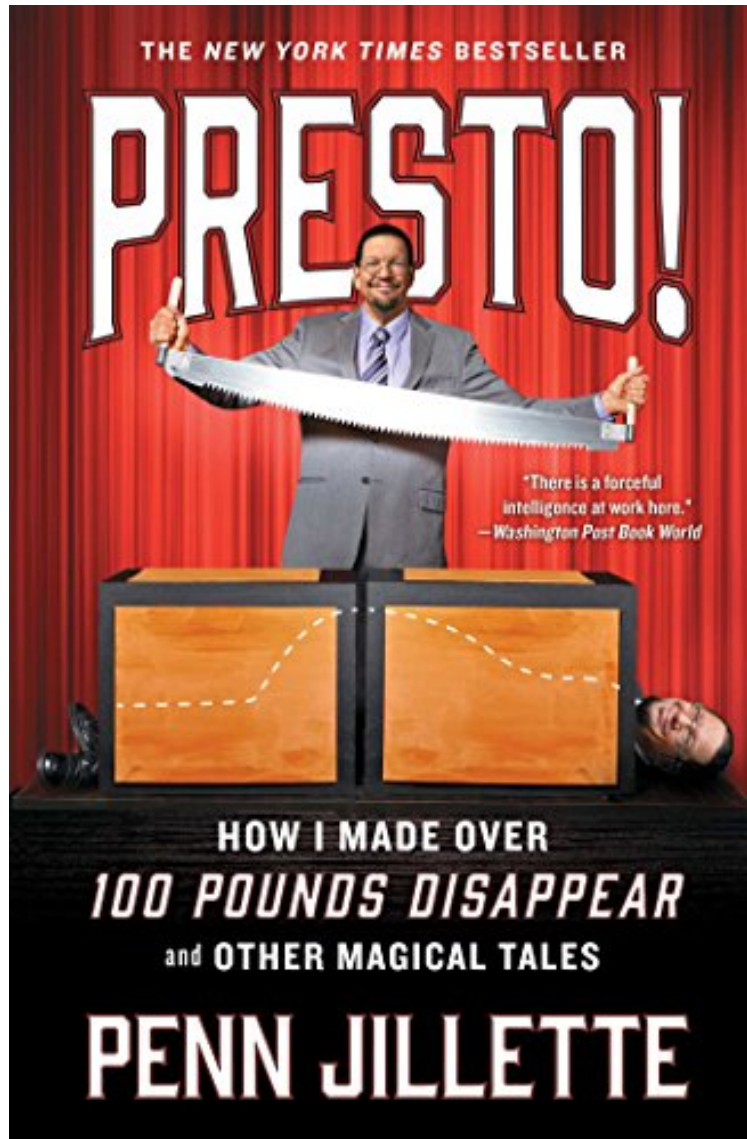


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Presto!: How I Made Over 100 Pounds Disappear and Other Magical Tales

Penn Jillette

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Penn Jillette : Presto!: How I Made Over 100 Pounds Disappear and Other Magical Tales before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Presto!: How I Made Over 100 Pounds Disappear and Other Magical Tales:

287 of 309 people found the following review helpful. It's not magic or rocket science; it's food.By R. CroniseThis isn't a diet book. It's a hysterical account of one man's journey on a diet. Penn is a great storyteller and has been a huge

influence in my life. We've known each other for over 20 years and have some crazy friends. He tells lots of funny stories and Presto will keep you laughing. The real message in Presto, his permanent lifestyle transformation, is in the book, but we likely won't hear it reported widely in the media or on blogs. Some ideas may indeed be very contrary to what the popular diet and exercise dogmas most often teach. Most reports will probably focus on potatoes and Penn explains the funny magic act behind this often maligned food. We can watch as this unravels in the press. We can listen as the media and blog machines kick into high gear with the "paleos and vegans' debating as the "carb vs fat" arguments mound. Where does he get his protein? We'll hear experts tell us all about how wrong this is (ignoring his success) without first talking to his physicians. One doesn't get too crazy with the loud, formerly overweight talking half of one of the most successful Vegas shows without second, third, and fourth opinions, right? Of course he's done it and we see the results, but some were once critiquing his approach based on information found in a tabloid article. His response to that article will make you cry with laughter and perhaps enlightens us on how stories get twisted. Presto contains many bites of wisdom all plated with Penn's comedic genius. Penn's transformation challenges status quo and suggests we can all make a change. Like much of his advice, Presto centers on breaking away from accepting mass mediocrity and instead seeking the best. Our struggles are real, but laughing at our mistakes brings us much closer to success than living a life driven by fear. We hear a lot of exaggerated claims about slowing metabolisms (the latest biggest loser distraction) and warnings against losing weight too quickly. Of course none of this will apply to the 196,000 people that had some form of bariatric surgery last year or the 703,000 in the 4 years prior. These people can't eat Penn's diet now without difficulty and I'd really hope to inspire those considering this option to do something really crazy: change your lifestyle. For Penn, his train wreck in health was the license he needed to be crazy and REALLY do something this time, no matter what. While people very well be convinced by the inner chatter, friends, family, and conventional medical wisdom that they don't have the willpower or are metabolically broken; maybe that isn't true. Penn's success suggests we can make a lot more progress with laughter along the way. It's not crazy to surgically rearrange someone's intestinal tract to limit their ability to swallow, but we are to lead to believe that it's crazy for me to tell Penn to voluntarily do the same thing. Okay, I'm a nut. My friend is doing great 17 months later, off 6 powerful BP meds and happy. We do crazy things for friends, right? Laced in the humor is a simple message - Change your lifestyle. Really. Change it. There's no need wait for the next new diet book or even reach for a potato. We probably won't hear this headline and that's actually what Penn did; he changed his relationship with food. Penn's success can be summed up in two sentences: It's nearly impossible to lose weight with moderation and to keep that weight off eating a controlled quantity of what was eaten to gain it. Further if social relationships dominate one's plate and these relationships are with people that eat unhealthily, the odds of moderating the food and the social pressure are overwhelmingly in favor of failure. When disruptive ideas are introduced, no one is completely correct. We want this to be, but history teaches we usually aren't. There are some paths that lead to cul-de-sacs and some that inch us closer to the truth. Presto has the ability to move you a mile, but it involves a permanent change that goes against what is socially normal. Penn is okay with running against social norm when it's for a just cause and we should all be happy for his success. 99 of 106 people found the following review helpful. Penn Jillette's Oprah Moment By David Wineberg

It's Penn Jillette again, so you think no more debunking of fraudulent magic? Questioning God, perhaps? But no. This is a 300 page memoir of dieting. Took me by surprise. I would not have read it had I known. But Jillette pulls it off by simply being Penn Jillette. He is loud, obnoxious, rambunctious, sarcastic and he swears way too much for it to have any impact at all. But it's entertaining, self-deprecating, highly opinionated, and funny. So it works. Much better than run of the mill diet books. Like most Americans, as he got older, Jillette got heavier. He noticed that while chocolate cake was a treat his mother made a few times a year, it was now available daily, if not hourly. There is junk food everywhere - at meetings, in the green room, backstage, and he ate basically all day long. He was sluggish, out of breath, and in denial. And he was on blood pressure meds and other joys. And this is someone who has never smoked, drank or taken recreational drugs. By losing a hundred pounds, he found he could give up the meds. He could taste tastes better and he lost his cravings for doughnuts and other such staples of SAD - the Standard American Diet. And with this book he has become an evangelist for it. To the the point of being aggravating. It's a 300 page testimonial to Ray Cronise, who designed his program, and who is himself now leveraging off helping Penn Jillette lose that hundred pounds. It's a multipronged multimedia marketing campaign, and that lessens the love, at least for me. For the millions of the overweight and obese, I hope it is inspirational. The book desperately needs editing. It is terribly repetitive. Jillette has no problem saying the same thing eight or ten times. It is possibly the longest diet memoir in history. It's almost a page a day of his diet. But it's from the heart, and it's the usual honest, forthright and fearless Penn Jillette, so there's little point going on about it. The message is terrific. Eat better and you will crave better foods. It's a virtuous circle. You lose the extra weight, you feel more energetic, and your body thanks you by making life easier. But it's not magic. David Wineberg 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Pretty awesome! By Psychotic Parakeet As someone that understands the struggle and battle of weight woes herself, I can deeply sympathize what Penn went through. In fact, I was crazy enough to try his diet for 30 days, and I did lose 5 lbs. However, the weight loss was only short term, and it came back. His book is funny, and you can hear his voice run through your head while reading. It is

not a diet recommendation book, it is mainly all about the hell Penn went through to get his life back on-board. After trying his diet, it *did* do something strange. I never lost my love for potatoes, but it curbed me from eating things that I used to eat (which were not really healthy). You know those build-your-own-pizza places, Cheez Its, and fries from In-n-Out? I was able to stomach them before I did the diet, but now, I am unable to tolerate them entirely. I feel like I am going to blow up when I do try them. The pain and misery from feeling sick turned me off from ever eating those items again. That is the silver lining so to speak. So I thank Penn for writing this book because it turned me away from past temptations that I once enjoyed. All I can say is weight problems are 80% your food and diet habits (e.g. what you're eating, when you are eating etc...), 15% physical activity, and 5% genetics (some people carry a higher BMI because of ancestral background). If you are really looking for a way to lose weight, stop ANY and ALL snacking -even if it is celery or a piece of chocolate, do not eat anything... not even a crumb 6 to 8 hours before you go to bed, and do at least high intensity exercise every other day. You will see a difference in about two weeks time. Be patient. You didn't get fat overnight, and you can't lose weight overnight either. It takes time...

Penn Jillette's New York Times bestselling account of his extremely funny and somewhat profane journey to discovering a healthy lifestyle that will motivate others to seek weight-loss solutions; (The Washington Post). More than three hundred and thirty pounds and saddled with a systolic blood pressure reading at dangerous heights, legendary magician Penn Jillette found himself at a crossroads. He needed a drastic lifestyle change if wanted to see his small children grow up. Enter Crazy Ray. A former NASA scientist and unconventional, passionate innovator, Ray Cronise changed Penn Jillette's life with his wild potato diet. In Presto, Jillette takes us along on his journey from skepticism to the inspiring, life-changing momentum that transformed the magician's body and mind. He describes the process in hilarious detail, as he performs his Las Vegas show, takes meetings with Hollywood executives, hangs out with his celebrity friends and fellow eccentric performers, all while remaining a dedicated husband and father. Throughout, he weaves in his views on sex, religion, and pop culture, making his story a refreshing, genre-busting account. Outspoken, frank, and bitingly clever, Presto is an incisive, rollicking read. In the end, it is undeniably inspiring; (Booklist).

"This hugely entertaining book chronicles Jillette's weight loss odyssey, but it really does much more than that...funny and profane...undeniably inspiring."mdash;Booklist "Penn Jillette of the comedy magic duo Penn and Teller holds nothing back in 'Presto!' as he describes how he lost almost a third of himself in a rather unconventional way. Using honesty and humor, he takes readers on his journey to discovering a healthy lifestyle....Jillette has written an extremely funny and somewhat profane book that will motivate others to seek weight loss solutions."mdash;ASSOCIATED PRESS (AP) Praise for GOD, NO!"Penn Jillette is a 21st century Lord of Misrule: big, boisterously anarchic, funny, Rabelaisian, impossible and unique. There isn't a better not better anybody like him." (Richard Dawkins, bestselling author of The Greatest Show on Earth and The God Delusion) "There are few people in the country who question more boldly, brashly and bravely than my friend Penn Jillette. This book is funny, provocative and profane. But is it right? God, no!" (Glenn Beck) "This planet has yielded exactly one mutual friend for Glenn Beck and me and that friend has written a brilliant book called God, No!. Penn reveals the big secret of magic," tells you why tattoos are perfect expressions of atheism and exactly what to eat when you know you're going to vomit later." (Lawrence Sanders, Donnell) "People who say that libertarians have no heart or atheists have no soul need to read this book. Because Penn Jillette has a lot of both." (Matt Stone and Trey Parker, creators of South Park and award winning Broadway musical The Book of Mormon) "Jillette has made a career as a provocateur, and it is tempting to dismiss this book as another piece of carny shtick, but there is a forceful intelligence at work here that demands to be taken seriously. He has shaped his argument with care." (Daniel Stashower, Washington Post Book World) About the Author Penn Jillette is a cultural phenomenon as a solo personality and as half of the world-famous Emmy Award-winning magic duo Penn Teller. His solo exposure is enormous: from Howard Stern to Glenn Beck to the Op-Ed pages of The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and the Los Angeles Times. He has appeared on Dancing with the Stars, MTV Cribs, and Chelsea Lately and hosted the NBC game show Identity. As part of Penn Teller, he has appeared more than twenty times on David Letterman, as well as on several other TV shows, from The Simpsons and Friends to Top Chef and The View. He cohosts the controversial series Penn Teller: Bullshit!, which has been nominated for sixteen Emmy Awards. He is currently cohost of the Discovery Channel's Penn Teller Tell a Lie and the author of God, No! and Presto. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Presto ONE-THIRD THE SIZE OF A COW DRESSED AS AN ELEPHANT In 2014 I made a movie called Director's Cut. I wanted to play a bad guy. I wanted to be the psycho villain. I also wanted a villain who was an outsider. In the early drafts of the script, I named the character Herbert Khaury, which is Tiny Tim's real name. Tiny Tim is a hero of mine, but he was also an obsessive nut and a bit of a stalker. Maybe he was a bit more than a bit of a stalker. Maybe Tiny was a little dangerous. Tiny Tim had his problems. For the movie, I parted my hair like him and shaved my stupid beard. Tiny Tim didn't have a beard. Tiny was tall not as tall as me, but still pretty tall, and Tiny was also pretty overweight by the time he was my

age. So, being fat was good for the part. I was very happy being fat. At the time of that movie, I was the fattest I've ever been in my life. I thought fat was good for the part. If you're reading or listening to this book right when Director's Cut comes out, you might see me on some talk shows pimping this book or read an interview or two with me. If you do, you'll hear me talk about gaining all that weight to play my character, Herbie, in the film. You'll hear me spin how fat I was. I don't like the word "spin"; I prefer the word "lie." I'm going to be implying very strongly (lying) that I gained all that weight to play my character. It's the worst kind of lie, because by the time I'm done with it, you'll believe it. There will be some truth in it, so I can focus on that little truth until the big truth goes away. The weight sincerely was great for the character, and it really made everything perfect for that movie, but I hadn't spent thirty years getting fat because I was planning to play Herbie. I wrote the script about ten years before we shot it, but I can't produce any notes that are time-stamped from those days saying, "I sure better start eating like a pig to do my best acting." Maybe De Niro just got a hankering for spaghetti while working on Raging Bull and then just spun the press accordingly. By the time you read this, I will believe that I gained over a hundred pounds for my movie; that in order to gain weight for my art, my sacrifice to the muses was to eat everything I saw. I know what it feels like to start spinning, progress to lying, and eventually believe the lies so much that you don't even remember that they started as lies. In 2012 I went on The Celebrity Apprentice with Donald Trump, who has hair that looks like cotton candy made of piss. Before the show was over I published my previous book, Every Day Is an Atheist Holiday!, which stated that Donald's hair looked like cotton candy made of piss. I created the most perfect description of Donald Trump's hair ever given by anyone. "Hair like cotton candy made of piss" is also the phrase that Trumpy said was his reason for my coming in second a year later on All-Star Celebrity Apprentice. I love that about Trump. He comes out and admits crazy shit like that. He doesn't pretend he's not being arbitrary and petty. His charm is arbitrary and petty. It's supposed to be my job, as bitter loser, to claim that his real reasons were arbitrary and petty, but Trump fucked me on that. He's enough of a real, inspired nut that he just says outright what I would have to claim, and after he does that, all I can do is lie more and write that it was just that one joke, which it wasn't. Trump is the hero here, and I'm the bitter loser liar. He just made it easy for me. Part of the final challenge was coming up with an ice cream flavor. If Trump had said that my competitor's ice cream really was better, which it wasn't, I'd have a beef; but nope, he was straightforward and honest, and I'm the weasel. My hair doesn't look like cotton candy made of piss, but it does look like the tail of a pathetic, aging roadkill raccoon. And if you said that to me, I wouldn't let you win a game I was running even if your ice cream made me cum, but I wouldn't cop to the real reason like Trump did. Trump was a better man than I, in this one very specific instance, on his show, with me, on that exact day. I'm as aware as everyone else that, since that one day with me, there is ample evidence that in general he is at very best the worst person who ever lived, and the best thing about him is that his hair looks like cotton candy made of piss. Believe me, I'm as horrified as you are. My ice cream was better, and my marketing was more successful, but I can be rude, weird, and crazy (and I guess I was), so I shouldn't have won. That's fair, but if I'm going to spin that fat ain't my fault, why not lie and say that Donald Trump's temporary, accidentally brave honesty is petty and arbitrary? I'm on a roll, spinning down a hill with my old-dead-raccoon-tail hair blowing in the wind. Because of my arbitrary and petty rudeness to Mr. Trump, the people with intellectual disabilities at Opportunity Village, the charity I played Trump's game for, didn't get the quarter-of-a-million-buck first prize. But, thanks to Trump's honesty and my dishonesty, others involved with The Celebrity Apprentice wrote checks that actually totaled more than two hundred fifty grand. Exposure on Trump's show sold a metric shit-ton of tickets to The Penn Teller Show at the Penn Teller Theater in Las Vegas. So, I'm a bitter loser who won big by being rude and lying just a little bit. I'm actually the big fat bitter loser, because, you know, I gained all that weight to play the part of Herbie in my movie. I'm a real artist—a bullshit artist. I lie like a rug. The ice cream I created, Vanilla/Chocolate Magic Swirtle, is still available at some Walgreens locations, but it's probably be gone by the time this book comes out; as I remember, though, it's really good. I added sea salt (which is just salt) to dark chocolate, swirled that into vanilla ice cream, and threw in some caramel "turtle-like" candies. It's good ice cream. La Toya Jackson helped with the great name, and Dennis Rodman let me borrow his palate to get the vanilla base to just the right level of sweet and rich. It tastes great. It's sweet, rich, and comforting. I'd have an argument with my wife and then eat a whole container, and that's the grown-up way to live. It's really good ice cream, and you should try it if you ever get a chance. My share of the money goes to Opportunity Village, and it'll be your favorite food ever. And then you'll read the rest of this book and you'll never eat it again. I give it, and I take the fuck away. I take my acting fat seriously. Before the script was really finished, I changed my character's name from Herbert Khaury (it's not right to use Tiny Tim's real name) to Herbert Blount—Blount being jazz great Sun Ra's real last name. Sun Ra, another crazy hero of mine, was also really fat. Sun Ra was also from Saturn, so he had an even better excuse than gaining weight for a movie. As part of my dedication to the craft of acting, I'd have big fat steaks at the Musso Frank Grill in Hollywood. I'd have big fat steaks everywhere. I ate a shit-ton of bread and butter and buttered popcorn and candy. And grilled

cheese. And grilled cheese with bacon. And pizza. And pizza with bacon. I'd eat dozens of raspberry-filled Krispy Kreme doughnuts, which, I either read somewhere unreliable or made up, were Elvis's favorite doughnuts. Yum. And Krispy Kreme doughnuts with bacon. Yup. For the past several years, I've hosted Penn Jillette's Private Bacon and Doughnut Party, a private party coincident in time but not associated with James Randi's The Amazing Meeting for skeptic and atheist cats and kitties in Vegas. I'd give everyone free bacon and doughnuts and play dirty-ass rock n' roll with nearly naked men and women all around me. It's all part of my plan: Sell ice cream. Give away bacon and doughnuts. Get really fat for a movie. Write this book to inspire all the fat fucks I helped encourage to get that fat. I am Wile E. Coyote, Super Genius. By the time we were done shooting Director's Cut, I was fat, depressed, tired all the time, and couldn't walk up a flight of stairs without panting. That's what a serious actor I am. At the end of every Penn Teller Show, I run up the aisle to the back of the theater and into the lobby to meet audience members, sign autographs, and pose for pictures, and will do so for as long as I'm still lucky enough to have people who want those things from me. At my fattest, at my Herbie movie weight, I couldn't do a very light jog down the five stairs from the front of the stage to the aisle without being winded. Even talking in the show was a bit of a strain. Yup—I'd get winded talking, and all I know how to do is talk. What the fuck? I don't know exactly what I weighed, because when I got that fat, I didn't really weigh myself much. But I was definitely north of 320 pounds. Truth be told, I probably hit 330. If I'm willing to beef up my accomplishments, let's spin that with a little goose and make it 333 1/3, a little more than half the number of the beast and one-sixth of a ton. Yeah, I like that. One-sixth of a ton. Just six of me would make a ton. Wow, that's one-twenty-seventh of a shit-ton. Shit. Around this time, we started using a live cow in the Penn Teller Show in Vegas. A cow isn't a very glamorous animal for the Vegas Strip, so we dress her in elephant drag and call her an elephant. We think that's funny. An American cow with a feedbag trunk to make her look like an elephant—will that be viewed by future social critics in the same way we now view blackface? I don't know. I plan to be dead by then. The "elephant" in our show is the size of a small cow. A small cow that we call Elsie onstage. The two cows that play the part of Elsie are actually named Gecky and Star. We had nothing to do with those names, and I have no idea how much weight they each gained for the part. Gecky weighs 1,117 pounds. That's small for an elephant, and even a little small for a cow, but when the Vanish of Elsie, the African Spotted Pygmy Elephant went into the Penn Teller Show, Penn weighed about one-third of her fake-elephant/real-cow weight. I was a third the size of a cow dressed as an elephant. I was a fat fuck. I was that fat because I take my acting craft seriously, and I like bacon. I couldn't run or really talk, and I had hypertension that was supernatural. I used to walk around knocking on two hundred for the top number (I never notice the bottom number; who cares?). My permissive doc had me on massive doses of six different blood pressure drugs. I got up in the morning and took drugs that made me piss so much and so fast that I couldn't take them before I had to ride to the airport. I had to take them at the airport, because it's more convenient to piss five times on a flight from Vegas to L.A. than to pull the car over during the fifteen-minute ride to the airport. Why did I have such bad hypertension? Because I was one-third the size of a cow dressed as an elephant! But I didn't see it that way. I knew that was part of it, but I couldn't believe that was all of it. I figured I would have high blood pressure anyway. My mom and sister had it, and I have some African- and Aboriginal-American ancestry, and it's, you know, genetic. I was born a fat fuck like you were born gay. Jesus fucking Christ, I'm an idiot. My doc would tell me to lose weight, and I knew he was right, but I didn't see myself as fat. Or, rather, I saw myself as fat but didn't see fat as a problem. My job didn't depend on my weight one way or the other. When I got acting jobs, I either played myself or a fat guy just like me. Penn Teller were never sold as attractive sex symbols; we didn't have the sex-symbol hand to play. My showbiz success was not tied to my weight. I was married and didn't have to worry about getting fucked. Some people didn't use "fucking fat" as the first two words to describe me because I'm also fucking tall. I'm six foot seven, so I'm a big guy. "Big guy" includes "fat," but it's not just fat. I carried my weight really well, except for the blood pressure that was on the verge of making me drop dead or stroke out every second of every day. I was fine. I was happy, except for the constant depression and being winded just thinking about running to play with my children. I was a miserable fat fuck with such a great job, a great family, and wonderful friends that I was theoretically and psychologically happy even at one-third the weight of a cow dressed like a fucking elephant. Oh, the things I've done for art!