

Foreword by **JASON FUNG, MD**  
Author of *The Obesity Code*

# LIES

# I TAUGHT IN

# MEDICAL

# SCHOOL

How Conventional Medicine  
Is Making You Sicker and What  
You Can Do to Save Your Life

**Simple, Proven Lifestyle Changes  
to Prevent and Reverse Disease**

**ROBERT LUFKIN, MD**

## **PRAISE FOR *LIES I TAUGHT IN MEDICAL SCHOOL***

“Dr. Lufkin’s *Lies I Taught in Medical School* is a provocative and insightful assessment of many paradigms in the medical field that are failing to improve the health of far too many people. If you are struggling with your weight, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, or any other condition linked to metabolism, this book is a must read.”

—Christopher Palmer, MD; assistant professor of psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; author, *Brain Energy: A Revolutionary Breakthrough in Understanding Mental Health—and Improving Treatment for Anxiety, Depression, OCD, PTSD, and More*

“Standard of care medicine is outdated, often barbaric, and based on recent revelations, in some cases even fraudulent. Yet the New Medicine is not being taught in most medical schools, leading to unnecessarily poor outcomes for many patients. Dr. Robert Lufkin has the fortitude to reconsider everything he learned about medicine and pursue the new model—something I wish every caring physician would do. I recommend this book highly for anyone interested in what real medicine can achieve.”

—Dale E. Bredesen, MD, professor and author of the *New York Times* bestseller *The End of Alzheimer’s*

“As an actor deeply invested in my health and longevity, *Lies I Taught in Medical School* by Dr. Robert Lufkin was a revelation. Dr. Lufkin exposes the outdated truths in medicine with courage and clarity, urging a much-needed shift in how we view health and disease. His

critique of conventional medical practices, especially regarding chronic diseases, is not only eye-opening but also empowering. This book is a must-read for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of health in today's world."

—Josh Duhamel, actor and longevity enthusiast known for his performances in films such as *Shotgun Wedding* and the *Buddy Games* franchise

"Dr. Robert Lufkin thinks outside the box of what most doctors believe but haven't thought to question. Dr. Lufkin did his homework with *Lies I Taught in Medical School*. This well-sourced work explores the newest findings in medicine and the science of aging that upset the status quo. I've known Rob for over thirty years and observed his own personal health transformation, which coincided with his rejection of popular falsehoods and embrace of good science. I wish every physician worldwide would read this book!"

—Michael Sinel, MD, associate clinical professor, UCLA School of Medicine; author, *Back Pain Remedies for Dummies*

"In his new book, *Lies I Taught in Medical School*, Dr. Robert Lufkin exposes defective energy metabolism as the common pathophysiological mechanism underlying the majority of chronic diseases that afflict people living in Western societies. Dr. Lufkin reviews decades of scientific evidence linking abnormal metabolism to chronic disease. The linkages are addressed for a broad range of chronic diseases including cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, cancer, hypertension, Alzheimer's disease, aging, and mental disorders, among others. Unfortunately, the evidence Dr. Lufkin reviews is at best misunderstood and at worst ignored by the medical institutions that are training the next generation of physicians thus indirectly perpetuating the prevalence of metabolic diseases. I can strongly recommend this important book to anyone interested in knowing the truth regarding the origin and the nontoxic options for managing chronic diseases."

—Thomas N. Seyfried, PhD, professor of biology, Boston College; author, *Cancer as a Metabolic Disease: On the Origin, Management, and Prevention of Cancer*

“In the fast-paced music industry, maintaining health is crucial yet challenging. Dr. Robert Lufkin’s *Lies I Taught in Medical School* is a groundbreaking read that challenges outdated medical beliefs, especially about chronic diseases. His insights offer a new perspective on health, crucial for anyone. This book is a must-read for those looking to harmonize their health with a demanding lifestyle.”

—Paul Oakenfold, superstar DJ, music producer, and health enthusiast. His music shaped an entire genre and is one of the leading forces in the global music scene today.

“I’m glad to see mainstream medicine correcting course after many decades of perpetuating myths about disease, nutrition, and longevity. Dr. Lufkin’s *Lies I Taught in Medical School* exposes some of the most common lies once taught as absolute truth, such as the doctrine that elevated LDL cholesterol is the primary cause of heart disease. This is an important book with new, valuable information readers won’t find anywhere else.”

—Philip Ovadia, MD, board-certified cardiac surgeon and award-winning author, *Stay off My Operating Table: A Heart Surgeon’s Metabolic Health Guide to Lose Weight, Prevent Disease, and Feel Your Best Every Day*

“Dr Lufkin tells an important story that is well known to those of us dirtied and sweating in the trenches. While true science is absolute, the science we are taught is based on the interpretation of data and often requires modification or rejection as new data comes in. Acceptance of new interpretations are easiest for those not vested in the field, for the old guard tends to defend the castles they built. Thus science is constantly moving as great wars replace one kingdom with another. Eventually, and if we are lucky, we may find Camelot.”

—Richard J Johnson, MD, Professor of Renal Diseases and Hypertension and author of *Nature Wants Us to Be Fat*

“*Lies I Taught in Medical School* reveals the newest scientific findings that displace old paradigms. Specifically, Dr. Lufkin shows how most of what the mainstream medical establishment taught about diet,

fitness, and disease is wrong. He also offers a proven, accessible plan to improve health and increase longevity. Getting older is inevitable; aging is not. *Lies I Taught in Medical School* explains why.”

—Kara Fitzgerald, ND, IFMCP; first-ever recipient of the 2018 Emerging Leadership Award from the Personalized Lifestyle Medicine Institute (DNA Methylation); author, *Younger You: Reduce Your Bio Age and Live Longer, Better*

“Dr. Robert Lufkin and I share the combination of a career in science and impaired health by following dietary recommendations from ‘health’ organizations that promoted the ‘food pyramid,’ which emphasized whole grains, beans, cereal, and rice, with limited consumption of saturated (animal-based) fat. We were both influenced by Gary Taubes and his big reveal that low-fat diets aren’t healthy. This was an epiphany for me as I sought to understand why I was at such a high risk for developing heart disease as my career in neuroscience progressed. The lies Robert taught in medical school were the same lies I had believed, that dietary saturated fat and cholesterol cause heart disease and lowering cholesterol with statins saves lives. This book documents how Robert, like so many others, was misled by the false consensus on diet and heart disease. It is an impressive source of research-based information on diet, cholesterol, and heart disease, as well as cancer and Alzheimer’s disease. It is of great value to laypeople and healthcare providers who are interested in thinking outside the box created by financially conflicted organizations that place profit ahead of healthy, evidence-based, recommendations.”

—David Diamond PhD, professor of molecular pharmacology and physiology, University of South Florida

“Dr. Lufkin clearly and utterly convincingly explains how medical doctors have gotten it so wrong. He gives you the tools you need to reverse diseases like type 2 diabetes and prevent metabolic-related cancers.”

—Megan Ramos, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Life in the Fasting Lane*

“Dr. Robert Lufkin is a conscientious objector to mainstream medical advice. With *Lies I Taught in Medical School*, he puts the pen where his heart is: challenging outdated dogma in a search for the truth. Dr. Lufkin has been quietly sharing the latest research on metabolic syndrome, chronic diseases, and longevity within the medical community. Now, he tells all, and not a moment too soon. This is an important and timely book. At the same time that science has given us powerful new health-span-extending technologies, Western populations are sicker than ever, due in large part to a healthcare system that is severely broken. Something is wrong with modern medicine, and Dr. Lufkin reveals what that is.”

—Matt Kaeberlein, PhD, professor of laboratory medicine and pathology, University of Washington and director, Healthy Aging and Longevity Research Institute

“*Lies I Taught in Medical School* exposes outdated beliefs about health, aging, and nutrition and offers a compelling alternative—the truth. Dr. Robert Lufkin offers an expansive, holistic view into the diseases of aging and a cause they all share—metabolic dysfunction. This is a longer, more detailed book than most ever written on the topic, yet Dr. Lufkin’s writing style is easy to read, friendly, and leaves you feeling empowered to take back control of your health.”

—Doug Reynolds, president, Society of Metabolic Health Practitioners; founder and CEO, LowCarbUSA

“I’ve had the privilege of reading an advance copy of *Lies I Taught in Medical School*, and it’s the best distillation of knowledge on metabolic health I’ve seen. Dr. Robert Lufkin not only tells you what was wrong and what the current understanding is but how to make use of it for better health.”

—James W. Clement, founder, Supercentenarians Aging Project; bestselling author, *The Switch: Ignite Your Metabolism with Intermittent Fasting, Protein Cycling, and Keto*

“Dr. Lufkin’s new book, *Lies I Taught in Medical School*, is a very interesting and clear assessment of the true causes of many of the chronic diseases of modern life, conditions like type 2 diabetes and

essential hypertension. Only if we know the true causes of illness can we be confident in our treatments. I found the book to be bang up-to-date and well referenced. Both the clinician and educated general reader will find much of interest. I honestly believe the wisdom in these pages is life changing.”

—David Unwin, MD, Diabetes Fellow of the UK Royal College of General Practitioners, 2016 National Health Service Innovator of the Year

“Dr. Lufkin’s book is a bold, hard-hitting presentation of the real facts about our health. It pulls no punches, protects no sacred cows in telling it like it is. It shows the reader where the government and medical profession got it wrong and where special interests have chosen profit over the health of the population. People who want the real facts and who want to save their own lives need to read this book.”

—Stephen Sideroff, PhD, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, UCLA Geffen School of Medicine and author, *The Resilience Response*

“Dr Lufkin’s new book, *Lies I Taught in Medical School*, represents an honest and critical appraisal of the current medical paradigm. Yet he balances his criticisms with a sincere and optimistic vision of an alternative, health-oriented paradigm with the potential to help many people live better lives. This book is a really nice read, with an important message.”

—Matthew CL Phillips, MD, neurologist, Waikato Hospital

“In *Lies I Taught in Medical School*, Dr. Robert Lufkin takes us on a journey through a multitude of both misrepresented and misguided ideas on what it means to be “healthy” and what it means to be “sick.” In his extensively researched book, Dr. Lufkin explains how our number one health issue is chronic disease, much of which is self-imposed and continues to kill millions each year. He provides detailed reframing of how we’ve been given some pretty unsound advice regarding our health, even by many well-meaning experts and physicians year after year. But most importantly, Dr. Lufkin not only

explains the science behind why so many of our so-called ‘healthy’ practices are actually making us sick, he also gives actionable practices we all can do that could change our lives for the better. While this book gives us a hefty dose of science, Dr. Lufkin presents it in a digestible way, which is both savory and sweet, all the while smartly holding the sugar.”

—Nina Shapiro, MD, professor emerita, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA;  
author of *Hype: A Doctor’s Guide to Medical Myths, Exaggerated Claims and Bad Advice—How to Tell What’s Real and What’s Not* and *The Ultimate Kids’ Guide to Being Super Healthy*

“*Lies I Taught in Medical School* is the controversial new exposé from the last person you’d expect to author such a book, an active physician and medical school professor. Dr. Robert Lufkin pulls back the curtain on more than a century of outright lies, half-truths, and ‘for the public’s own good’ claims that have made more people sicker with preventable diseases they never should have developed in the first place. Corporations continue to profit off debunked claims about nutrition and the root causes of chronic illnesses. *Lies I Taught in Medical School* is a brave book, and I believe every physician on the planet should read it.”

—Lucia Aronica, PhD, Stanford University



**LIES  
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# **LIES I TAUGHT IN MEDICAL SCHOOL**

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How Conventional Medicine Is Making You Sicker  
and What You Can Do to Save Your Own Life

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**ROBERT LUFKIN, MD**  
*with Joshua Lisec*



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*This book is dedicated to all who will never settle for anything less  
than  
the best possible health, wherever their lifestyle journey takes them.*

*Most importantly to Jenny, Raine, and Eden, my muses,  
who bring the ultimate meaning to my life.*

*And, of course, Butter.*

# CONTENTS

*Foreword by Jason Fung, MD*

*Preface*

- Chapter 1** I Did Everything Right and (Almost) Died Anyway
- Chapter 2** The Metabolic Lie: “Metabolism Is Just the Body’s Way of Digesting Food”
- Chapter 3** The Obesity Lie: “To Lose Weight, Just Exercise More and Eat Less”
- Chapter 4** The Diabetes Lie: “Sugar is Harmless, Other than Causing Weight Gain and Tooth Decay”
- Chapter 5** The Fatty Liver Lie: “There Is No Treatment for Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease”
- Chapter 6** The Hypertension Lie: “High Blood Pressure Is Best

Treated with Drugs”

- Chapter 7** The Cardiovascular Disease Lie: “Statins Are a Good Choice to Prevent Heart Disease”
- Chapter 8** The Cancer Lie: “Most Cancer Is Caused by Accumulated DNA Damage”
- Chapter 9** The Alzheimer’s Lie: “Alzheimer’s Disease Is a Progressive, Untreatable Disease Caused by Beta-Amyloid Accumulation”
- Chapter 10** The Mental Health Lie: “Metabolism Has Little Effect on Mental Health”
- Chapter 11** The Longevity Lie: “Aging Is the Inevitable Result of Accumulated Wear and Tear”
- Chapter 12** The Plan: Simple Lifestyle Changes Can Prevent and Reverse Diseases Conventional Medicine Causes

*The Truth Sets You Free—To Live Your Best Life*

*Lies I Taught in Medical School Companion Guide*

*Suggested Reading*

*Tell Me What You Think*

*Acknowledgments*

*Notes*

*Index*

# FOREWORD BY JASON FUNG, MD

Soon after my third book, *The Cancer Code*, was published, I received a congratulatory email from Dr. Robert Lufkin. He also told me about two of his interesting new MRI studies. One detected Alzheimer's disease ten years prior to a typical clinical diagnosis using biomarkers in the brain. The other MRI study tracked liver fat content changes to better monitor metabolic diseases and insulin resistance, which Robert will tell you all about in the coming pages. A mutual colleague, Dr. Charlene Lichtash, was testing all of her patients free of charge.

All these anecdotes fascinated me, given my research on fasting—a most useful tool for improving people's metabolic health. Megan Ramos, coauthor of the *New York Times* bestseller *Life in the Fasting Lane*, and I created a program to encourage sustainable, intermittent fasting for lasting weight loss ([www.TheFastingMethod.com](http://www.TheFastingMethod.com)). I've also authored three books—*The Obesity Code*, *The Diabetes Code*, and *The Cancer Code*, over a million copies sold in total—on metabolic health and how the medical establishment got it all wrong.

A hallmark of my work has been this connection between

metabolic health and chronic diseases such as diabetes, obesity, and cancer. Dr. Lufkin brought up this new research and these new technologies, knowing this was in my wheelhouse. It's in his, too.

And it turns out, our fascination with the relationship between metabolism and disease wasn't the only thing we shared. In the late 1990s, we were both employed at the same institution, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Dr. Lufkin was a professor in radiology. I was studying nephrology. I spent my time at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center. In my practice, I treated numerous cases of type 2 diabetes, easily the leading cause of kidney disease. And most of these type 2 diabetics *also* suffered from obesity.

Dr. Lufkin and I took different paths, but we both arrived at the same destination—metabolic health is the key to unlock lasting health and longevity. I approached metabolic health in terms of those three diseases—obesity, diabetes, and cancer—while Robert comes from a different angle. I was struggling to keep up with the cases of kidney diseases stemming from type 2 diabetes and obesity and was starting to make the connections between these chronic illnesses and metabolic health. Robert was approaching the root of the cause—metabolism, a subject that, before now, was rarely studied in the institutional environment except for a few lectures in a basic science class. Metabolism is for dietitians, we thought.

How wrong we were. Now, Robert is setting the medical field straight. His book, *Lies I Taught in Medical School*, hopes to change what future doctors learn—and what the general public believes to be true. Metabolism is the *most* important factor in preventing these chronic diseases, and Robert “shows his work” and demonstrates just that.

Dr. Lufkin shares my appreciation for the simple but effective tool of fasting. As I've written:

*There is one thing that the teachings of Moses, Jesus, the Buddha, Muhammad, and Hinduism appear to all agree on. Fasting is part of a healthy life.*



We also agree that lifestyle and metabolic factors play a huge role in cancer, type 2 diabetes, and obesity. Fixing your diet, rather than taking drugs, is the way to handle these diseases. As I argue in *The Obesity Code*, obesity isn't a disease of "calorie imbalance" but *hormonal* imbalance.

Saying that "a calorie is a calorie" implies that the only important thing about a food is the caloric energy intake. A calorie of olive oil and a calorie of sugar prompt very different metabolic responses, ones we can easily measure. Sugar increases blood glucose and drives up insulin production in the pancreas. Olive oil will do none of that. It's the hormonal response that is key to understanding—and treating—obesity. It's why *just* cutting calories and exercising more doesn't actually work.

But the number one thing that Dr. Lufkin and I agree upon is that, at the root of all of these chronic diseases, they are largely driven by growth factors. Especially insulin.

*Lies I Taught in Medical School* replaces the outdated paradigms we all followed (and got no results from) with the latest research, the newest findings, and the controversial conclusion I had to discover myself.

I couldn't recommend it more.

—Jason Fung, MD

Author of *The Obesity Code*,  
*The Diabetes Code*, and *The Cancer Code*

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# PREFACE

I've spent my career writing scientific papers and textbooks for a narrow academic audience. My natural tendency is to drill down and include lots of detail and references. I realize that this can be unnecessary, intimidating, and even counterproductive in the sort of book that I hope will reach a larger general audience.

The message I hope to communicate with this book is too important to be buried in a technical text—and it's time for people to have the information to be able to make their own choices about health and longevity. I believe the message of this book needs to reach a greater audience. In doing so, I struggled with keeping the information simple without oversimplification. My coauthor, Joshua Lisec, is responsible for making the book readable, enjoyable, and entertaining.

He gently steered me clear of making this just another textbook. He helped me resist my natural urge to include more (perhaps too much?) detail. He was able to guide me to thread the needle and walk the line between oversimplification and just enough simplification for a general audience to understand.

Anytime the book errs too far on the simplification side and misses key points of truth, or just gets things flat wrong, I am the one to

blame. Since the stories, insights, and opinions herein are mine, Joshua kindly agreed to a first-person singular author voice throughout this book—*I, me, my*, and so on, all referring to my perspective. This ensures continuity throughout the reading experience.

When the book resonates with a particularly memorable passage that illustrates complex ideas with crystal clarity, then Joshua is the one responsible. It's our hope that, between us, we have written a book that will be an enjoyable read while adding useful, actionable items anyone can use to improve their health and longevity.

Each of the “lies” we describe could be a book in themselves. In fact, there are much better and deeper books on the topics we cover. (We've listed some of these at the end of this book.) We intentionally aimed for simplicity in explanations, even when we left out technical details, if we didn't think the added complexity would help in the understanding.

It's good to remember that the “lies” I talk about and the alternatives I suggest to be true are all mere hypotheses—imperfect models attempting to explain the clinical experience of improving health.

The lies I taught in medical school have been replaced in this book by what I am hoping will be borne out as more accurate models. Of course, if you follow the logic and the way that science works, much (or all) of what is presented in this book as “truth” will be pointed out by some future author as the lies *she* was taught in the first quarter of the twenty-first century.

Finally, if I've learned nothing else through this whole process, I have learned hubris. Even the best “lies” that we come up with as explanations will never fully capture the complexity and beauty of the way that our reality truly works.

## **MEA CULPA**

To be clear, I have not personally published any peer-reviewed research in most of the areas this book covers, which is both good and bad. It's bad because I don't have a lab full of mice that I can run experiments on to gain firsthand knowledge. On the other hand, it's good to be more of a generalist. I can integrate broader concepts to a broader audience in a way that a specialist might not.

The hypotheses I am presenting as “lies” (or conversely, “truth”) are almost certainly all “lies” at some level, in that any hypothesis is just an approximation or model of reality that at some future date will be usually replaced by a superior version that somehow gets closer to truth, as best as we can know it.

As a medical school professor, I don't have any special access (for the most part) to any information that is not available (thankfully) to everyone. We live in the age of the internet, where the access to scientific information in the form of primary publications is unprecedented. Where paywalls still exist for some publications, they can usually be accessed via a physical visit to a local institutional library, although that is more difficult.

All I am doing is reading the scientific literature the best that I can. The ideas are not mine. They have all originated with deeper scholars than yours truly. I'm trying to recapitulate the ideas that seem to me closest to the truth into some sort of overall coherent narrative. I try to reference each of the sources the best that I can without overwhelming the reader. I try to exclude articles that fail on a scientific level to make their arguments.

I almost certainly have made many errors. If I made errors in the past and taught lies before, then some (all?) of what I am teaching now may also be suspect. I urge you to be suspicious of every claim that I make—and any claims others make, too. Look critically at the arguments for and against a hypothesis.

Presenting information is always a balance between information and entertainment. In the past, I have written textbooks aimed at a more technical audience with an emphasis on information. With this book, I aim to communicate complex ideas to a more general audience. I have tried to make it entertaining. My first impulse is to drill down the rabbit hole to very basic details on any subject, but I realize