

*before you diet...*



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AN EXPLORATION OF BODY TRUST

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# HOW TO USE THIS **WORKBOOK**

- ✦ Print the workbook and gather your favorite pens.

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- ✦ Plan a date with yourself for this process. Make adequate space for it so you can work through all of it. 45 minutes will do; an hour or more would really give you time to think and reflect.

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- ✦ Find a safe and comfortable space. Settle in. When you are there, ask yourself, "How can I make myself just a little bit more comfortable?"

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- ✦ Let go of judgment. Notice thoughts that might say "I know this already."

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- ✦ Listen to the answers that come from your mind and your body.

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- ✦ Watch for when you feel the truth emerging.

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- ✦ Trust yourself and your intuition.

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- ✦ Most importantly, enjoy this time with yourself.

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- ✦ Before you begin, close your eyes and take some really deep breaths.





After making the list, name all the feelings you have when you look at it. It would be typical to notice things like frustration, anger or disappointment, and it might be harder to name things like shame or self-blame.

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**Now, this is a really important question to consider.** Have you ever blamed “the plan” (see *your list*) or have you always blamed yourself? You know, it’s really common to blame yourself. In fact, many people believe they need to blame themselves in order to feel motivated to try again. The startling truth is the dieting industry is a \$60 billion dollar industry with a 95% failure rate. They need repeat customers. Your self-blame works against you and for them.

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## Now for the different part.

If there were to be **no more judgment** about your body (we know that can be hard to imagine), what would you want to do to take care of yourself?

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How would you feel?

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“Tears began to well in my eyes and I cried not out of **regret, remorse or feelings of need**, but because I recognized **truth** and I was **grateful**.”

- Vandita

Many women learn that their body is a problem from a person or source **external** to them by the time they are 10 years old. When did you first learn that your body was a “problem”? Who was the source? Describe the details.

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Feeling fat and being self-conscious of one's size tends to lead a person to do things to "check" their body. Some women "feel fat" occasionally. Others "feel fat" almost all of the time. How do you currently check your body to make sure it is okay?

- Stand naked in front of mirror
- Step on the scale
- Step on the scale daily
- Step on the scale multiple times a day
- Feel for bones or fat
- Scan a room and compare bodies
- Measure body parts with hands or tape
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**"We have judged ourselves out of our *magnificence*."**  
- Panache Desai

Imagine what would be possible if you decided your body wasn't the problem. Place some thoughts here. Make a list.

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Complete this sentence: If there was no more waiting for me to reach my "desired" weight, shape or size, I would...

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Many people identify with this cycle of dieting.



People cycle through this dozens of times in their life, and yet they **NEVER** blame the plan. They tend to blame themselves. This cycle creates thoughts like...

*“What’s wrong with me?”*

*“I have no willpower.”*

*“I’m such a failure.”*

## Trying different instead of harder.

After many years of listening and developing a language and practice to help people move toward a sense of wholeness and wellness, we have identified six core competencies to provide some guidance for the remarkable change process you are considering.

“The curious paradox is that when I *accept* myself just as I am, then I can *change*.”

- Carl R. Rogers

**Develop sustainable health practices ::** Many of the behaviors we adopt in the name of ‘health’ (aka thinness) are not ones we can sustain because they do not honor all of us – our emotional, physical, spiritual and relational health. Research shows that lasting behavioral change and movement toward a natural weight range is much more likely to occur through ‘self care,’ rather than the self loathing, body dissatisfaction and fear that motivates people to diet. Shift your focus toward the development of sustainable health practices that are flexible to meet the demands of your changing life.



What are some health practices that you might engage in now, regardless of their impact on your size, shape or weight?

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**Practice intuitive eating** :: Deepen your connection to internal cues of hunger and fullness, increase awareness during your eating experiences and learn to tune out the constantly changing rules of the 'dieting mind.' When making decisions about what to eat, honor your taste buds and your health because when eating healthy tastes good and makes you feel better, you are much more likely to maintain changes in your eating habits.

How do you decide when to eat? When to stop eating?

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How do you decide what to eat?

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**Engage in joyful movement** :: EVERY body benefits from regular physical activity, regardless of size. In fact, research consistently shows that fitness, not fatness, is what matters most when it comes to health. Disconnect your motivation to move your body from your size, shape and weight and focus on how an activity makes you feel. Root movement in loving-kindness and gentle expectations. If you don't like it, then it's not for you. You might have to let go of your ideas of what counts. Apply the pleasure principle, get moving, and find more energy and joy in your life as a result.

What are three reasons to move your body that have nothing to do with how you look?

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What activities bring you joy, pleasure and satisfaction?

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What activities do you dread doing because they bring no pleasure or feel like punishment?

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**Cultivate body trust ::** Body dissatisfaction, dieting and disordered eating harm us in so many ways. We lose confidence in our ability to make good choices for ourselves and turn to so-called experts to tell us what, when and how much to eat and exercise. Over time, trust in ourselves and our bodies is destroyed and we end up feeling more disconnected from our own experience. It is possible to regain the trust you had when you were born into the world so that your body becomes a safe and welcoming place to live as time goes on.

How has your body, just as it is, helped you survive in the world? What does it do for you every day, regardless of how you treat it?

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What was food and eating like for you before you decided (or someone decided for you) that your body was a problem?

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Do you remember a time in your life when you were more active just because it was fun? When was that? What were the circumstances?

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**Nurture self-compassion ::** When you are able to understand that personal struggle is part of the experience of being human, you are more able to speak your truth, move away from shame, and act in the interest of your own well-being. When you have compassion and empathy for others, you feel warmth, caring and act kindly towards them. The same can happen when you increase compassion for yourself. It is in this space that the capacity for change increases, and your relationship to your body and yourself begins to feel different.

What would you say to a dear friend or loved one if they were complaining about how much they weighed or what they just ate?

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If you don't like your body, how are you going to take care of it?

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**Redefine success ::** No longer will you have to measure your worth and your progress by the number on the scale or the size of your jeans. Discover more meaningful markers of your health and wellness—reduced body hatred, increased trust with food, more satisfaction and joy in your life and feeling more confident in your own skin. Imagine that!

How do you feel after reading about our core competencies?

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Which one calls to you the most? Why?

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“You can search throughout the **entire universe** for someone who is more deserving of your *love* and *affection* than you are yourself, and that person is not to be found **anywhere**. You **YOURSELF**, as much as anybody in the entire universe, **deserve** your *love* and *affection*.”

-Gautama Buddha



What would life be like if you decided to **try different** instead of harder?

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Finish this sentence: My greatest hope for myself is...

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If you could start by trying just one small new thing, what would it be?

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Finish this sentence: I'll introduce this change with curiosity and kindness by...

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The **truth** is that meaningful change is a process. It can be **uncomfortable** and is often **risky**, especially when we're talking about embracing our **imperfections, cultivating authenticity,** and looking the world in the eye and saying, ***"I am enough."***

- Brene Brown

Reclaiming body trust starts by turning towards your body with curiosity and building your awareness of it's inherent wisdom slowly over time. The practice of body trust involves tuning into your body, listening for its cues, and then acting accordingly. It is hard to trust your body in a culture that doesn't. This path is radical because it means letting go of what our culture commonly expects and prescribes for our bodies and moving towards weight-neutral self-care practices. Without a doubt, **EVERY BODY** benefits from good self care.

**Believe** that you can do this.

**Try different, not harder.**

We are here to support you in your journey to lose the weight of body hatred.



**be nourished**