

9 self-help books for 2009

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'Tis the season for self-improvement, and the bookshelves are full of betterment bibles from ab-centric to zany. If you need help making or keeping your New Year's resolution, check out these titles for 2009.

MANNERS FOR MISS

"The Man Plan: Drive Men Wild - Not Away" by [Whitney Casey](#) (Perigree, Jan 6, \$19.95). Journalist Casey's guide to getting a man isn't just another collection of dating don'ts and manners musts. Chapter by chapter, she gives etiquette tips on dressing, decorating, sports, wine, finance - even how to text-message. Anyone who's reads her tips on "Your Dream Bedroom, His Nightmare" has got to admit she's on to something.

WORTH A TRY

"I Can Make You Thin: The Revolutionary System Used by More Than 3 Million People" by [Paul McKenna](#) (Sterling, \$22.95). There's no great secret to British TV guru and hypnotist Paul McKenna's diet plan. His to-the-point book teaches you to pay attention to your appetite to learn when you should stop eating. The gem here is the accompanying hypnosis CD, a guided float through healthy eating and self-esteem to the tune of McKenna's tiger-purr baritone.

THE COPING COMPANION

"Work's a Bitch and Then You Make It Work: 6 Steps to Go from Pissed Off to Powerful" by [Andrea Kay](#) (Stewart, Tabori & Chang, \$15.95). The title of Kay's down-to-earth volume says it all: This one is about taking what you have and making it work. "Work's a Bitch" is about acknowledging the "naked truth" of workplace struggles and, with a refreshed perspective, increasing productivity, self-esteem and enjoyment.

THE CATCHALL

"The Great Life Makeover: A Couples' Guide to Weight, Mood and Sex" by [Daniel Monti](#) and [Anthony Bazzan](#) (Collins Living, \$24.99). M.D.s Monti and Bazzan, who run a midlife health center at [Jefferson University](#), call themselves "anti-geriatricians" "because we aim to keep our patients as youthful as possible," they write in the intro. Their clear, comforting book breaks down weight gain, sleep loss, exercise and intimacy with an eye on how they relate to growing older with the person you love.

AMMUNITION

"The Complete Divorce Handbook: A Practical Guide" by [Brette McWhorter](#) Sember (Sterling, Jan 6, \$14.95). If the economic tumble hasn't convinced you of the importance of protecting your assets, this book will. Former divorce attorney Sember, who has written extensively about the divorce and mediation, walks you through how to choose the right lawyer, divide assets (and debts) and prepare for social and psychological hurdles, all without making your head spin.

THE PERSPECTIVE-CHANGER

"What Men Say, What Women Hear: Bridging the Communication Gap One Conversation at a Time" by [Linda Papadopoulos](#) (Simon Spotlight Entertainment, \$22.95). From its opening chapter, "When He Says 'Tomato,' You Hear 'I Hate You,'" Papadopoulos' communication book comes with a sprinkling of humor and a grain of salt. It may not always be revelatory, but the advice on how to glean understanding and not take perceived slights personally rings true.

SNACK ATTACKER

"Eat This Not That! Supermarket Survival Guide: The No-Diet Weight Loss Solution" by [David Zinczenko](#) with [Matt Goulding](#) (Rodale, \$19.95). Men's Health editor Zinczenko returns with another in his series of picture-book primers on healthful and not-so-healthful foods. This one zings readers through the pitfalls of grocery shopping, pointing out why, for instance, you should top your hamburger with a Kraft [Velveeta](#) slice instead of a slice of Kraft Deli Deluxe Cheddar. Surprised? Check out the part about ice cream.

PRETTIEST!

"Bobbi Brown Makeup Manual: For Everyone From Beginner to Pro" by [Bobbi Brown](#), [Debra Bergsma Otte](#) and [Sally Wadyka](#) (Springboard Press, \$32). Makeup legend Brown's compendium of tips goes beyond blush, to say the least. She offers advice on exercise, skin care, even how to beautify hands and feet. And, of course, the book is packed with illustrated

how-tos from lips to lashes.

THE REINFORCEMENT

"The Skinny On: Willpower" by [Jim Randel](#) (Clover Leaf Publishing, \$12.95). Okay, you've made your New Year's resolution, but you may soon need a little encouragement. The latest of Randel's "stick-people books" follows the rudimentarily drawn Billy and Beth as he vows to get in shape and she starts a business. As noted on the cover, this one is "a super quick read"; it'll leave you with a basic psychological understanding of how to achieve your goals.