



True You: A Journey to Finding and Loving Yourself

Janet Jackson, David Ritz, Karen Hunter (Contributor)

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ONE OF THE GREATEST ENTERTAINERS OF OUR TIME CANDIDLY REVEALS HER VERY PERSONAL STRUGGLE WITH AN ISSUE SO MANY OF US FACE EVERY DAY: SELF-ESTEEM

Janet Jackson emerged from the shadows of an already famous family to become one of the most beloved, recognizable, and influential performers in the world. But at what cost?

From the age of ten, when she made her acting debut on *Good Times*, Janet was told by Hollywood that she needed to slim down. Her well-meaning brothers, especially fun-loving Michael, teased her relentlessly until she began to believe that who she was wasn't good enough. It was an idea that no amount of critical acclaim in television and film or, later, international platinum success in music could change.

Janet turned to food for comfort and escape. She developed a self-destructive pattern familiar to so many of us: fear and uncertainty led to bad feelings about herself and ultimately depression. The depression led to overeating. And her yo-yoing weight was painfully obvious in the bright lights of the entertainment world.

It has taken Janet most of her adult life to come to terms with who she is. But she has finally broken free of the attitudes that brought her down and has embraced realistic goals that help her eat better, exercise better, feel better, and ultimately be better.

This book is about meeting those challenges that face all of us. With candor and courage, Janet shares her painful journey to loving herself. She addresses the crazy rumors that have swirled around her for most of her life, shines an intimate light on her family, and pulls us behind the velvet rope into her unforgettable career. She also shares lessons she has learned through contact with friends and fans and reveals the fitness secrets she has learned from her trainer. Finally, her nutritionist, David Allen, unveils the wholesome, delicious recipes and lifestyle-changing tips that helped Janet get in shape—mind and spirit, heart and soul.

True You is a call to tune in to your own fundamental wisdom, to let go of the ugly comparisons, and to understand that who you are, the *true you*, is more than enough.

“I’m loved, I’m valued, and I’m capable of achieving balance in my life. I can learn to eat well. I can exercise. I can express gratitude for the simple act of being able to breathe in and breathe out. I can move away from darkness and depression to light and hope. I can be happy with who I am, not what I should be, or what I might have been, or what someone tells me I must be.”

I am me, the true me; you are you, the true you—and that’s good. That’s beautiful. That’s enough.”

—JANET JACKSON

True You: A Journey to Finding and Loving Yourself Details

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Shanae says

This memoir is so boring. I feel like Janet could have gone more in depth with issues of body image. She talks a lot about her battle with health and body image, but she never really explains WHY she had these issues, she says she internalized her brothers' teasing, but why? I found the memoir very unfulfilling because I see memoirs as the reality TV of literature. This did not cut it. Janet should have (and hopefully will one day in the future) write a weight loss book, even one reads like a novel would suffice. I look forward to that.

Monique says

Ok....This was a pretty good book...I've been a fan of Miss Jackson since her "Control" album came out when I was 11 yrs. old...So I was so thrilled when I saw that she was putting out an autobiography...She always amazes me how she is so humble and shy in person, but, when she hits the stage and gets a mic in her hand she becomes this fearless femme fatale....Same with her acting chops as well...This woman's just so blessed with so many talents...I enjoyed getting an inside look into how she became the superstar that she is today and could relate to the struggles she had with self-image, it's empowering to know that even these people that we tend to perceive as super-human with beauty, brains, and talent have insecurities and problems just like the rest of us do...I highly recommend this for fans of Janet Jackson...However, if you are not a fan of hers or the Jacksons as a family than this book probably won't be for you...But, I liked it and learned a great deal from it...I hope she writes another one as well:)

Michael says

Janet Jackson is one of the most talented artist in our decade. I was never a huge fan of her music until recently, her songs of empowerment and courage has stood out in her iconic songs. Based on a few interviews of her, I never noticed that she battled self image and esteem. Janet is beautiful in every to me, not only is she gorgeous on the outside, but she is also beautiful in the inside. Knowing that she struggled with her weight was a shock to me. Reason being is that I never saw her as fat, but curvy. Then again after reading this touching memoir, you never know how much a person suffers behind all the cameras and lights.

Starting from the beginning, Janet recounts her life growing up as a Jackson. Raised in a strict household, she obeyed whatever her parents taught. However she took control of her actions, doing things her way. As the story progresses, I got to know how Janet came into the music industry, mainly cause she was forced to be an entertainer. I felt really bad for her in so many parts in the book, I really she would put music on hold and pursue what she wants to do. Although I think she is content where she is now, now that she has complete control over her life. Ultimately she finds faith in God and her true self.

Very impressed with this memoir, totally unexpected.

Monique says

Wanted more Janet and less others. The main story of the book was her weight issues, briefly discusses relationships with J DeBarge, Dupree, her dad & Michael. The book gives one false hope for in-depth story since 70 pages of recipes, nearly 25 pages of photos, 15 pages from her nutritionist and almost 20 pages of letters or stories from friends and/or fans. The message is clear, always be true to you.

Diane says

I was truly disappointed by this book. I mean, I love Janet and all, but I'm not really looking for self-help advice from her. There were a lot of anecdotes, but I don't feel like they were as fully developed as they could have been. Also, only about half of the book is Janet giving advice. The other half happens to be her nutritionist and a list of recipes. Again, appreciate it, but not looking for self-help advice from Janet...

Che says

Oh, my beloved Janet. I have never been more eager to return a book to the library. Not because I want to share the joy of reading with the next participant, but mainly because I can rid myself of the bedside-book guilt of not enjoying your literary attempt. Now, mind you, I understand you are a private person. And shy, to boot. But, I was under the impression that when I picked up a book about your life, that I would actually read about YOUR life. I pity the fool who believes this. I've learned more about your "friends" and their personal struggles than I have yours. Now, I can relate to your fluctuating weight and the determination to be healthy but happy; those struggles mirror my own. But, if I can be blunt, I realized that about you over the years. Your weight has been all over the board and I know, first hand, the emotional strain that comes with that reality. But all this book did was highlight it. Miss Jackson, (and I don't mean that in a nasty way), perhaps you weren't ready to tell your story. At least not most of it -- some for legal reasons, some because it's against your nature. I get that. But, I gotta say, this book, similar to your role in "For Colored Girls" was necessary, yet not notable. I am glad you are working through the issues that developed between you and Michael early in your siblinghood. And I am glad you are redefining your sense of self as a woman within relationships. I just hope in your next book, which I will undoubtedly read, (solely because I'm a fan! dammit!), perhaps you can redirect your focus. This book seems as if it's written for a younger audience. Other times, it seems as if you're talking to your older fans, in the same simplistic child-like tones. What you wrote was a whisper towards the truth. And even that takes bravery. If that is all we should expect from you, I will correct myself. But, I WILL warn others, that just because you subtitled the book, "A Journey to Finding and Loving Yourself" does not mean that Janet will take you anywhere beyond the corner CVS to pick up a copy of Essence. Janet, I still remain a fan....of your music!

Desiree says

First of all, I would like to point out to everyone who reads this that this is not a memoir or an in-depth, detailed overview of her darkest days, facing herself. It is, in fact, a lighter version of her battling those voices most of us have within ourselves, telling us that we'll never be or look good enough to appease both the world and ourselves. Janet mentions several times throughout the beginning of the book that this is about

finding the True You, learning to be self-confident and find those parts of ourselves that we do love without a doubt, and learning to love ourselves and lead healthier lifestyles as a result. She also makes it clear that she's not an expert and that she has learned what she knows now from various sources, most of which have been fan letters and encounters as well as close friends' stories. I don't understand how so many people have gotten the impression that someone as shy, sensitive, and guarded as Janet Jackson, would write a book that was full of all sorts of intimate details. She wrote what she knows (the number one rule to writing) and she wrote from the heart (the number one advice when it comes to writing), what more could you possibly want?

I highly recommend that fans of Janet Jackson and/or people who need help figuring out ways to accept and love themselves read this book. It is quick but it also opens your eyes to something very important... People with low self-esteem often have very skewed self-perception that comes from many different places (family, friends, media) and if someone who is as beautiful, talented and successful as Janet Jackson is can suffer from this for 40 years and break the cycle, anyone can. It's difficult (she never says it's easy) but just through noticing where these feelings and thoughts come from, you can recognize ways to help break that cycle. <3

Jackie says

I read a lot of memoirs. That being said, this book was not a memoir. It's more of a revelation of self loathing and wanting to be thin... so that "others" can accept you (self esteem issues). Janet was so open and brave for the first half of the book. We got a side of vulnerability that I am sure was difficult to share.

Janet's book is actually a "DIET" BOOK IN DISGUISE. It was *this close* to being a knockout. There is an afterword from her nutritionist who talks about getting her in shape and getting her to eat healthy (which I enjoyed very much). There are healthy recipes (from her chef) in the back of the book as well.

RYCJ says

I deeply respected the way Janet explains growing up, particularly her relationship with her mother and father, and 'Mike.' The letters of affirmation coming from fans were heartwarming, and particularly empowering. It says a lot when your music affects individuals in the way these letters affirm. Control and Rhythm Nation were two of my favorite albums as well. The music speaks volumes to the underlying premise of her memoir. It as well seemed that Janet grew up sheltered, which she sort of did, but I didn't realize how fast she'd grown up. I nearly fell out of the chair laughing, reading her talking about "people sniffing flour". Add all of this on top of the recipes inserted at the end of the book, along with her personal trainer's summary of methods for promoting physical wellness, puts this memoir over the top. From start to finish highly recommended!

Vanessa (V.C.) says

As an avid Janet fan, I got joy out of reading this book because it was written from the point of view of Janet herself. You can almost feel her sensitivity, her pain, her insecurity, and her strength while reading each chapter in which she explains her journey about accepting her body and her true self, and how her journey can help others in finding the "true you." It's not a memoir or an autobiography; it reads more like a journal,

meaning that there are parts that are extremely brave, personal, and candid, but other parts where her train of thought is kind of scattered. One moment she talks about her body issues, and then out of nowhere jumps into a story about a friend or a fan letter, and then talks about her recording Control, Rhythm Nation, etc., and then jumps back into her feelings of shame and regret about her body, with not much explanation as to why she felt that way at that particular time and moment. I wished that Janet could have written in more detail about her thoughts and feelings about particular deep and scarring moments in her life (like her relationship with her father, Mike's teasing, etc.); many times it seemed like she hardly touched the surface, only giving us a mere fact about how she was feeling but not really telling us WHY she felt that way and how she overcame those struggles. Her explanation of the fan letters and some of the stories she's heard from them were touching at times, but didn't seem all too relevant to what she was speaking of prior to sharing it. As sincere as they are, they felt almost like filler, to be honest. The ending was very abrupt; instead of us reading Janet's final thoughts about her journey, we are given pages and pages of commentary from her nutritionist and a unnecessarily long list of cooking recipes. Why? Again, I feel like it was added for filler. It would have been nice if the book ended on a stronger note instead of concluding it as if True You was a cookbook. Nonetheless though, despite the book's flaws, I commend Janet for being so brave in writing a book about her body/self-esteem issues and willing to share her journey in loving herself to her fans.

Lindsay Wood says

I enjoyed what little information she provided about her childhood and those stories but overall this book is very gimmicky. "the True You" like she's selling something and doesn't think anyone reading is smart enough to see through it. It's very surface and doesn't seem very sincere. Love Janet but not this book!

Sherese says

Awful - don't even bother.

I always loved me some Janet historically minus all the albums after 2001's "All for You". I wanted to be her for several years as a child - Good Times (reruns people I'm not that old), Different Strokes, Fame to Control, Rhythm Nation, Janet, Velvet Rope, All for You. I was hoping this book provide actual insight to her struggles with weight and body image which I feel I could always relate to even if my weight fluctuates have never been as extreme as Janet's up and down rollercoaster.

This book told me nothing except she didn't have rib removed, she actual read (or reads) fan letters which she mentioned way too often in this book along with her other "friends" stories - Janet I want to know about you and your coping skills not some fan who wrote you in 1985.

There is no mention of plastic surgery, specific food temptations, workout tips, reaction to Superbowl Half-time debacle or her overtly sexual live shows/lyrics etc. These are all things relate to body image and how she sees herself and how society views her & her sexuality.

End Result - Repetitive journal that should been left in her drawer somewhere - "Be the True You" on repeat for about 125 pages and then some recipes for second half of the book - Thanks Janet but I don't cook!

Sarah Q. says

I liked this book, in fact I don't understand why so many people expected it to be an autobiography or deeply personal memoir. Janet herself said not only in the book several times, but also in every promotional appearance she made on tv that it was about her life long journey to finding her true self and hoped that it would help you, her fans & those who read the book, find your true you.

I liked that there were several pages of recipes at the end of the book as well as the chapter from her nutritionist - he had some interesting insights into Janet as well as for those who are struggling to get healthy.

I'm actually surprised she shared as much personal stuff as she did about her personal life and family, and I liked that she shared stories about friends and fans who shared things with her that touched her. It was very much like reading her journal, I could almost hear her voice as I read the book. Janet mostly shared different times in her life that caused her to find something wrong with herself, or to want to change things about herself and how trying to make those changes or how those moments in time affected her life & the lives of those around her, as well as how she finally came to finding her true self.

Joseph says

absolute drivel.

you can tell that janet is a shell of a person from this book. in fact, it's not even really a book. it's more like stringing along quotes from fans of hers and then giving props to her trainer and cook by putting his recipes in the back of it.

i wanted to read about her caffeine enemas!

maybe one day she'll grow up. wait she's a jackson. she never will.

Adrienne Thompson says

First of all, to clear up the confusion, no, this is not a steamy, scandalous tell-all memoir. But I knew that from the moment Janet Jackson announced she was working on this book. It is a self-help book in which she shares some details of her struggle with self-esteem and her yo-yoing weight. It is a glimpse inside her life that she shares in hopes of helping others who battle the same issues. The content resonated with me causing me to take many notes and highlight and underline some key points. This book is not for everyone, but is extremely helpful to those who need to know they are not alone in their struggles. I especially loved the photos of Janet that are included and the recipes at the end are an added bonus. I do wish the recipes had included photos as well, but all in all, this was a great book. I would definitely recommend it to others.

Adrienne Thompson
Author of Seven Days of Change (A Flash Devotional)
