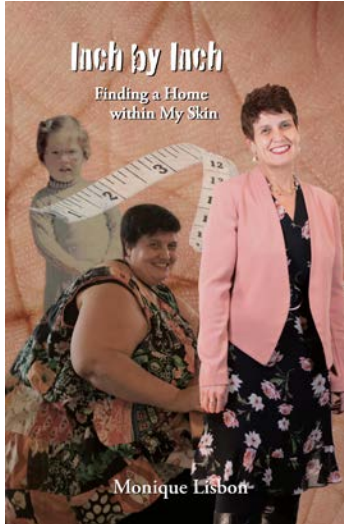




## The Eating Disorder Journal (July 2021, Vol. 22, No.7)



### ***Inch by Inch: Finding a Home within My Skin*** by Monique Lisbon

(Living Hope Resources:  
Ashburton, Victoria: 2020)

[www.inchbyinch.net.au](http://www.inchbyinch.net.au)

### **BOOK REVIEW**

Review by Mary Anne Cohen, [EDReferral.com](http://EDReferral.com) professional book reviewer, a professional psychotherapist since 1972 and Director of the [New York Center for Eating Disorders](http://NewYorkCenterforEatingDisorders)

This is a very brave book written by a very brave woman.

Beginning at the age of five, Ms Lisbon's father offered her up naked to a group of his friends to be molested. And, the following morning, to reward her for her "efforts," he treats her to a strawberry tart. Years of abuse by him and other perpetrators followed.

Seeking salvation from pain, she embraces the numbing oblivion and anesthesia of massive amounts of food. We know that abuse shatters the sacred innocence of a child and often becomes a primary trigger for eating disorders. Victims of sexual abuse become plagued with confusion, guilt, shame, fear, anxiety, self-punishment, and rage. And Lisbon chronicles her fifty years of depression, psychiatric hospitalizations, social isolation, bullying, and suicide attempts.

At her highest, Lisbon weighed 435 pounds and was almost immobilized by her fat. For so many decades, her own body was not something that belonged to her but a possession of others – a tool for their manipulation and control.

And, yet, in a defiant act of self-affirmation at age forty, Lisbon decides to take control of her own sexuality and hires a male sex worker to learn about her sexual needs and how to respond to them. This is an astonishing and courageous act especially for a devout Christian woman.

Years of therapy and the decision to have bariatric surgery follow which contribute to her reclaiming her sense of self "inch by inch."

The author describes that though this book "has been written following successful weight loss of 270 pounds, the book is not primarily a 'weight loss success story'. Rather, it is an exploration of a complex, difficult, lifelong relationship with my body, beginning with early

childhood trauma and moving towards a healthy and positive self-image after decades of hard psychological and physical work.”

Enclosed in the book is a CD of songs by the author recounting her journey of healing.

This is a fine and powerful story of one woman’s post traumatic growth. Highly recommended.

*Monique Lisbon is an Australian singer/songwriter, pianist, author and public speaker, with a special focus on finding hope. She is the author of two previous books on surviving childhood sexual abuse.*

More information from [www.inchbyinch.net.au](http://www.inchbyinch.net.au) and can be ordered at [Amazon](#).