



WEIGHING IN ON *THE BIGGEST LOSER*

The Biggest Loser is a reality television show that first aired in the United States in 2004. It has since celebrated 17 seasons and expanded to more than 20 countries. The premise of the show is a competition among overweight contestants to lose weight; the contestant who loses the highest percentage of starting weight is determined to be “the biggest loser” and wins \$1 million. *The Biggest Loser* is affiliated several products and advertisers and has expanded its products to include videos, cookbooks, video games, race series, fat camp, and other online components. To enhance its entertainment value, the show ups the drama of weight loss and exercise by tempting the contestants with favorite foods and putting them through physical fitness challenges as well as pitting contestants against one another. All this does not always create the healthiest environment in which to lose weight. Moreover, the show chooses contestants to represent a range of identities, including gender, racial, ethnic, and age variations. Amid accusations of various unhealthy training principles, mistreatment of contestants, and concerns about unrealistic messaging to viewers, the popularity of the show has spawned other similar shows, including *Heavy*, *I Used to Be Fat*, *Extreme Weight Loss*, *Shedding for the Wedding*, *Celebrity Fit Club*, and *Thintervention with Jackie Warner*.



Weight loss should be done in a healthy, balanced manner through moderate exercise and healthy eating habits that can be maintained for a lifetime.

that the word *fat* is in the very least incendiary and at its core may be a spoken or rhetorical violence in Western society, especially because it typically refers to an “immoral dirty-ness” or “a moral and physical decay” (p. 249). In elite sport, professional golfers John Daly and Laura Davies live in bodies that trouble the boundaries of nature and culture, especially since they are considered fat athletes