

Weight Stigma or Anti-Fat Prejudice, Anti-Fat Bias: What in YOUR mindset?

Give yourself time to reflect on the following prompts. Journal your responses.

Sometimes it's helpful to

- notice a physical response (tension in your shoulders, butterflies in your stomach, for example),
- then check in with what emotions are coming up,
- then try to identify what thoughts are driving those emotions. You can then CHOOSE to think different thoughts. (yay!)

What are your thoughts about overweight or obesity?

- Is it attractive?
- Is it a choice?
- Is it uncomfortable to be around?
- Is it funny?
- Do people of high weight deserve to be treated differently?
- Is thinness desirable?
- Are you relieved when someone larger than you walks into a room?

There aren't right or wrong answers here-be curious and honest in your responses.

What images, thoughts or feelings come to mind with words like

- Fat
- Thin
- Overweight
- Obese
- Strong
- Skinny
- Fit
- Athletic
- Attractive

Have you been on the receiving end of anti-fat bias?

How did it make you feel?

Are you weight biased against *yourself*?

- What do you do when you look in a mirror? (DO you look in a mirror?) What are your thoughts, words and actions?
- Would you speak to someone you care deeply about the way you speak to yourself?
- Do you make fun of yourself first?
- What beliefs do you have about activities you can do, clothing you can wear, places you can go based on your size or your weight? Is there something you really want to do but don't believe you can because of your weight?
- Do you self-sacrifice or over extend yourself, feel like you have to put the needs of others in front of your own? Can you say why?

Would you like to think differently? Would it feel better somehow to do so?

Choosing to think differently about weight can mean trying to overcome some pretty ingrained bias, culturally and individually. Be patient with yourself, practice those new thoughts. You can shift gradually:

- Recognize thoughts
- Choose to change
- Desire the change
- Hope for the positive outcome, the feeling good, feeling better
- Expect the positive outcome
- Be ready for it
- Accept it
- Appreciate it
- Enjoy it!

Last issue we talked about mantra's. Perhaps you can create a mantra to help shift your thinking away from an anti-fat bias to a more weight inclusive mindset...that "*optimal health is available to a wide range of sizes and weights*". Or even simpler, like ...

*I really like the idea of accepting myself as I am.*

I am not implying that if you just say nice things and think happy thoughts, you will be healthy and will no longer have any concerns or bad experiences about your weight. BUT, changing your thinking can help create the energy and inspiration to take good care of yourself-to do what you need to be healthy and to thrive...to live your best life. It will also help you be more resilient in standing up to or weathering anti-fat bias when it rears its ugly head in your world.

Remember, you can wish you were thinner AND still be accepting and compassionate towards yourself NOW. There really is no upside to beating yourself up. It doesn't work, does more harm than good-and dear friend *you simply deserve better than that.*