

FACTUAL+WELLNESS

# Authority & disbelief in nutrition info



# Expertise

Authors and influencers who provide nutrition education often **lack formal training** in nutrition biochemistry. The idea that “anyone” can talk about food and nutrients contributes to the **volume of misinformation**. Even MDs and PhDs can misunderstand and misapply scientific concepts to nutrition if their expertise lies in different fields. **Digestion and absorption are complex biochemical processes**. They may appear to be cause-and-effect, but oversimplification leads to misinformation.



# Context

Whether it claims to be pro-diet or not, food-related content will always have the **potential to polarize**. Readers may gravitate to an author's personal story, making it hard to **objectively consider nutrition or dietary advice**, including whether someone is qualified to dispense it. Readers may also seek to replicate the author's experience rather than learn how to apply principles to their unique circumstances. Individual health, genetics, food intake, and social environment make specific outcomes non-transferable.



# Accuracy

Most books published for a mainstream audience **are not peer-reviewed or fact-checked**. Readers often expect that information, especially about health and nutrition, has been vetted or proven. This doesn't mean that all books contain false information, but it *does* mean that **readers need to think twice** before accepting information as truth just because it's in a book or written by someone with a platform or credentials.



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# Liability

Every book, article, and social media post comes with direct or indirect **disclaimers**: What you read isn't personal or medical advice. **No author or influencer will take responsibility for negative effects.** For the same reason, critical thought is needed before giving them *credit* for positive effects. Starting a diet and feeling better isn't a controlled experiment; it's circumstantial. Yet authors use reader-success stories *all the time* to **sell more books** and enhance their credibility.



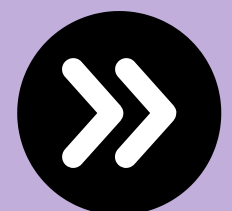
# Proof

Authors use anecdotes and reviews to demonstrate the effectiveness of their plans and ideas. But reader success stories are *not* evidence. While most might be true, they *could* be fabricated, exaggerated, or taken out of context. There is no systematic process to analyze success stories, so even if there are thousands, this doesn't equate to scholarly proof.



# Rigor

Authors may point to citation volume, word count, and number of pages to demonstrate research credibility, but volume alone doesn't equal rigor, substance, or accuracy. Word counts and citations can be used to enhance the appearance of credibility *and* avoid scrutiny.



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# Loyalty

The **scientific process** should allow for shifting views in light of new evidence. Experts should be given the flexibility to communicate updated stances rooted in the latest research. However, most health and wellness platforms are built on **values and views, not science alone**. This can leave health and nutrition communicators at the mercy of audiences who feel “betrayed” by scientific updates. It may also compel authors to **research from within a confirmation bias** to protect their platform, brand, and revenue.





# Ethics

**Misinformation is abundant** because most content comes from platforms without scholarly training in their subject matter.

The belief that *any* scientist can communicate about *all* science is false, just like *any* doctor can't provide *all* surgeries.

**Fact checks and peer reviews are essential** for ethical science and health-related communications. Platform size, years of experience, and charisma do not automatically verify credibility. When inquiries and verifications are **treated as personal attacks and complaints**, the scientific process is hindered, and misinformation flourishes.





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