# Oprah Winfrey acknowledges promoting unhealthy diet practices, sparking debates on her legacy



Oprah Winfrey, a prominent figure in the media, has recently acknowledged her influential role in promoting unhealthy diet practices throughout her career. During a television special last month, Winfrey, 70, expressed regret about her contribution to toxic diet culture, marking a significant shift from her previous stance on weight loss and body image.

Winfrey's journey with weight management began in 1977 with a restrictive 1,200-calorie-a-day diet prescribed by a dietitian that led her to rapidly lose and then regain weight, sparking a long-standing battle with yo-yo dieting. Medical professionals, like Beth Czerwony from the Cleveland Clinic and Michelle Routhenstein, a cardiovascular health specialist, have highlighted the potential risks of such drastic caloric reduction, including negative impacts on metabolism and overall health.

In 1988, Winfrey famously lost 67 pounds on the liquid Optifast diet, which she later criticized for its unsustainable nature and promotion of extreme dieting behavior. She also experimented with the cabbage soup diet in the 1990s and later became a significant investor and board member of WeightWatchers. While this program was praised for not restricting food types, it too faced criticism for potentially fostering unhealthy attitudes toward eating.

In December 2023, Winfrey admitted to using a weight-loss drug, impacting her previously claimed natural weight management methods. This class of drugs, known for suppressing appetite, has been noted for both its effectiveness and high cost, alongside potential side effects.

This revelation has led to discussions about the sincerity and implications of her endorsements of various weight loss methods over the decades, especially given her broad influence on audiences worldwide.