Discussion Questions

Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us by Michael Moss

Source: Madison Public Library www.madisonpubliclibrary.org

1. Did you find the author’s writing and investigative reporting persuasive? After reading this book, do you believe that processed foods are genuinely “addictive”?

2. If you’ve been following diet and health trends over the past 20 years, you’ll be familiar with the ‘evils’ of sugar. Did the focus here on salt surprise you? Do you think salt gets much attention in the popular press? Are you aware of your salt intake in the same way you are aware of your sugar intake?

3. Will this book change what foods you buy and eat? Are there some items you can’t live without—despite the facts?

4. Is there a particular story or product mentioned in this book that especially surprised or upset you?

5. Since the publication of the book the food and drink companies profiled have offered some new initiatives—including promoting water, selling ‘mini-cans’ of soda and more. Are these responses, in your opinion, damage control, an attempt to regain market-share, actual good corporate citizenship or something else?

6. Do you think the USDA or other governmental agencies should do more to protect the public? For example, should New York City have banned jumbo-sized soda?

7. Did this book influence your thinking on the concept of self-control? Some critics of the book’s premise think the responsibility for what you eat still resides exclusively with the individual. Did Moss persuade you otherwise? Was he trying to?

8. Do you agree with the author that food corporations should be held accountable for the obesity epidemic and its social consequences? If so, how could this be done?

9. Are you surprised that the food chemists who created the ‘bliss point’ were willing to talk to Moss? Do you think their product development mirrored the way the tobacco companies crafted cigarettes? Are there other parallels between the tobacco industry and the food manufacturers profiled in the book?