

Week 5: Respect Your Body

As long as you are at war with your body, you cannot be at peace with yourself or food.

Unrealistic cultural standards and body vigilance fuel dissatisfaction.

We must accept our genetic blueprint. Acceptance does not equal complacency.

A Word About Weight Stigma

- Public health campaigns to prevent obesity have made it worse.
- It is an independent risk factor for a range of health problems.
- Healthcare is one of the primary sources of weight stigma.
- Trying to shrink your body to avoid weight stigma merely reinforces it!

When you are stuck in the I-hate-my-body mindset, you believe you do not deserve good things. What have you missed out on because of this? To feel deserving, you need to start doing the things that a person who felt deserving would do!

Why "Respect?"

- Does not require you to have any positive feelings about your body.
- You cannot take care of something you don't respect.
- Fosters an appreciation of your here-and-now body.
- The foundation of making peace with your body.

My body deserves to be fed.

My body deserves to be treated with dignity.

My body deserves to be dressed comfortably.

My body deserves to be touched affectionately.

My body body deserves to move comfortably.

How Can I Respect My Body?

Get rid of body-assessment tools

These are external measures that take the focus off what matters - honoring your body's true needs.

Stop body-bashing

Being overly critical of your appearance and comparing yourself to others breeds discontent.

Get comfortable

It is the job of your clothes to fit your body, not the other way around.

Be realistic

If obtaining or maintaining your "ideal" weight requires you to subsist on rice cakes and exercise hours a day, then your goal is not realistic.

Do nice things for your body

Your body deserves to enjoy things that make it feel good.

View your body as an instrument, not an ornament

Value function over form. Your body is the most incredible machine you will ever own!

Watch your media consumption

Find media that spotlight different types of bodies, and disengage from those that make you feel bad about your body.

Let go of the fantasy

You may need to mourn the fantasy body you have been chasing after. Consider the price you have paid in this pursuit.

BODY BASHING? TRY THIS.

If you start thinking body-bashing thoughts (such as "my _____ is/are so big; I hate how I look"), this grounding practice can help.

You can do this as an internal monologue, write it down or speak it out loud (whichever is most comfortable).

Follow these steps:

1

STOP

Take a pause. How are these thoughts helpful?

2

NARRATE.

Using a neutral, matter-of-fact voice, describe what you see or hear or smell or touch - without editing your words. For example: "*I see a cat. There are 3 cars parked. One car is a Toyota. Ugh, I hate my _____.*"

3

NOTICE.

Notice when the intrusive body-bashing thoughts re-enter. Don't judge; just quietly acknowledge that your thoughts have wandered and gently continue to narrate your surroundings. "*There go those negative thoughts again. I need to refocus and continue to describe what I see/hear/smell/touch.*" Acknowledge the thoughts and then move on.

PRACTICE is KEY.

It doesn't matter how often your mind wanders - the main point of the exercise is to train your mind to focus on things other than your negative thoughts. In time, you will be able to simply stop those thoughts and refocus, without narrating your environment.