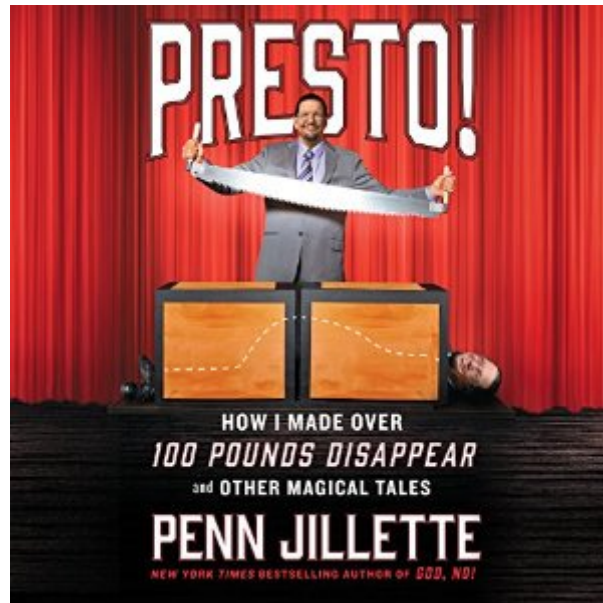


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# Presto!: How I Made Over 100 Pounds Disappear And Other Magical Tales



## Synopsis

An unconventional weight loss tale from an unconventional personality. Penn Jillette tells how he lost 100 pounds with his trademark outrageous sense of humor and biting social commentary that makes this success story anything but ordinary. Legendary magician Penn Jillette was approaching his 60th birthday. Topping 330 pounds and saddled with a systolic blood pressure reading over 200, he knew he was at a dangerous crossroads: If he wanted to see his small children grow up, he needed to change. And then came Crazy Ray. A former NASA scientist and an unconventional, passionate innovator, Ray Cronise saved Jillette's life with his wild "potato diet". In *Presto*, Jillette takes us along on his journey from skepticism to the inspiring, life-changing momentum that transformed the magician's body and mind. He describes the process in hilarious detail, as he performs his Las Vegas show, takes meetings with Hollywood executives, and hangs out with his celebrity friends and fellow eccentric performers, all while remaining a dedicated husband and father. Throughout, he weaves in his views on sex, religion, and pop culture, making his story a refreshing, genre-busting account. Outspoken, frank, and bitingly clever, *Presto* is an incisive, rollicking listen.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This isn't a diet book. It's a hysterical account of one man's journey on a diet. Penn is a great storyteller and has been a huge influence in my life. We've known each other for over 20 years and have some crazy friends. He tells lots of funny stories and *Presto* will keep you laughing. The real message in *Presto*, his permanent lifestyle transformation, is in the book, but we likely won't hear it

reported widely in the media or on blogs. Some ideas may indeed be very contrary to what the popular diet and exercise dogmas most often teach. Most reports will probably focus on potatoes and Penn explains the funny magic act behind this often maligned food. We can watch as this unravels in the press. We can listen as the media and blog machines kick into high gear with the "paleos and vegans' debating as the "carb vs fat" arguments mound. Where does he get his protein? We'll hear experts tell us all about how wrong this is (ignoring his success) without first talking to his physicians. One doesn't get too crazy with the loud, formerly overweight talking half of one of the most successful Vegas shows without second, third, and fourth opinions, right? Of course he's done it and we see the results, but some were once critiquing his approach based on information found in a tabloid article. His response to that article will make you cry with laughter and perhaps enlightens us on how stories get twisted. Presto contains many bites of wisdom all plated with Penn's comedic genius. Penn's transformation challenges status quo and suggests we can all make a change. Like much of his advice, Presto centers on breaking away from accepting mass mediocrity and instead seeking the best. Our struggles are real, but laughing at our mistakes brings us much closer to success than living a life driven by fear. We hear a lot of exaggerated claims about slowing metabolisms (the latest biggest loser distraction) and warnings against losing weight too quickly. Of course none of this will apply to the 196,000 people that had some form of bariatric surgery last year or the 703,000 in the 4 years prior. These people can't eat Penn's diet now without difficulty and I'd really hope to inspire those considering this option to do something really crazy: change your lifestyle. For Penn, his train wreck in health was the license he needed to be crazy and REALLY do something this time, no matter what. While people very well be convinced by the inner chatter, friends, family, and conventional medical wisdom that they don't have the willpower or are metabolically broken; maybe that isn't true. Penn's success suggests we can make a lot more progress with laughter along the way. It's not crazy to surgically rearrange someone's intestinal tract to limit their ability to swallow, but we are to lead to believe that it's crazy for me to tell Penn to voluntarily do the same thing. Okay, I'm a nut. My friend is doing great 17 months later, off 6 powerful BP meds and happy. We do crazy things for friends, right? Laced in the humor is a simple message - Change your lifestyle. Really. Change it. There's no need wait for the next new diet book or even reach for a potato. We probably won't hear this headline and that's actually what Penn did; he changed his relationship with food. Penn's success can be summed up in two sentences: It's nearly impossible to lose weight with moderation and to keep that weight off eating a controlled quantity of what was eaten to gain it. Further if social relationships dominate one's plate and these relationships are with people that eat unhealthily, the odds of moderating the food and the social

pressure are overwhelmingly in favor of failure. When disruptive ideas are introduced, no one is completely correct. We want this to be, but history teaches we usually aren't. There are some paths that lead to cul-de-sacs and some that inch us closer to the truth. Presto has the ability to move you a mile, but it involves a permanent change that goes against what is socially normal. Penn is okay with running against social norm when it's for a just cause and we should all be happy for his success.

It's Penn Jillette again, so you think "more debunking of fraudulent magic? Questioning God, perhaps? But no. This is a 300 page memoir of dieting. Took me by surprise. I would not have read it had I known. But Jillette pulls it off by simply being Penn Jillette. He is loud, obnoxious, rambunctious, sarcastic and he swears way too much for it to have any impact at all. But he's entertaining, self-deprecating, highly opinionated, and funny. So it works. Much better than run of the mill diet books. Like most Americans, as he got older, Jillette got heavier. He noticed that while chocolate cake was a treat his mother made a few times a year, it was now available daily, if not hourly. There is junk food everywhere " at meetings, in the green room, backstage, and he ate basically all day long. He was sluggish, out of breath, and in denial. And he was on blood pressure meds and other joys. And this is someone who has never smoked, drank or taken recreational drugs. By losing a hundred pounds, he found he could give up the meds. He could taste tastes better and he lost his cravings for doughnuts and other such staples of SAD " the Standard American Diet. And with this book he has become an evangelist for it. To the point of being aggravating. It's a 300 page testimonial to Ray Cronise, who designed his program, and who is himself now leveraging off helping Penn Jillette lose that hundred pounds. It's a multipronged multimedia marketing campaign, and that lessens the love, at least for me. For the millions of the overweight and obese, I hope it is inspirational. The book desperately needs editing. It is terribly repetitive. Jillette has no problem saying the same thing eight or ten times. It is possibly the longest diet memoir in history. It's almost a page a day of his diet. But it's from the heart, and it's the usual honest, forthright and fearless Penn Jillette, so there's little point going on about it. The message is terrific. Eat better and you will crave better foods. It's a virtuous circle. You lose the extra weight, you feel more energetic, and your body thanks you by making life easier. But it's not magic. David Wineberg

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