

BOOK REVIEW

Good Energy: The Surprising Connection Between Metabolism and Limitless Health

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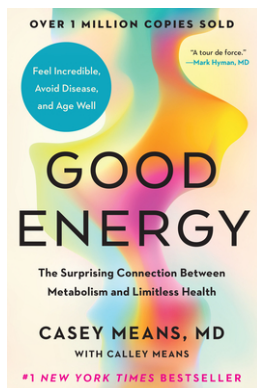
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Book Title: Good Energy: The Surprising Connection Between Metabolism and Limitless Health

Author: Casey Means, MD, with Calley Means

Publication Details: Penguin Random House, 2024, 400 pp., \$32.00 hardcover

Like Peter Attia, MD, author of *Outlive*¹ and *The Drive* podcasts,² Casey Means is a Stanford medical school graduate who left her residency training in a surgical specialty to pursue a career in lifestyle medicine. Rather than focusing on undoing the damage so many Americans inflict upon themselves, she aims to prevent the damage. She dedicates the book to her mother, who died before age 70 of pancreatic cancer—in the author’s mind, a preventable metabolic condition. Means is a passionate writer; as she describes her catharsis, I am reminded of the 1976 movie *Network*, where Howard Beale, played by Peter Finch, declares, “I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take this anymore.”³

As Means describes it, all food becomes energy in the body, converted by the mitochondria for different purposes. Good energy is food that nourishes us in positive ways. Bad energy, which occupies much of the book, is food that results in metabolic dysfunction and a variety of health problems. Good energy, which comes from the food of the natural world, unprocessed, nurtures our metabolism. Bad energy comes from ultraprocessed foods, sugars, and inflammatory proteins and fats. Means is on a mission to eliminate bad energy from as many people as possible.

The book is divided into three parts: “The Truth About Energy,” “Creating Good Energy,” and “The Good Energy Plan.” Good energy recipes complete the text. She describes six principles of good energy eating: (1) Food determines the structure and function of our cells and microbiome; (2) Eating is the process of matching cellular needs with oral inputs; (3) Food is how you communicate with your cells; (4) Extreme food cravings are feedback from your cells that you are giving mixed messages; (5) Ignore diet philosophies and focus on unprocessed foods; and (6) Mindful eating—finding awe in food. The nutrition science presented here is solid and understandable to both health care professionals and patients. Some of the author’s expressions are endearing, such as “Eating fiber is telling your microbiome I love you.”

After starting a lifestyle medicine practice, Casey Means founded Levels, a health technology company with the mission of reversing the world’s metabolic health crisis. A bold vision indeed. Her brother Calley Means, an attorney, has dedicated his career to helping her change the world. Taking on the processed food industry is no small task, but as Margaret Mead said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; it’s the only thing that ever has.”⁴

Good Energy is an excellent book for a lifestyle medicine book club and may be recommended for patients wanting good nutritional advice. It is well worth reading.

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