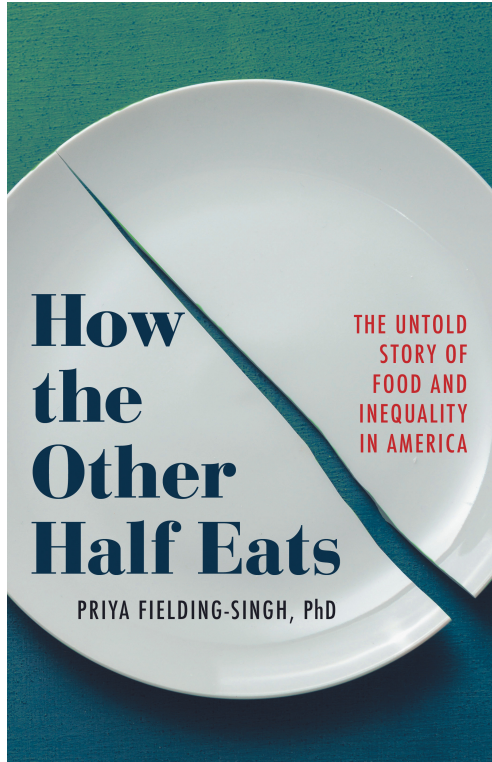


LITTLE, BROWN SPARK PRESENTS



READING GROUP GUIDE

A fascinating look at dietary differences along class lines, revealing that lack of access to healthy food is far from the primary driver of nutritional inequality in America.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *HOW THE OTHER HALF EATS*

1. How does a child's freedom to choose what and how much to eat affect their growing relationship with food? To what degree should parents police children's diets? How do childhood eating patterns influence adult behavior?

2. In the United States, we share deeply held beliefs about what makes women good mothers, so much so that sociologists have coined the term "intensive mothering." Intensive mothering refers to the unreasonable and gendered demands society places on mothers to be self-sacrificing and labor-intensive caregivers to their children. How does this pressure impact mothers in their efforts to feed kids? How does it play out differently for mothers across race and class lines?

3. Women, specifically mothers, hold the majority of the household purchasing decisions, collectively spending more than two trillion dollars a year. What are some ways the food industry has capitalized on mothers' worries, guilt, and doubts?

4. Eighty percent of advertisements from the food industry are for unhealthy foods (snacks, sodas, etc). These options are also the most visually appealing, especially to impressionable children. How do these marketing efforts contribute to a family's food choices? In conjunction with the question above, how much marketing power does corporate America hold over our diets?



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5. In Chapter 14, we are introduced to the Morales family. Through them, we learn that food can quickly go from being a teaching tool for parents to a way to buffer kids against hardship. What role do you see money having on a family's food choices? How do certain foods' price and proximity affect a families' diets?

6. The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated the hunger crisis in the United States. Food insecurity rates increased from 11% to 38%, and an additional 4.5 million Americans enrolled in SNAP, a key form of federal food assistance. Take a moment to reflect on how the global pandemic has impacted your eating habits. How was your diet affected? Did you or someone you know experience hunger or seek out food-related aid? How did that affect their/your mental health?

7. In Chapter 15, we meet Teresa and her son Esteban, who exemplify how immigration shapes families' diets across generations. Teresa was raised on homemade meals in a village in Mexico. Esteban straddles this cultural connection to food with an attachment to American dining. What role do Esteban's and Teresa's experiences of immigration and acculturation play in their dietary choices? How does your own culture affect your diet? Discuss the benefits and pitfalls of dietary acculturation.



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8. In Chapters 16 and 17, we are introduced to the concepts of "downscaling" and "upscaling." We learn that low-income mothers and wealthier moms have two different approaches when it comes to their children's diets. Discuss the potential benefits and drawbacks of these patterns. Why do you think this happens and how do they affect a child's diet and their relationship with food?

9. The "culture of poverty" theory suggests that the values of people experiencing poverty play a key role in perpetuating their impoverished conditions. How do the experiences of Nyah, Dana, and other low-income mothers in the book reveal the fallacies of this argument?

10. What does this book offer to the national conversation about food and inequality? How do we proceed as a society in developing inclusive solutions for combating nutritional inequities and improving family well-being? Has this book changed your thinking about food and inequality?



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