

A critique of "don't blame the eater"

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" I couldn't open up a magazine, you couldn't read a newspaper, you couldn't turn on the TV without hearing about the obesity epidemic in America. " is a quote by Morgan Spurlock, that acutely describes the obesity problem going on in America. Anyway one can want to talk about the problem, it will always be a huge dilemma throughout the United States. For a long time now, people have been discussing who is to blame for the obesity crisis going on.

Some people prefer to blame the government, several blame the restaurants, others the parents and even the schools receive criticism for obesity. People should develop their own ideas on the obesity crisis and to figure out who is to blame and how to fix the problem. The main article I want to focus on is " Don't Blame the Eater" by David Zinczenko. Throughout this article, he refers to the few kids suing McDonalds and other fast-food restaurants.

According to the book, They Say, I Say, there are two major parts of an article, the They Say, and the I Say. From Zinczenko's point of view, he was biased towards the side saying that the food restaurants is responsible for the obesity crisis, while the others he is writing against, are writing about personal responsibility and how to teach the world how to be self-empowered and control what they eat. Others write about the government flailing around, not doing anything to stop and fix the obesity crisis.

Zinczenko focuses on the fast-food restaurants are causing all of the problems, because their advertisements are focused to children, (The Happy Meal by McDonald's) and teenagers, by having cheap carb-filled food for the average poor teenager and college student. Throughout his article, he made many valid points as to why the restaurants are to blame for obesity. The <https://assignbuster.com/a-critique-of-dont-blame-the-eater/>

restaurants create a very difficult way to tell exactly what you are eating, mainly because there are no calorie information on the food you get in these eateries.

This is mainly because the FDA does not cover prepared food in all restaurants, especially fast food restaurants, where it is needed the most. An example he gives is that a website says a chicken salad contains 150 calories, the almonds and noodles it comes with is an additional 190 calories, a 280 calorie dressing, but the dressing is 2.5 servings.

That total is 1,400 but that excludes anything else you might get, like a coke or fries. (Zinczenko 393) He also gives statistics that show how Type 2 diabetes has increased 25% since 1994. (Zinczenko 392) After all of the points he has shown, he came up with a solution to solve this crisis, "And I'd say the industry is vulnerable. Fast-food companies are marketing to children a product with proven health hazards and no warning labels.

They would do well to protect themselves, and their customers, by providing the nutrition information people need" (Zinczenko 393) This is one way that we can start to work with the restaurants to solve this problem. Although he brought up very good points, his argument was very biased against fast-food restaurants.

During the article he mentioned that we should be responsible for our actions, such as "Whatever happened to personal responsibility? (Zinczenko 391) and "Shouldn't you know better than to eat two meals a day in fast-food restaurants?" (Zinczenko 392) He did not display both sides equally, or

even bring up the other side, not contributing to the "They Say" of his article.

Other than those two quotes, he does not talk about others to blame or any other solutions to this crisis. Another part of the article that confused me was the part where Zinczenko told his story about how in high school, he was 210lbs. with a lanky 5'10" body frame. According to the article, he joined the Navy Reserve in college, lost all the weight by working out, and took responsibility for himself.

Zinczenko 391) Even though he uses this story in which he took responsibility for himself, he still blames the fast food restaurants and barely scratches the surface of self-responsibility. Another article about obesity is "What You Eat is Your Business" by Radley Balko, but it has a different approach than the way Zinczenko had used. Balko believes that the government needs to leave the public be, and promote personal responsibility.

He says that politicians are joining the fight, "President Bush earmarked \$200 million in his budget for anti-obesity measures. (Balko 396) Those two hundred million dollars could have been spent on much more important things, like helping people with more serious problems. Throughout Balko's article he supports the idea the people need to take responsibility for their own actions, such as becoming obese. Balko says "It only becomes a public matter when we force the public to pay for the consequences of those choices." (Balko 397) When the people who stay fit and control their own weight have to pay for those who do not stay fit and become obese is when this becomes a large debate.

He continues on to discuss how easy it is to get health benefits while obese, such as not having an extra fee for people over a certain weight and " Your heart attack drives up the cost of my premiums and office visits. And if the government is paying for my anti-cholesterol medication, what incentive is there for me to put down the cheeseburger? " (Balko 396-7) The United States do not give any sort of privilege for being in shape, so why not just get fat and enjoy life. A third author who has written about the obesity crisis is Judith Warner, with her article " Junking Junk Food.

All through her article, she pokes fun at the government giving different stories about how individual people are trying to fight the ways that the government is trying to deal with the obesity crisis. She starts the article off by telling a story about Sarah Palin bring a bunch of cookies to the schoolchildren to try to stop the " high-minded anti-sugar edict. "

She made a few mistakes about the whole set up, such as Pennsylvania was not in a debate against sugar in their public schools, and the school she showed up to with her cookies was a private Christian Academy. Warner (400) despite the miscommunications that happened there, Palin's message traveled straight to the American heart, " she had come up with new and vivid imagery to make the case that the Obama ' nanny state' is, essentially, snatching cookies - i. e. , the pursuit of happiness- from the mouths of babes. "

Suddenly, any kind of attack on sugar or some sort of healthy sweet became an attack on the American way of life. (Warner 401) Glenn Beck is also fighting the government's intentions, by creating a compendium that includes, " Reports of government health inspectors shutting down a 7-year-

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old's lemonade stand. According to Warner, the "choice architects" of the Obama Administration believe that "you're incapable of making decisions Left to your own devices, you're going to eat too much, you're going to be a big fatty." (Warner 401)

According to Beck and Warner, the government has no faith in us, so it views itself as needing to intervene. My own ideas of this topic lean towards Balko's point of view, that we must become responsible for our own bodies. I do agree with Zenczenko up to a point that the fast food restaurants are partly to blame, but not all of the blame can be sent to them.

And I do agree with Warner up to a point as well, we cannot leave ourselves in the government's hands, we have to take responsibility. We, as a country, must work together with the fast-food restaurants and the government to stop obesity right in its tracks. There are other ways to stop this crisis that are not mentioned anywhere in the article, such as teaching children to cook healthy foods and exercise using such things as a nutrition class to teach the students to be responsible for themselves.

We have to try to distract the children away from computer games and television to get them to play outside and get their daily amount of exercise. Others would point blame to the parents, for if the parents put in the effort with their children, and kept an eye on what they eat, and how often they go outside to play, can make a large difference throughout a child's life. Zenczenko argued that as a teenager, he only had four or five places for him to eat around his house, but where were his parents at the time.

No parent would ever want their son or daughter to be obese, so we need to let the parents know how bad fast food can be if that is all you eat. My goal here was to help you decide which group of people do you blame for the crisis, and how do you think it can be stopped. My answer is that we must influence ourselves to become responsible for ourselves, to help us want to stay physically fit and healthy. We cannot rely on any power, such as the government, or lay blame on the restaurants, such as McDonald's, but take responsibility into our own hands. Which choice would you pick, and do you think you can make a difference?

Works Cited

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