

# Powerful Living: Mindset + Exercise + Recipes

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## Extract

### Power Up!

We've all heard these depressing facts about our waistlines before, but bear with me while I regurgitate them one more time. At the current growth rate in obesity, **more than 70 per cent of us Aussies will have a weight issue by the time this book hits the shelves.** Worldwide obesity has nearly doubled since 1980, and here in Australia we are at the forefront of this epidemic.

If the current rate of growth in obesity continues, by 2025 – in just ten years' time – eight out of ten Aussies will be overweight or obese. Imagine that – in a line-up of ten Aussie adults, only two of them will be a healthy weight. Worse, one in three of our kids will also be overweight or obese.

We're not alone in this issue. Far from starving to death, in our modern Western world we're more likely to kark it from eating too much than not enough. A mind-blowing 65 per cent of the global population live in countries where being overweight or obese contributes to more deaths than undernourishment does. It's nuts.

**We've lost control of our lives and ourselves** largely because the world has changed and conspired to build a perfect storm of weight-related health issues. This New World produces more and more food, often hijacking our brains with seductive flavours to make us eat more than we need. We've become experts at growing more food, faster, selfishly adopting unhealthy agricultural and farming practices in the process.

We are bludgeoned daily with slick marketing that encourages us to buy more food, more snacks, more drinks, often using methods so sneaky that we don't even realise we are being marketed to. 'Big Food' companies strive to develop increasingly sophisticated techniques to sell more stuff to us that we don't actually need.

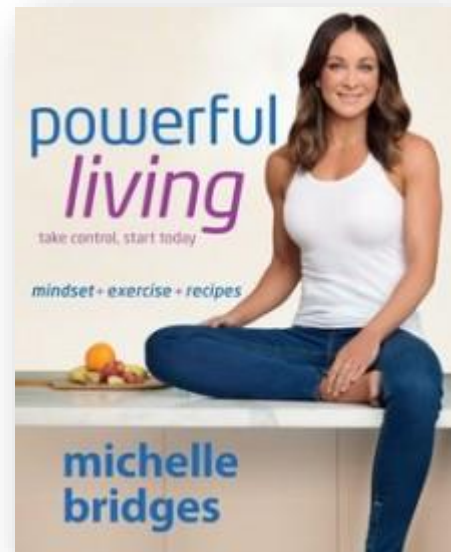
This New World – a world of automation, effortless transportation and static entertainment – also sets us up to move less and less.

Our buildings make us lazy by being designed so that we can get around in them quickly with a minimum of effort. Urban planners are only now starting to get their heads around designs that encourage people to get out and about more by refining pedestrian access and cycleways.

It's what researchers call an obesogenic environment: places that encourage people to live unhealthily. We've let corporations take control of what we eat, when we eat it, how we get around and how we relax and enjoy ourselves. We've given away our power to others, and our health is very rarely their first priority.

**I've called this book *Powerful Living* because it's about empowering ourselves every day with thoughts, words and actions that put us back in the driver's seat, with our hands on the steering wheel, taking back control.**

It's about where we work and how we entertain ourselves. It's about understanding where our food comes from, what types we should buy and how much we actually need to put on our plates. It's about recognising when we're being sold to, and when our kids are being sold to.



It's about cutting through the food marketing hype and chatter that we're bombarded with thousands of times a day. It's about reconfiguring our lives so that we have the time and the headspace to prepare and cook our own food, and to pass this most basic of survival skills on to our children and other loved ones.

It includes understanding the role of our mental health in the way that we perceive our bodies, our self-worth and ourselves. And understanding how our food, lifestyle and environmental choices contribute to the way we think, the way we feel and the way we behave.

Because here's the thing – weight management and obesity aren't one-dimensional issues, they are multidimensional. Living powerfully is about making positive change in all these dimensions.

The New World and all of its cronies – the food producers, marketers and governments – have united to gradually dilute our control of these fundamental life skills.

**But we have a choice; you have a choice.** You don't have to let others dictate how you lead your life, because *you have the power to make a change*. Sure, it may seem easier to let others make choices for you, to prepare your food for you, to tell you what to eat and to build a world that takes away your ability to make your own choices. The seduction of allowing others to make the decisions for you can be too tempting to say no to, and I get it because I live in the same world that you do.

But I'm here to tell you that something special will happen to you when you take back control, when *you* call the shots, and *you* decide what you're going to eat, what you're going to do and ultimately who you want to be.

Because empowering yourself is a process of multiples – the more you do, the more empowered you become. And the more empowered you become, the more you can do.

When you switch to a nutritious wholefood diet, your body responds *immediately*. **The very moment you have a wholesome, nutritious meal, the cells in your body respond to the high-quality nutrients you have fed it.** You'll not only feel better, but all of the processes that allow you to function – to move, to metabolise, to think – will be improved.

Your tastebuds will make minute changes to the way you appreciate food, meaning you can ditch the habit of smothering your meals in salt and crappy sauces.

The same thing happens when you have a workout – all of your body's cells respond immediately. There is no gap – it's instantaneous! And the more you stick with a regular exercise and activity regime, the easier it becomes. **Each training session re-empowers you more than the last one.** Your muscles get stronger, more flexible, healthier. Even your bones increase in density. Your heart and lungs strengthen and their function improves.

Even your brain will function better from a good workout! And we know now, through the science of epigenetics, that minute changes to your DNA will take place immediately, dialling up good health and dialling down your propensity to disease. Your digestive system will be cranked up and your immune system will get a kick up the backside!

But it shouldn't end there. **Empowerment isn't just about exercise and nutrition – it's about conscious choice.**

First of all, here are a few things that conscious choice *isn't*:

- Conscious choice isn't doing something because it seemed like a good idea.
- Conscious choice isn't responding to someone else telling you to do something.
- Conscious choice isn't reacting to clever marketing.

**What conscious choice is about is embracing something fully because you have chosen it as a reflection of what you want. It's not somebody else's choice made on your behalf.**

So just get your head around the distinction because it's really important to understand – **when you choose, the power rests with you. When you let somebody else choose for you, you give that power away.**

**The best thing is that that choice, your power, can extend into all elements of your life: into your environment, your ecosystem; into what you eat, how you move, where you live, your home and your workplace; even into what you think!**

It extends into your relationships – not just the relationships with your loved ones, but into all of your relationships: with food, alcohol, leisure, with how you look and how you feel about yourself. It speaks to the work that you do, and how you feel about it; how you physically get there and the environment you work in.

Now I'll admit to spruiking the mantra of 'eat less and move more', and that still rings true for a lot of us. But it's actually far more complicated than that; it just isn't that easy. We realise now that the obesity crisis is multidimensional and won't be solved by exercise physiologists and nutritionists alone.

**We've created an obesogenic environment, so we must absolutely look at all aspects of it if we're going to make any headway in solving this modern-day problem.** This is the approach of cutting edge obesity researchers, the forward-thinking individuals who we look towards to crack this problem once and for all.

We've got to enlist the help of economists and marketers. Of governments, advertisers and psychologists. Of environmentalists, agriculturalists and farmers. Of educators, doctors and sociologists, planners, designers and architects.

I've been privileged to meet some of these men and women, and their foresight and wisdom blew me away. But what really landed with me was that their multidimensional approach should not just be confined to us as a society – *it must be our approach as individuals.*

Our power is multidimensional and it should be reflected in all aspects of our lives. **Let this book start you on your own empowerment journey.**