

# BODY & SOUL

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**COOKING RESPONSIBLY**  
Jay Weinstein's "The Ethical Gourmet" (\$19, Broadway) is your guide to buying local, organic and fairly in order to curb our wasteful culture and preserve our resources — all this and a stock of delicious recipes with guilt-free ingredients. METRO/NC



**DATA**  
**70** Percentage of the Mexican population over the age of 20 that is overweight, according to a National Nutrition Survey to be released in August. This is a 10 percent increase since the last study five years ago. AP

NO MORE *drama*

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## The on-again, off-again cycle

*I am a 26-year-old male. I went out with my girlfriend for 14 months, loved her dearly and am now separated. During the course of our relationship, we had many ups and downs, but in the long run, it definitely wasn't a healthy relationship. I got back with her and broke up recently for the third time. For some reason, no matter how crazy and unhealthy our relationship is or how much I try to walk away, I think two years down the line we'll still be together. What is wrong with me? And why do I keep making the same mistakes?*

—Jeff

Unless you're striving to be like now-former couple Pamela Anderson and Tommy Lee (not sure why you'd want to), I suggest you try to end this neurotic game of push and pull. In a microwaved version of your relationship, here's what happens: You and your girlfriend reach a threshold of tolerance, push each other away, calm down, miss each other, seek relief from the void, get back together and repeat. This game is repeated many times over and will likely continue until the issues that keep it going are defined and reconciled.

If you looked into a crystal ball, you'd probably see that the problems you're having keep repeating themselves. If you continue to create the same conflict, you'll get the same result with no new answer.

Generating fresh ideas to solve your problems may help to inspire you and your girlfriend to view the relationship in a different light and not function out of desperation. Rather than driving a wedge between the two of you, perhaps your problems can inspire a discussion about real differences that will move you toward better understanding and a richer relationship.

Not two people are totally alike, and couples rarely match in every aspect of their beliefs and personality. Differences are inevitable. Make productive use of these differences, and respect your partner's opinions. Stability will likely follow, and your relationship will be more on-again than off.

→ Have a question you want Jonathan to answer? Send an e-mail to jonathan.alpert@metro.us.

# In the trenches

Author reports on her findings in the women's locker room

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**INTERVIEW** We go to the gym to work on our thighs, abs and every muscle in between in hopes that by doing so we will work on our body image. But the locker room can be a terrifying place for many women. Author Leslie Goldman went into this conflicting haven to talk to women about their body images and how the locker room helped or hindered them. She shared her findings in her book, "Locker Room Diaries: The Naked Truth about Women, Body Image and Re-Imagining the 'Perfect' Body" (\$23, Perseus), and spoke with Metro.

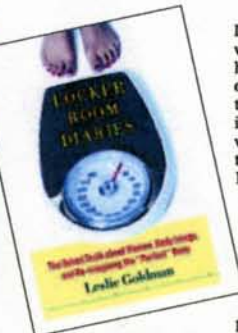
Do you have a fear of the locker room? The way the book started was that I had an eating disorder in college and, as a result, can usually spot if another woman has issues. I'm interested in women's health and work out, and in the locker room, I would hear women saying these horrible things to themselves or to each other. They would slap their thighs and say "I'm so fat!" even if they had a perfect body. Or I would watch women stand on the scale and hold their breath. So I kept a journal of anecdotes thinking maybe it would make a good article, but it turned into a book.

Why does the locker room make so many



**LESLIE GOLDMAN** says, "Your thighs let you walk," so "stop calling them fat and ugly."

women freak out? People go to the gym and get sweaty and gross. But the locker room is a whole other ball game. Once you hit it, you can have competition. I find myself looking at breasts or cellulite — still.

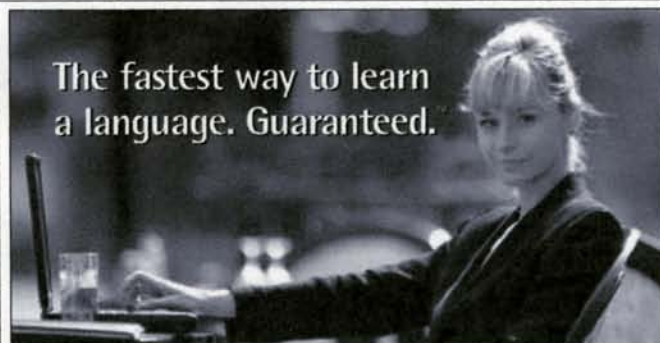


Women probably look at each other more than men look at women because we are constantly comparing. And no one will deny it; we are all guilty.

Who had the most issues?

I talked to all kinds of women — thin women, heavyset women and every one in between — and how they dealt with their bodies. I would see well-toned women who would go into the bathroom stall. And heavier women who would saunter to the showers with no cares. It all varies.

Is there anything you learned from your time in the locker room? Be compassionate. Don't stare if you see a woman with a mastectomy scare. Stop putting yourself down. Your thighs let you walk. Stop calling them fat and ugly. Don't get on a scale in front of a child. You are just teaching them bad body image from the get-go.



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