent in the agencies we trust to protect us, and how knowledge is power. Read this book. Ignorance is bliss, but at what ultimate cost?

Sera says

I read this book because Robyn discusses the Feingold Diet which my family follows with much success and I wanted to read her opinion on this diet.

Robyn's discussion of genetically altered food was very interesting. Her discussion about cows treated with antibiotics was also very interesting. I also especially liked her list of "dirty dozen" vegetables and fruits. I would have given the book 4 stars except for the following 2 reasons:

1. The book was written from the perspective of a hysterical mother and all of the extraneous exclamation points were used to continuously remind (and often irritate) the reader. Had the book been written from a calmer point of view it would have been more credible and easier to read.

2. Her description of the Feingold Diet was good and her list of "Dirty Dozen" fruits and vegetables was very good BUT in the back of the book she recommends foods that are on (or have ingredients) that are on her "Dirty Dozen" list and/or are banned from the Feingold Diet which is contradictory.

I do however applaud Robyn's taking on "Big Food" as it is a fearsome foe. As Michael Pollan said in today's NYT Opinion Section (9/10/09) in reaction to Obama's 9/9/09 healthcare speech to Congress "That's why our success in bringing health care costs under control ultimately depends on whether Washington can summon the political will to take on and reform a second, even more powerful industry: the food industry."

Holly says

I enjoyed Robyn O'Brien's conversational writing style because I prefer reading a book that feels like the author is conversing with me, rather than dryly lecturing me, and Robyn was both chatty and amusing throughout the book. Also, I very much appreciated her candor about her family's dietary issues and struggles and compromises. Her information about GMOs, preservatives, artificial ingredients, the FDA, patenting and the history of their approval, use and study around the globe is an excellent primer for anyone who needs an introduction to how our food is manufactured, marketed and monitored. However, her "solutions" fall hideously short and do not all logically follow from her arguments. She thinks that we need socialized medicine because then the government will do a better job policing the food industry if they have to pay for the damage it does. Why ask the government to solve all our problems and micromanage everything for us?! In fact, following her bunny trail solution, the government should be like China and institute government fertility police to force abortions and sterilizations on the citizenry because if the government has to educate, protect and provide health care for its people then it should decide how many of what kind of people it should be responsible for. . .GO EUGENICS! Essentially, her big picture solution is more government policing of the food and pharmaceutical industries. (How about we just do something about the corruption in the agencies that already abound since we seem to be stuck with them?) Her personal solutions for the individual and family amount to pretty much, "I'll have a little less of the toxic food the standard American is having." While very true that her suggestions are wonderfully do-able and great as baby steps and that every little bit helps, switching your kids from multi-colored Goldfish crackers to just the orange ones is hardly a RX for robust health. Using only part of the packet in Kraft Mac n Cheese. . .seriously?! Eating "natural" Cheetos instead of the regular ones? Drinking a bunch of sugary juice in place of Kool Aid? That sounds like hitting yourself in the head with a 1 pound hammer instead of a 1.5 pound hammer. Is it better? Well, sure, but it's still pretty awful! I am not knocking the solutions that worked for her, and would not want to tell her what to eat, but my opinion is that her recommendations fall far short of really healthy diet changes that are just as do-able and she misses the chance to advocate for traditional, natural foods that have stood the test of time across culture. Go butter!

Mandy says

"The Unhealthy Truth" has a lot of politics in it. O'Brien frequently says things along the lines of "I'm not saying they're evil/doing a bad job/the devil incarnate, but they are evil/doing a bad job/the devil incarnate". These things aside, I have learned a lot of valuable information that makes me second guess myself for reaching for that tasty double-stuf mint oreo in the cupboard and has me grabbing a kiwi instead.

I had no idea that soy was so controversial, and I had never given much thought to artificial colorings or

preservatives. I wasn't bugged by drinking milk that didn't have the rBGH free label on it, and I didn't think eating genetically modified foods was a bad idea. I have some different thoughts now. I had never heard of Monsanto before, but now I don't think I could ever forget them.

What I find most interesting right now is how companies have removed artificial ingredients from products in the UK, like Coca-Cola Great Britain, Kraft Foods UK, Mars UK, Nestle UK, and UK Cadbury Chocolate division. Like O'Brien, we should all lament the fact that they haven't done so in the US as well.

I also didn't realize there was a link between behavior problems/ADHD tendencies and artificial colorings and preservatives.

This book ends with a little bit of a fizzle, but is a very interesting read, and I would recommend it to anyone.

Stephanie says

The 4 stars is based on the importance of the subject matter, NOT on the writing. Wish the co-author had tried harder to get rid of the redundancies. (She said "shocking" again. DRINK!). If you've read anything by Michael Pollan or watched Food, Inc. you already know our food production system (and the head honchos who have lawmakers and enforcement agencies in their pocket\$) are evil. But this book talks specifically about kids and how food additives, colors, and genetically-modified ingredients that are so popular in "kid foods" are likely contributing to their increasing health problems (see: allergies, ADHD, Type II diabetes, etc.)

I was mostly reading for the second part, where the author gives advice on how to clean up your family's diet. Her tips are good, but she seems scared that she will put people off if she gives it to them straight. So she'll say things like, "Try using HALF the packet of fluorescent powdered chemicals in your kids' Kraft Mac 'n Cheese." ALSO, did you know that Kraft took the artificial colors OUT of the boxes they ship to England and other countries? That's because England told them where they could put that crap. (In the Americans' food, obviously.)

Danielle says

I would have preferred to give this 3.5 stars-- the information was spot-on. The writing drove me a little nuts. I would probably be in the minority as far as being bothered by the writing style. The book is written very conversationally and informally. I'm sure that makes it feel more accessible to a lot of people, but I am just not a fan of that writing style. That said, the information in this book is so important. I knew a lot of the basic facts, but Robyn filled in a lot of gaps for me. Everything I learned reinforced my decision to be "weird" about the way I eat and keep fighting against the standard American diet. In many ways, the book was really discouraging because it was my first time hearing a lot of the details around things that Monsanto has done and the extent to which big ag is in bed with the government agencies. I truly believe Monsanto has been more of a scourge to the world than anything else. I would say this is recommended reading - it's the type of information I would love all the people in my life to be aware of.

Amy says

This book is a life-changer! I feel like I want to give everyone I know a copy of this book! The author's journey into healthy eating was a lot like mine. She was just a regular mom feeding her family all the regular foods until one of her kids ended up with a food allergy and during her research uncovered more and more startling facts about our food. If any one wants to know why I feed my family the way I do...this is why...read this book!!! Here are some tips if you do decide to read it:

1. Please try to endure the first part of the book where she talks about all the allergy connections and her setting up her AllergyKids website. It was interesting for me, as a parent with a child with food allergies, but maybe not for others. It actually does pertain to the rest of the book, but it can be a lot to endure to get the real "meat" of the book.
2. She will remind you, and I will just start off by saying she was just a regular mom. In fact, she was a very conservative Republican, raised in the South with conservative values, and had faith that our government was doing everything it could to keep us safe. She had no reason to doubt the system.
3. After completely opening your eyes to some difficult truths about our food, the FDA, and major corporations, she also gives us hope and ways we can make a difference and ways you make practical changes in your life.

Lisa says

I appreciate the information that the author brought to light in this book, but--too bad--I thought her writing was crap. Much too sentimental, and she repeats herself a lot.

It was interesting, though, to have this information coming from someone to whom it was all totally new. I assumed everybody knew there were disgusting chemicals in mainstream processed food products and just didn't care, or couldn't afford the alternatives. The fact that many people are in such a state of ignorance was the most horrifying revelation of this book, to me.

Despite the off-putting way the information was presented, I know the work Robyn has done is very important, and I have hope that she is able to get the message out to enough consumers that collectively we demand and receive a change in food composition from the corporations.
