



HEALTHY BODY IMAGE

Group Phone Coaching Conference Call Call Recap

The concept of body image is a **BIG** topic. It also presupposes that other people are going to be looking at our bodies. When we are alone at home it is unlikely that we have a poor body image. We put on clothes that are comfortable and just relax. But the second we leave our homes, we seem to care about what other people think of us. Enter Body image.

What does it mean to have a healthy body image? How can we be imperfect and still have a healthy body image? What is it about what other people think of us that sends us into a perfectionist frenzy? Why do we care about what others think of us? Are we being as harshly judged as well feel like we are in our heads. Or is this possibly a projection of our own way of judging ourselves and others. How can we separate our own stuff for the stuff that belongs to other people?

"You are too skinny. You sure are getting bigger. What is that you are eating? Oh, on a diet again? You don't need to lose weight. You shouldn't really eat that." Now let's add to the mix the images of perfection. The way the stars look, the way our fellow figure competitors look in a touched up photo from a photo shoot. We put these touched up photos on our fridge as if this is some realistic goal to achieve. If I put my own photo on the fridge, I wouldn't even be able to live up to it, so how can we live up to it if it is someone else?

According to Kathy Kater of www.bodyimagehealth.org there are 4 toxic myths to creating and maintaining a healthy body image. They are:

MYTH 1: IMAGE IS VALUED OVER SUBSTANCE

WHAT IT MEANS: "How I look" is more important than "who I am." An essential criterion for the "right" look is a slim/lean body. How it works: Mass marketing of ultra thin role models as if they were normal has been very effective in creating tremendous appearance anxiety and fear of fatness in individuals who naturally want to be normal and fit in.

MYTH 2: DENIAL OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

WHAT IT MEANS: Anyone can be slim if he or she works at it. Fatter people eat too much and/or are inactive. Fat is bad/wrong and inevitably unhealthy. How it works: For the drive to be thin to be widely embraced, biological diversity of size and shape has had to be denied. Instead of accepting that weight is influenced by many factors, and that wholesome eating and fitness result in diverse BMIs, the current norm is to mistrust the body's ability to regulate weight if/when the end result is or might be visible fat.

MYTH 3: DENIAL OF THE EFFECTS OF EXTERNALLY PRESCRIBED HUNGER REGULATION

WHAT IT MEANS: Dieting is an effective weight loss strategy.

How it works: Since restrictive eating commonly results in short term weight loss, this is routinely presented as evidence that anyone can be slim(mer) if they "work at it." "Dieting" continues to be viewed



as the primary means to achieve this, even though the basis for its dismal success rate has been well documented and understood since 1950. At least 90% of weight lost through any type of weight loss plan is regained, often with added pounds.

MYTH 4: DISCOUNTING THE VALUE OF HEALTH; COMPLACENCY ABOUT CHOICES THAT DO NOT RESULT IN THE DESIRED LEAN LOOK.

WHAT IT MEANS: Eat, drink and be merry... Healthy choices for health's sake (versus appearance) are too much work! How it works: When appearance, the drive to be thin, denial of biological size diversity, and the diet mentality dominate, the primary purpose of eating and fitness is lost: "Why eat healthy (or be active) if it won't make me thin?" Given a market flooded with entertainment foods and sedentary pastime options, the number of people who routinely override their internal weight regulatory system, are poorly nourished, and lack basic fitness increases exponentially.

BIG QUESTIONS:

What will it mean for me to look exactly the way I want to look? In other words, what does having this image goal represent? Some examples could be:

- Strength
- Power
- Self Reliance
- Beauty
- Taking care of ourselves

These are just some examples. Think about when you were completely happy with your body, and think about how that felt, think about what that represented for you. You may come up with some similar answers. So now here is a new question, can we have strength, beauty, power and other outcomes without having to look a certain way? Why do we need to look a certain way in order to feel a certain way?

MORE QUESTIONS:

Why eat healthy if it won't make me thin?

It is very sad to be able to relate to this. Think about it, have you ever passed on some broccoli or chicken because you weren't dieting? What about how it makes you feel compared to some other foods? What about other goals that are not related to the way you look at all.

SOLUTIONS:

Begin to make a list of goals that inspire you that are not related to how you will look. What kinds of goals can you come up with? What else is important to you? What about family? What about feeling great? What about being productive for work, or school. Eating healthy for those reasons. The following are some questions that you may find helpful in getting to the core of your body image issues and creating a healthier relationship with yourself.

This fitness journey is supposed to be fun, not a struggle. When it becomes a struggle, is when we know something is off. Let's work on this and get to the core of how we really feel about our body.



WHAT CAN I DO TODAY TO INCREASE MY HEALTHY BODY IMAGE?

1. Get it out on the table. What are your body issues?

2. What do you think is the cause of these issues? Did you make a mistake? Is it your fault? Are you defective? Do you feel that you did something wrong? Or are you doing everything you know how to do?

3. What do your issues represent? In other words, if you had your body exactly as you wanted it to be, what would having that do for you? What is the desired feeling you are going for? Some examples may be self respect, discipline, beauty, strength, character. What is it for you?

4. Is there any other way that you can have your desired feeling besides fussing over having a perfect, body, hair, face, skin, arms, abs, butt, biceps, weight, waist measurement?

5. Make a list of all of the things that inspire and motivate you to live a healthy lifestyle that are not related to how you look. Focus on other elements of your life that will enhance your physical journey by incorporating personal goals.

SPECIAL NOTES:
