

10 “Will-Power” for Improving Body Image

By Michael Levine, Ph.D.

1. Twice a day, everyday, I will ask myself, “What do I really gain from preoccupation with what I believe are defects in my weight and shape?”
2. I will think of three reasons why my assumption that thinner people are happier and “better” is ridiculous. I will repeat these to myself whenever I feel the urge to compare my body shape with that of another person.
3. I will spend less time in front of mirrors of any type. All they do is make me feel uncomfortably self-conscious and only magnify each body part I focus on into a bigger and bigger flaw.
4. I will exercise for the joy of feeling my body move and function effectively, not to purge fat from my body or compensate for calories eaten.
5. I will not avoid activities I enjoy, even if they call attention to my weight and shape. I will constantly remind myself that I deserve to do things I enjoy (e.g., dancing, swimming, and sunbathing) no matter what my shape.
6. I will refuse to wear clothes that are uncomfortable or that I dislike, simply because they divert attention from my weight or shape.
7. On my own or with the help of loved ones, I will list 5-10 good qualities I have (e.g., empathy, intelligence, or creativity) and I will repeat these to myself whenever I veer toward telling myself “I’m a failure because I’m too fat.”
8. I will practice taking people in general seriously for what they say, feel, and do. Not for how thin or how “well put together” they appear.
9. I will develop activities and relationships that enrich my self-image, thereby making it less likely that my self-esteem will revolve around feelings about my appearance.
10. I will give my body what it really needs, moderate exercise, a healthy diet, sensual pleasures, and relaxation. Then my body will respond by treating “me” better.

References:

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