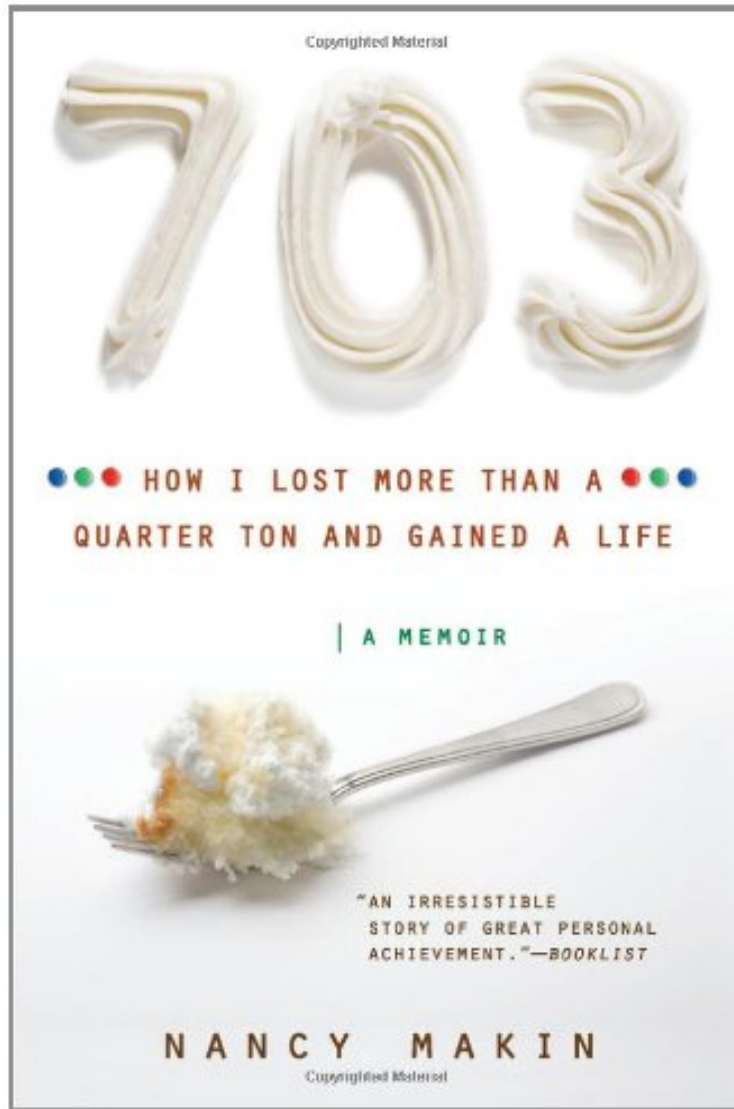


703: How I Lost More than a Quarter Ton and Gained a Life

Nancy Makin

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Nancy Makin : 703: How I Lost More than a Quarter Ton and Gained a Life before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised 703: How I Lost More than a Quarter Ton and Gained a Life:

45 of 47 people found the following review helpful. A fantastic read!By JessabeanWhat's probably going to get lost in all the hype that always comes with the subject of weight in this country is just how well written, how well organized, and how engrossing this book is. I went to bed the other night at 10, thinking I would read the first chapter. Well, the

first time I even thought to look at the clock, I was 150 pages in and it was 1am! The last book to do that to me was some vampire teen book who-shall-not-be-named-because-I'm-holding-on-to-my-dignity-till-the-end. I never thought a book of this description would be so hard to put down. Nancy is funny, clear, direct, and always honest. She doesn't beg for sympathy or, for one second, pretend that she isn't responsible for her life. She lays it all out on the table and the result is surprisingly fascinating. This is neither a maudlin tale of woe that will have you rolling your eyes nor a bunch of cheerleading, "motivational" drivel encouraging you to walk off those pounds! You will probably hear that it's inspirational and it is. I would like to point out that it is so because it's so honest and so clear. Nancy doesn't veer off into cheap sentimentality or melodrama, even though her life story is very emotional and dramatic. It didn't make me cry so much as help me understand and that's what sets it apart. Nancy seems surprised by what she learned in her descent into darkness and her climb out of it. She offers that information to the world in this book with clear eyes and a fresh perspective. I was surprised myself. I hope you are too. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Fascinating on a number of levels
By JZ Alabak
I find the book fascinating and surprising on a number of levels. First, it turned out to be a great read about the human spirit, what it can endure, and what adversities it can conquer. I couldn't put it down. I love the author's wit and humor: I laughed wholeheartedly at her reposts to the Hispanic man and the priest, and so will you. I felt her pain of dealing with her mother, being sent to a convent against her wishes, and facing all the indignities of discrimination against the obese. I empathized with her when she was denied Social Security disability status and coverage for her surgery. Even though this is her first book, Nancy Makin is already a mature writer with solid command of the language; I find her phrasing often surprisingly vivid, fresh, and even luscious. Second, more than a fascinating story of human endurance, though, the book is a serious indictment of our social safety net: Nancy's case is one more proof that Social Security Administration moves claims at snail's pace and routinely, or by unstated policy, denies legitimate claims on their first few passes. The book is an even more serious indictment of our allegedly "best health-care system in the world." Along with Nancy, I was enraged by the insensitive and clearly incompetent treatment she received from a number of her doctors--especially, by the way one doctor reacted to her proposed draconian diet of 1,200 kcal/day. With her weight close to its peak, this diet must have easily represented an 85-90% cut in her daily caloric intake. Every medical doctor knows or should know that a much smaller, 50% cut in caloric intake in the Minnesota Human Starvation Study turned out to be close to unbearable for all subjects and led even to a suicide attempt by one of them. So how did Nancy's good doctor react to her proposed draconian diet? By going even more draconian and recommending further cuts in the proposed caloric intake! No wonder the obesity epidemic is gaining force! Third, Nancy's massive weight gain followed by massive weight loss proves that her appetite control mechanism remained intact throughout her ordeal. If she had any genetic defects that led to the super-obesity, she would have not been able to return to her more or less ideal weight with no medical intervention, particularly without bariatric surgery, just through life style modification. As painful as her journey must have been, it offers a unique window into how our appetite control mechanism actually works and how it is influenced by our level of physical activity. Indeed, when you track her weight throughout the book, it is striking to see that Nancy gained weight while withdrawing herself from life and progressively becoming more sedentary. It is as striking to see that after she revived her interest in life, Nancy lost weight while progressively increasing her physical activity. In conclusion, I highly recommend this book. And, by the way, I can't believe the two one-star reviews the book received so far. One is just mean, while the other one is unfair: if you are surprised that the book is a memoir when its jacket reads "A Memoir" right under the title, in plain view on 's picture of the book, you shouldn't complain about it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Colleen
Great motivational book!

A moving, funny, tongue-in-cheek memoir about a woman who lost and found herself online. Nancy Makin weighed an astounding 703 pounds in May 2000. She was forty-five and suffered from obesity-related maladies. Due to shame and logistics, she was homebound for a dozen years. But all that changed when she received a computer. In cyberspace she found the friendliness, the connection, the acceptance and the nurturing she'd been missing for so long. She followed no particular diet plan; no surgeries, pills, potions or ab-crunching exercises played a part, and yet today Nancy has lost more than 530 pounds and kept it off for more than seven years. Her tale is one of redemption and shows a growing America that there is hope...if you believe.

From Booklist
Makin lost an enormous amount of weight slowly, carefully, and without fanfare. She now tells her deeply personal story, describing her traditional Catholic middle-class upbringing that was intensified when her family landed in an austere Canadian monastery. Separated from her parents and siblings in an environment commanding submission, Makin rebelled by stealing food. After they returned to "regular life," her weight fluctuated under stress. Teen pregnancy and marriage found her in the habit of trying to make things better via gourmet meals. Her divorce and subsequent downward spiral in finances and health increased feelings of crushing bewilderment. Curiously, a computer provided the unforeseen turning point that brought connection and hope, and, oddly enough, pushed Makin out the door. She started eating right and losing weight while working as a house cleaner. By the time she appeared on Oprah in 2007, she had turned a corner no one expected she would reach. To say that this title is uplifting would be an

understatement. Makin offers no plan or formula, just an irresistible story of great personal achievement. --Colleen Mondor

From the Author I hope my story can help any number of people suffering from what they now perceive as overwhelming odds, tremendously high hurdles. I am nothing more or less than anyone you'd see walking down the street anywhere in the world. But I did discover something along this crazy, zig-zagging path of life that turned all I was sure I knew, all that was set in stone, from an existence of surrender and complete resignation, to one of self-belief and wondrous hope for a better future. That key is there for anyone searching for a different tack upon which to set their sails... Good Lord... If I can find my way out into the sunlight, anyone can! I hope you enjoy my story... It's from my heart to yours.

From the Inside Flap I enter the first set of doors at the building and give a courtesy buzz to the person I'm visiting, then scan the lone key card issued to residents. The occupant I'm coming to see doesn't need hers; she hasn't as long as she's lived here. I begin the long walk down the hall. Immediately my dread starts to build. I am visiting my mother's tomb the way so many others visit a dead relative in a graveyard's mausoleum, only my dearly departed answers. Will she answer me this time? Or will I, this time, be left alone to tidy up one last situation, rearranging her clothing, smoothing her hair, and setting my mother in the most flattering position possible? In this way, when the firemen arrive, my mother can maintain that false sense of dignity we both worked so hard to uphold over the years. I say false dignity only because, with her weight at 703 pounds, such a select few allowed her any at all.

___ Christopher Makin, the author's son, from the prologue