



Skinny Me

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Whirling from a life that's crumbling around her, Jennifer Carpenter devotes herself to the one thing she can control: becoming the ideal version of herself—a thinner version—no matter the cost.

She isn't always nice. She isn't always likable, but she's honest.

Skinny Me is an in-depth look at the complicated layers of insecurity and depression that can stem from seeking self-worth and beauty in the numbers on a scale.

This novel is beautiful, harsh, and truthful in its characterization of a woman who is flawed, yet inspirational.

Download *Skinny Me* and join Jennifer on her journey toward self-discovery today!

Skinny Me Details

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Author : Charlene Carr

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From Reader Review Skinny Me for online ebook

Casey M says

1 and a half stars

WARNING: For you innocent readers, this review does contain a few b-bombs.

I would think it's fairly obvious that to write a book you need a set of things:

- Nice prose
- Well-thought out characters
- An intriguing beginning

And

- A plot

Skinny Me has a few well thought-out characters, but other than that, there is no reason why this book should've been published.

Jenn, the main character who has spent her whole life struggling with her weight, is a bitch. There's no other way to put it, and I really hate using that word. I am aware that the blurb states that she is 'sometimes unlikeable'. Criticising everything, blaming everyone but yourself for your own weight-gain, yelling at your friend when she is trying to keep you safe, and trying to steal your cousins **boyfriend** is not being unlikeable. It's being a bitch, plain and simple.

So in a book that's about feeling sympathy towards the character and then supporting her through her journey, you can see why this was a big issue. Then there was the non-existent plot. I get that this was supposed to be about Jenn losing weight and following her on her 'journey of self-discovery', but to me it read more like a fitness plan (not entertaining) in some parts and a boring diary of a desperate 27 year old in others.

This novel is ~~beautiful~~ boring

~~harsh~~ the only thing that's harsh is Jenn's attitude

and truthful in its characterization of a woman who is ~~flawed~~ a bitch

So maybe that's a bit harsh on *my* part, but anyone who feels no remorse about trying to steal their cousins boyfriend (not to mention that the cousin has been extremely caring and supportive) is beyond sympathy.

Just to clear things up, I'm aware (of course) that there's more to this story than Jenn's weight loss. Give me a book with the sub-plots from Skinny Me, and it would receive a much higher rating. But, as it so happens, Skinny Me is supposed to be an intriguing story of an obese woman's journey towards a healthy body, and it failed to be intriguing. So it was painfully boring. The only thing that saved this book from sailing straight into the garbage bin was Carr's writing, which was quite nice.

All I have to say about this book (and the series, in general) is to avoid it. Avoid, avoid, avoid.

"Yeah, for sure." I look up at him, he smiles at me and I wonder how happy he and Autumn really are. He seems pretty glad to see me and Autumn doesn't usually take her relationships very seriously."

Cathy says

This book was intense, but in all the good ways. It made me feel things I haven't felt in a long time or didn't want to feel. It was the kind of book that made you look twice at yourself and how you judge people, how you treat people and most importantly your self-worth. Everyone is worth something and the sooner you believe you are worth it, the sooner you will be happy. I don't know if that made sense but it did to me, lol.

We meet Jennifer who is obese, as well as her mother. They both depend on one another that is until her mother passes away in a way that makes Jennifer look twice at herself and the choices she is making in life. Throw in a father who left her for another family and a brother who doesn't want anything to do with her and you could just image the thoughts she is having. One day she finally decides to change her life for the better, to make herself healthier is what she tells other people, but really she has a goal and it's to be perfect. With lots of work she finally reaches the goal or almost reaches that goal when the realization hits her. She's still not happy.

This is an eye opener for her and for readers as well. It doesn't matter what you look like, sure it's great to be healthy but if you are not happy with yourself in general than you will never be happy with yourself. She has unresolved issues with the way her mother died and the beliefs she held about her mom, but when she takes a step back new things come to life. I love the line on her mother's stone that reads "Blessed is this life. Celebrate being alive". Those are the words that Jennifer needs to believe in. Celebrate life to the fullest because it's short and you might as well be happy with yourself before you can be happy with anyone else.

This book made me depressed and motivated and inspired all in one, a hard task to achieve. Overall it was more inspirational than anything because it helped me to remember to celebrate life, otherwise what is this all for?

Definitely an amazing read and I'm looking forward to picking up the second book in this series and continuing on this families journey through life and discovering their happiness.

Char ? Denaë says

This was a powerful read. I wasn't sure what to expect after reading the synopsis, but I was not disappointed. This is more than a story about a young woman losing a large amount of weight, and how it changes her life. It's also about what a young woman thinks about herself, and how she thinks other people see her. As a person who's been 'not exactly skinny', myself, I was ashamed to realize that there was a lot of me in Jenn. Feeling angry that I wasn't good enough, or that others were judging me because of my weight, is something that I've experienced in my life. I'm older now and know that a lot of that wasn't real, but it's very difficult to let go of that mindset. It's easy to get caught up in bitterness and anger, and let it take over your life. It's much harder to think positive and just love yourself for who you are. I think most women, and probably men, too, think this way, whether it be over weight or some other imagined 'flaw'.

The young woman, Jenn, struggles with her illusions of what others see and think, throughout her entire transformation, and can't wait to show them they're wrong when she reaches her weight loss goal. Once she's lost almost all of the weight she wanted, though, she realizes that most everyone still treats her the same. She also realizes that she's still not happy with herself. She holds onto a lot of hurt and negativity over how some people have treated her, but mostly over how she imagines she's been treated. Once she starts thinking differently, thinking that maybe it's not just everyone else, but herself, as well, that's when her life truly begins to transform.

Learning to love yourself, is probably the hardest love of all, as Whitney Houston so beautiful sang. This story tells of one woman who's trying to get there but it's really about all of us. Jenn's struggle shows how transforming your body isn't enough to make you love yourself. You have to transform your mind, as well.

Beautifully written. I can't wait to read more from Charlene Carr. I even signed up for her newsletter to read a bonus chapter of this story. It was wonderful, and I also found out that Ms. Carr offers writing services, as well as communication and writing seminars. I'll definitely be learning more about (from) this author.

I received a copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Angie says

There was a lot to like about this book. It seems like I rarely get to say that. The character development was done just right and the plot moved along enough that there weren't many times I was left wanting more action.

Let me say this: It takes balls to make your character become entirely unlikable a little over halfway through the book. It takes a skilled writer to bring that character back around so you're pulling for them again. Charlene Carr does both excellently.

Jennifer goes from sympathetic, to really bitchy and obnoxious, and then back around to being a likable person again. Through her weight loss journey and her journey into becoming a whole new person, we follow Jenn through it all with a voice that rings true to life.

This is where I send a giant THANK YOU to the author for writing a book about weight loss that is so much more than a list of foods the protagonist hates but eats, gross food binges that most heavy people don't actually do, and some magic silver bullet that suddenly makes overweight people want to be thin. I've walked away from so many books that were nothing more than a food diary masquerading as a novel about someone's physical transformation, preachy little things that try to sum up the struggle with 'eat veggies and turn off the tv.' Carr's book is so much more than that. She is able to take many of the real feelings that many overweight women feel and put it into words in a way that very authors have attempted to do. She doesn't make her lead character a caricature. She makes her human. She gives her emotion and intelligence and relationships. That's more than some writers would ever dare to do for an overweight character.

There are fantastic commentaries on view of self, negative and judgmental attitudes, and what success and failure really means. Great piece.

Logan LeDuc says

I was contacted by Charlene Carr and offered a free e-copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

As I was reading Skinny Me, I couldn't help but develop a bad taste for Jennifer. I've had family that have lost hundreds of pounds and I understood that there is more to getting healthy than the physical side. It's an

emotional battle. And yes, by the end, Jennifer redeems some of her more unlikeable qualities from earlier in the book. But the way she treated people, especially her own cousin who was nothing but kind to her for the entirety of her life? That really bothered me.

Even when she was trying to be happy with herself she was still jealous of what others had. It seemed very petty and childish and as though she wouldn't be able to flip a switch with those sorts of character traits holding her back.

She wasn't the worst character though. And I enjoyed all the other characters and their diversity. Part of me thinks Jenn was written as a character we were meant to "love to hate." Kudos to Carr for achieving that, as it's not an easy feat.

The plot was sound and wrapped up nicely, though rather quickly.

Overall a good, quick read. Just be prepared to not love Jenn. She'll make you roll your eyes and appreciate what you have for how little she appreciates everything she's been granted. But she definitely portrays how extreme the mental aspect of losing weight can be.

Kate says

In all honesty, this book was very hard to finish. At about 48% into the book (according to my kindle) was when I actually had to force myself to finish the pages. I literally had to tell myself **YOU ARE NOT A QUITTER**. I really didn't want to finish this book but I suppose I am glad I did.

Let's start with the good, shall we? First off, I can relate to Jennifer in certain ways and her shyness and lack of confidence reminded me a lot of myself. I too have always struggled with my weight and alike her I used to blame a lot of people for it...but I was 14 when I did that. What irks me is that her attitude through-out the novel is what made me NOT want to finish. She blames everyone for her weight, doesn't take accountability for anything and even says she's losing weight for herself, when in reality it is all for every person but herself. She thinks being skinny = happiness (something the 14 year old me believed too until I grew up a few years later). She's an adult, which shows you just because someone is older doesn't necessarily make them wiser. Another good point was the other characters I loved. They weren't superficial or rude, yet they told her the truth. She just didn't want to listen. They were very supportive and I am actually surprised they stuck around. I won't ruin the ending for you, but let's just say I am glad I stuck through it. I am glad that everyone finds the light at the end of the tunnel!

Bad stuff now. Jennifer in the beginning, middle and partly the end is just a plain bitch to be frank. (view spoiler). Besides being a downright terrible person, she treats everyone like shit, judges people based on their weight and general appearance, yells at people for saying hello, is selfish and honestly is down right cruel. I understand the author is trying to make a whole point of that it doesn't matter how much a person weighs, what they look like and so on. If they are unhappy with themselves they will always be unhappy unless they address the issue and try and change it. While I was reading this I kept saying that she's acting this way because she hates herself and I got passed that. It's easy to say things we don't mean and treat people nice when we can't even treat ourselves nicely. What I could not get passed was the fact that she tries to steal her lovable and extremely supportive cousin's boyfriend. For no other reason than that her cousin has had bad relationships in the past, that she will eventually be better looking than her cousin (therefore more attainable) and better for her cousin's boyfriend. She doesn't take her cousin's emotions or feelings into account or the fact that they are "perfect" for each other. All she cares about is herself and that made me hate her.

Maybe I am looking too much into this, as so many reviews on here are glowingly happy. Maybe I just didn't get it.

Elizabeth says

Before I say anything, just let me say I really enjoyed this book. I've always enjoyed reading books where the main character is someone who is overweight or has lost weight, I suppose because it makes me feel a little better about myself in some way, like I'm not the only person going through it.

The main character in this story is Jennifer, or Jenn, as her family calls her. She is 27, in need of a new job, overweight and desperately unhappy. You see just how unhappy she is very early on in the story and several things happen which propel her on a mission to lose weight. She also has a lot of family issues and you come to see how they have affected her throughout her life.

As the story progresses, you see how determined she is to lose this weight, but also how negative her mindset is about many things—her own self-image, her opinion of others, and her thoughts about what others think of her. Her self-loathing is very evident, and at times painful for me to read, because I've often had some of the same negative feelings. For Jenn, her ultimate accomplishment is reaching a certain set number on the scale (although that number is never actually stated) and she will not let herself feel happy or like she matters until she does.

She has an overweight friend, Tammy, who is in a relationship, has a good job, and likes to look nice, despite her weight. Basically Tammy doesn't let her weight hold her back in what she wants. Jenn doesn't understand how she can possibly be happy, and seems to think that trying to look pretty when you're overweight is pointless (another way in which you realize her level of self-loathing). This, and another scene later in the book involving picking out jewelry to wear out, make me think of how society often views overweight women who do put effort into their appearance. I know for myself I've often had moments where I've felt this way, like, "What's the point? No matter how nice my clothes are or how I do my hair, I'm still fat and that's all people see." Jenn feels that way.

Jennifer has a supportive cousin, Autumn, and throughout the book her relationship with Autumn—and most of her other relatives—evolves. She realizes that she's often pushed people away and created a lot of her own unhappiness.

What I really liked about this book was how real it felt. The author of the book is not overweight (at least from her picture). She looks young and pretty, and I wonder if she's ever had a weight problem, or if someone close to her has. I feel she understood a lot of the feelings that many overweight women probably have. I know that I've had many of the struggles that Jenn has, like being embarrassed with your clothes not fitting well or having family members make fun of you.

I also like the progression of the story. Some books are all over the place and I'm always wondering at what point in time we are, but this story follows a sort of timeline from start to finish, and I like that. Last night I finished the book and realized at the end that there is going to be another book, so that's exciting because I really want to know more! There is a tendency in me to get attached to characters, and I am definitely attached. There is a character Jenn meets, Rajeev, and I must know what happens to him because I really liked him a lot.

As far as criticisms, I can't really think of anything that stands out. The only thing that I can think of is Jenn's attitude at times, but that is not a criticism of the book or story, it's just one of those things where you want to

shake a person and ask what the heck is wrong with them because you see how destructive they are being. A lot of Jenn's thoughts no one knows, she's just often so negative, and at times, can seem very selfish, which was bugging me even though I like her at the same time.

The book isn't very long (less than 200 pages on my e-reader) so it's something you can read fairly quickly. I read it in 3 or 4 sessions before bed each night and I had to stop myself from reading and go to bed. I really wanted to know if Jenn succeeded.

In my opinion, this is a book almost anyone would enjoy, particularly if you've ever struggled with weight. I know I've been overweight my whole life (like Jenn) and I know how it can affect you.

I'd definitely recommend reading this, and I can't wait to read the next book, as I love reading a series.

Kelly says

Skinny Me, by author Charlene Carr, details the weight loss journey of a young woman named Jennifer Carpenter. The book is told from Jennifer's point of view, and thus gives the audience a perfect look into the mental aspect of weight loss. As many of my blog buddies and other folks out there know very well, weight loss can be (and usually is) ALL about the mental, and boy does this book hit that nail right on the head!

Throughout the book, Jennifer is confronted with real life issues that any person who has ever embarked on a weight loss adventure would find familiar. I found myself identifying with her thoughts ALL the time- especially when she gets nervous about being around lots of food at social events. Been there, done that! But what I really identified with throughout the book (and found that I was mad at myself for doing so) were the very private thoughts of Jennifer throughout the book. Some of these thoughts were hateful thoughts directed not only toward herself, but toward others. Feelings of jealousy toward women who she assumed were happier because they were thin, feelings of animosity toward friends who didn't feel that they needed to lose weight like she did, and feelings of resentment toward others for how they treated her before she began her weight loss journey. Although these thoughts aren't "pretty," I really found that they are ALL thoughts that I've had in the past and still have occasionally. It really caused me to take a hard, introspective look at WHY Jennifer had those thoughts, and why I've had them before. It also made me more aware of the fact that those thoughts only contribute to negativity, and y'all- I don't need none of that in my life anymore, and neither did Jennifer!

The other thing that I ADORED about this book was that it caused me to re-examine all of the reasons I began to lose weight. It also helped me remember why it is so important to not focus on that perfect "number" on the scale, and to find reasons to love myself as I am and as I have been at ALL of my previous weights.

I highly recommend this book to anyone and everyone who has ever had any kind of weight loss experience, thoughts about starting a weight loss journey, or friends and family who have lost weight or who would like to. It provides unique insight into what is really happening mentally during what, to many, may look like "just" some hard work with food and exercise.

Amy Paulussen says

Wow. I don't think I've ever read a book with a central character that is so self-loathing! And the fall-out of

that is huge - for every relationship, every interaction, even. This book is fascinating and disturbing, but it comes together well in the end. It is definitely unnerving for the first 2/3. I was terrified that losing weight would solve everything for Jenn, and I'd have to throw my kindle across the room - but the author deals with the subject matter really well. We are properly in Jenn's head but also able to see how messed-up her thinking is (vaguely bridget-jones-ish, though not funny). This is not a rom-com, not at all. But drama, yes. And thought-provoking. Makes me wonder how many people are walking around, feeling the way Jenn does for most of the novel, reading all-the-world as an attack. And we (big WE, including mass-media and every comments section ever, probably) reinforce the idea, that perfection (of a very painful, expensive, dangerous and specific type) is the key to happiness, to the peril of so many relationships and even lives. 'Skinny Me' should potentially come with a trigger-warning and/or a disclaimer - something about dealing with the subject of eating disorders, but that Jenn's recovery is simpler/faster than extreme cases. This (and punctuation errors, which detract credibility, I'm afraid) is probably why I'm not giving 5 stars. I'd have liked Jenn to be seeing a therapist or councilor, not just a personal trainer, to deal with things holistically. But I'm no expert.

Lynndell says

Skinny Me by Charlene Carr involves a young woman who has battled her weight her entire life and is dealing with the feeling of hitting rock bottom. She feels that her weight is out of control, she's unemployed and her mother has passed away. She picks herself up and focuses on what she can do to improve her life and relationships. Little by little, Jenny makes changes starting with a new menu and beginner exercises and a job acceptance. She tries to socialize more and also pushes herself to run. Jenny meets with a personal trainer and sets a possible goal and continues to work on her relationships. She realizes that losing weight isn't going to stop her insecurities and internal struggles; she has to work on her self esteem also. 4 stars for a realistic story geared toward adult readers. Per author request, I voluntarily read and reviewed this book.

Sandra says

I have read this book three times now. When I read it as first, I was anxious to read it once more to see how it affected me on the second reading. Even on the third reading, it brought me to tears. At first I really didn't like the main character, Jennifer, and sometimes I just wanted to slap her. As I got further into the book I started to understand her more, and now I want to follow her life story and see how she "grows" once she learns not to judge herself by the reactions and/or thoughts of others in her life. If you are a woman or man who has ever had self-esteem issues, you often may feel that the author has gone inside your head and is reading your thoughts.

Although this is a fiction book, it is also a self-help book and I feel the author has captured so many of the emotional turmoils which can pull us down in life and prevent us from accomplishing the goals that we set for ourselves, but she has also shown us that we can improve our self-image and be happy with ourselves.

I am looking forward to reading further books in this series and learning more about the progress in Jennifer's life, and in the lives of her family and friends.

2kasmom says

This is a story of Jennifer Carpenter. She is unhappy with her looks and embarrassed that anyone notices how heavy she is.

I love the honesty in this book - we hear from Jennifer's own point of view how damaging a negative outlook on life can be. We see what can motivate and help us on our journey. In this case, it means seeing her lose the weight and why.

Jennifer is surrounded by friends and some family. She has recently lost her mother and is wondering should she give her estranged father another chance to be in her life? He invites her to lunch and other outings and she rarely, if ever, gets together with him. Too hurt by the childhood memories of rejection by him and her brother.

We see serious character development and such honest feelings, reactions, and even scenarios that a single woman with losing weight would live through. I was impressed with the way the author handled it. Not sugar-coating any of it. Her own cousin has it out with her several times.

It is easy to relate to such a character like Jennifer, all women feel some kind of negative toward themselves. Whether it is a personal dislike of a certain feature or weight, we all have something that makes this story hit home.

I enjoyed the read - and found it it is a series now with a whole new book coming out soon with more on these wonderfully rich characters. I cannot wait to read the next installment of the A NEW START series.

***This book was given FREE from Netgalley.com, for review purposes. My honest opinion does not reflect Netgalley nor its affiliates.

Bethany says

This probably would have been a DNF for me if I wasn't only reading it as my 'waiting in queues etc.' book (i.e. only reading it a few pages at a time every now and then). Even then, I was pretty tempted to just stop.

The premise of this book sounded potentially interesting and promising, but when it came to the execution, it all just fell flat.

The main character, Jenn, is really, *really* unlikeable. I like a good flawed, three-dimensional character, but Jenn really didn't have many redeeming qualities about her. She was whiny, selfish, and was really just horrible to all her friends and family, and yet she expects them to be absolutely perfectly behaved to her no matter how nasty she is. There were little parts I could relate to, but it's really hard to feel in touch with a character so constantly bitter and loathing. All of the prominent male characters are too one-dimensional to actually care about.

The writing is far from poor, but not exceptional, and dialogue sometimes seems repetitive. The style was appropriate for the type of book it is - nice and simple without being overly basic. The author could have done more with her words to get readers to connect emotionally with her character's struggle, but then, maybe this would have had an effect on those who could personally empathise with the situation.

Overall, I wouldn't recommend this - it's short, but still not really worth the time, and I won't be continuing the series.

Maiko-chan says

Charlene Carr's *Skinny Me*, the first novel in the *A New Start* series, follows Jennifer in her quest to become the person she knows she is internally and was always meant to be on the surface: a person who does not feel ashamed of herself or face ridicule from those around her, who feels comfortable in her own skin. Jennifer, in her late 20's, has been obese for most of her life, finding comfort in food ever since she was a child, an act somewhat supported by bonding and spending quality time with her mother over food. The book opens with a scene of Jennifer ripping her pants in public and enduring the ridicule of those around her, an example of the way people have typically treated her throughout her life. Spurred by jealousy of what others have and how they are better regarded for their looks Jennifer begins her spiral into beliefs of self-worthlessness as she endures painful event after painful event – father abandonment due to her mother's weight gain, her mother's death, brought on by her own unhealthy weight, and a recent job loss – until she finally decides to truly take control of her life.

Jennifer constantly challenges herself to do better than she ever has before, to not lose her resolve as she has in the past to lose weight and change her life with the hope of transforming herself into a new person, someone she perceives to be better. In doing so she makes some good choices and maintains this new direction she has taken, such as getting a new job, finding blogs that motivate her to eat healthily and going to the gym for proper fitness training. The downside is that she makes many significant poor choices based on bias from personal experiences and her expectations. She considers everyone around her from a perspective that focuses on weight, her own and theirs, and imagines negative reactions, causing her own actions to reflect this mindset. Jennifer is convinced that everyone looks at her and only sees her exterior, that no one could possibly want her as she is and consequently refuses to see the truth in front of her, the positive demeanor of some people around her, believing that other girls cannot be happy with themselves if they are not perfect.

In becoming obsessed with her physical appearance and having accepted the ideal female form society views to be desirable Jennifer fails to grasp that this image is simply an ideal, one that is in fact unattainable by its very nature and due to social beliefs of perfection. She becomes fixated on reaching this ideal by any means possible, pushing those closest to her away as she allows herself to think poorly of them while ultimately neglecting her own health in the process. Jennifer says horrible things to her friends, supports a crush on her cousin's new boyfriend and later fiancé, and dissuades herself from seeing the interest a man genuinely has for her as she thinks he cannot be good enough for her, the 'ideal self' image she is working towards. It is not until Jennifer visits her mother's grave, reading the inscription on the headstone, that she begins to see how prejudiced she has been, the jealousy she has always felt for others she perceives to either be better, certainly physically, or simply happy with themselves just because Jennifer is unable to find similar joy in life due to all of the depression external influences have wrought upon her. In the end Jennifer may not have met her ideal weight, a number that, like her original weight at the start of the book, is never given, but she does begin to find inner peace, to change the way she looks at herself and how she interprets reactions directed towards herself, seeing that perhaps what were once viewed as derogatory remarks may have been given that dismissive tone from her own unhappiness, self-deprecating thoughts, and self rejection. *Skinny Me* challenges societies views on beauty while showing the importance of being positive and is ultimately a book meant for anyone who has experienced self-loathing.

Favorite quotes:

"Sometimes it's like that in life too. We look into a past that no longer exists, looking as if it's real. We hold onto things in our life that there's no reason to hold onto anymore because, unlike the stars, they don't bring us beauty, they bring us pain."

-

But it was more than that. It was all the moments leading up to that moment. All the moments that made me feel like nothing. For so much of my life I felt hated and judged when, ironically, it was probably because I spent so much of my time hating and judging others.

-

But outward appearances never tell the whole story.

Magda says

The book, as promised, is about much more than just losing weight. It looks at how people define themselves and others based on physical appearance and how at times, what is outside reflects what we feel on the inside. The story shows the struggle of putting the past behind you and finding the courage to want to change things and the determination in fulfilling your plans. The novel in a way examines complicated relationships within families and between friends. 'Skinny Me' is not some kind of perfect image of how easily we can change our lives, it shows ups and downs that people go through, the tragedies that touch us and how they influence us.

I didn't particularly like the main character, but as she went through emotional changes I came to see her in a different light, even though she annoyed me before. Overall, the book was a thought provoking read, making you look at what you have with a new appreciation and with a dose of criticism.
