

10 tasty bites for loving your body and dealing with your eating, weight and body hang-ups!

- 1. Find the starting point of your hang-ups and start from there. It is usually something to do with grief, trauma, abuse, life changes or loss.**

My own eating and weight issues started after the death of my grandmother and I couldn't deal with the emotional pain of losing her. Food filled my void. Deprivation also kept me focussed on something other than my sorrow. I learned a pattern of self-survival by looking becoming very independent and burying my emotional pain in my studies and in my closet eating and exercise regimes.

- 2. Share a secret and lighten your load**

With weight, body image and women's health issues, there is generally a secret that has not been shared, which sits stored in your body and it keeps asking to be "pushed down" usually with food or other pain-numbing substances or addictions. Find a "safe someone" to share your secret with. Don't do this to go into victimhood, "poor me" or to "stir up stuff" mode, but feel the lightness that get when you off-load something that has weighed you down, often for a very long time. When the secret is shared, your weight, body or well-being issues begin to change.

- 3. Pay attention to your body's physical signs of hunger and fullness**

Recognise what your physical hunger signs of hunger and fullness are. A gurgle, cramp, saliva drop, headache, lull in concentration, smell, body sensation, taste in your mouth... Eat when your body shows you that you are physically hungry or thirsty. Recognise your fullness signs. After each bite, ask yourself, "Am I full?" If so, stop! Thank your body for telling you exactly what you need. Pay attention also to physical body signs that are asking you to move, exercise, make love, slow down, look after your health or take a holiday.

- 4. Differentiate physical hunger from emotional or spiritual hunger.**

When I'm tempted to eat, indulge, over-indulge or deprive myself, I ask myself, "What am I feeling and what do I REALLY need?" If I am lonely I call a friend. If I am sad, I express that somehow. If I am lacking direction, I take one step that leads me to a different place. If I am pining love, I do something nice for myself or ask someone for a hug. When I feel empty, I find what my soul is crying out for. Sometimes it's music, a creative outlet, a night out, a good belly-laugh or a word of encouragement. Ask the Universe to provide signs to direct you to the right people, places and activities that will "fill" you at that soul level.

- 5. Stop grumbling and practice body gratitude and self-forgiveness**

It is easy to focus on the "woes" of your body – the things you think aren't right with it, the problems it is experiencing or the way it looks. Change to a "wow" attitude. "Wow, look how my body has healed, changed, adapted, loved..." or "Wow, look how beautiful.....is" or "I love this about me and my body". Forgive yourself for what you have put your body through in the past. Say, "I'm sorry", and follow that up with new actions aligned with self-love and body gratitude.

6. Jump OFF the scales and throw away the tape measure

We have an obsession for numbers as a measure of success – how many centimetres our waistline is, what number is on the scales, how many days we went to the gym this week or how often we gave up on our diet. Instead of external measures being your mark of success, start focussing on your internal treasures - love, passion, free-spiritedness, compassion, integrity... Such personal qualities do not change.

7. Stop self-bullying! It's not OK. Find a new name for yourself

Most people don't tolerate bullying, but don't realise they are bullying themselves regularly with the names they are using and actions they are doing that belittle, punish and mistreat themselves. Ban the words ugly, disgusting, big, fat, or any others that belittle you and are not the truth about you. Walk away or close your eyes and ears to anything other than self-love talk. Start using self-honouring and body-loving names.

8. Stop fobbing off compliments. Notice and compliment inner beauty in yourself and others

Stop complimenting people on their clothes, appearance and their situation as you see it. External beauty and "got it togetherness" is transient and is changed by many external factors like aging, wellness, ill-health, stress, money, crowd you belong to, relationship stuff, masks we wear...and other factors. Complement people on their INNER beauty, great personality streaks, talents, skills, visions and values. When others complement you, RECEIVE it with a "thank you." Don't fob it off, or tell them where you got your clothes from, where you got your hair done or what diet you have been trying. Just notice they are appreciating YOU.

9. You are smarter than you think. Trust you gut and own inner knowingness

Most of us know loads about diets, calories, food, exercise, and what to take for what problem or how to cure a certain health complaint. Google is our friend, and yes it's good to get advice now and then. But actually only YOU know YOU the way you do. Get back to our own gut feeling, intuition, inner guide... about your situation. The way I do this is to sit in stillness, pose a question and sit and listen. Follow your heart and soul, not your mind.

10. Connect with someone in soul who thought your were the "bees knees" – a.k.a very loveable, gorgeous, beautiful, talented....

This doesn't have to be airy-fairy. You might want to look at their photo, snuggle up in a blanket you once shared, listen to music that brings back memories of them or ask for some tangible signs that they are "still around" helping you. They will appear. I now connect with my grandmother by wearing her ring. I talk to her in my quiet moments or when I need to make a decision. Start nourishing and nurturing yourself with compassion, much like they would want for you.

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