

Love All of Yourself

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Self image is a very important factor in how people perceive themselves. There are so many societal norms put onto people that pressure themselves to become someone that is not to become popular and well liked. These norms are portrayed on television, social media, and even through music.

People will physically harm themselves to be able to fit in and be deemed attractive to society. A positive body image is important for all body types, skinny or obese or something in the middle. Being healthy is what is important, physically and mentally. When you are a parent, being body positive is more important than ever because not only are you thinking it but your impression of yourself can affect the way that your children think of themselves. I was raised with both of my parents being bigger and I think it brought comfort to me because I am a bigger person. So when my mom talked about herself in a negative way, I questioned whether I should be looking at myself that way, especially when I was younger and still living with them. Now as I have moved out, I have become more comfortable in my skin and both of my sisters are that way too. All three of us are of different weights and sizes but we love ourselves and each other just the same and that is what is important. I think that social media feeds into the way of thinking that people are only attractive if they look a certain way but there is a lot more to being loved than physical attraction. What you look like, skinny or obese, as long as you are healthy is what should matter to your partner. Of course you are going to look different than what people portray themselves as on social media because there are so many body types in the world. Individuality is a human trait and we are all humans.

Having a child and raising them to be healthy human beings is what is important. So if my child asked me to get them a doll for their birthday I would want to be inclusive. I would take

into account what dolls they already had, if they had a skinny or bigger doll and get them the opposite of what they already had. Or if I knew that my child was having problems with how they looked I would get the doll that most resembled them and their body type. There is no simple choice, you have to think about who your child is and how you want them to think about themselves. If you continually get your child skinny dolls, where is the inclusivity, same goes to dolls that are bigger in their body type. A child needs to know that no matter how big or small you are, being healthy is the most important part. I do not think that I would change my choice of doll because of the gender of my child. If my son wants a doll, I would treat it just the same as if I had a daughter that played with dolls. A child's imagination is a powerful thing and as a parent we should foster that imagination to the best of our abilities and let them be a child for as long as it is healthy. Body issues should not be a problem that they are thinking of, especially when it comes to what their dolls look like. As I have said before, a parent's self image is important to a child's self image as well. Children tend to pick things up, things that we would not imagine them to but they are so intuitive that they can and will pick up on things that we, as parents, unconsciously project. We also have to be aware of the things we outwardly project. As parents you should focus on keeping your child healthy now, not worrying over whether or not in the future they may be obese and therefore not pretty enough. In the textbook *Psychopathology: An integrative approach to mental disorders* Chapter 8 page 2a the author states, "In one early study, toddlers with affluent parents appeared at hospitals with 'failure to thrive' syndrome, in which growth and development are severely stunted because of inadequate nutrition." So maintaining a healthy body image consciously and unconsciously for the sake of your children is essential in how they view themselves in the future whether they be skinny or obese. Being healthy is what you should strive for your children to not be defined by their body image.

References

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