



**DEVELOPING A  
POSITIVE BODY  
IMAGE,  
INCREASED SELF-  
CONFIDENCE & AN  
OVERALL HEALTHY  
RELATIONSHIP  
WITH OUR BODY**

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Part II

Now that we have laid down the three foundations for beginning the journey to having a healthy relationship with your body ... To recap:

#1, becoming more aware of the cultural and social norms and values that have been impacting how we see and relate to our body, and then making conscious choices to develop healthier views and beliefs, (i.e., "In my culture, I am aware that full-figured bodies, especially female bodies, are frowned upon, but I am choosing to accept my figure and relish in my physique.")

#2, committing to making small and simple choices that will get the ball rolling in the direction of conscious relating to our body (i.e., "I will remember to feed my body a nourishing breakfast," "I will make an effort to be in bed with the technology away by 10pm and make healthy sleep a priority."), and

#3, beginning to see your relationship with your body as you do a new and fresh budding friendship, or a cherished and valuable family relationship. In doing so, hold back on criticism and self-debilitating beliefs by choosing to just allow those old thoughts to simmer on the back burner. For the time being, allow yourself to express gratitude and recognition for what your body is already doing well and where it currently satisfies you (i.e., "I love my beautiful eyes," "it is so wonderful to be able to enjoy food so delectably and have healthy digestion," "I need to pay attention to my weight and what I eat, though I am grateful that I am on a journey to learning how to nourish my body in a better way). And remember, like any relationship, even the one you have with your body, can be improved, repaired, and restored. Be curious. It is a work-in-progress. As such, let's continue...

#4, Be Ready to Have Some Fun, to Explore & Get Creative! Any relationship needs quality fun time, and a bit of novelty & excitement! Find what your body (and you, in the process) enjoy, and engage fully in

And by this, I mean, do more than self-care. Do quality indulging time. Find something you truly enjoy smelling, maybe some fragrant flowers, and allow yourself the opportunity to fully indulge for a few moments in the scent and notice how your body responds to the pleasant smell. Or you can do the same with something that you truly enjoy eating, or touching. Engage in the same experience, but this time connect with how your body feels and affirm the experience by telling yourself, "the taste of this delicious food truly gives me an amazing feeling in my stomach," "the feel of satin feels so pleasant on my skin. I feel lovely in my body. I feel calm and relaxed." Now, I can imagine what you may be thinking!? What if you happen to maybe enjoy some experiences a bit too much?! That's okay! You really only need to sense and experience the feeling long enough to identify the experience before you can move on. For those things you truly, truly enjoy, engage with them! Fully! For a few moments, as you identify the pleasant feeling/s in your body, affirm them by telling yourself things like "I feel a sense of warmth and comfort when I hug a familiar blanket and how pleasant that feeling is in my body."

Most times, when we engage in over-indulging, we do so mostly unconsciously and attribute other feelings besides the pleasure in our body to the experience, such as safety or security. For our purpose, we are only recognizing the pleasure and satisfaction arising in the body and affirming that our body can and does allow us to safely feel wonderful sensations which we can then appreciate and begin to be grateful for.



### #5, Respect & Trust.

Imperative to any healthy and successful relationship. Even the one you are developing with your body.

It may be hard to do in a body that has experienced, or is battling, a disease, abuse, addiction, or chronic pain, to name but a few. Though, it is nonetheless critical and is something we may be consistently working at improving.

Maybe your body has been a source of great discomfort, or even pain, and that is irrefutable. Though, you can strengthen it, and your connection to it, but beginning to believe that "maybe, just maybe, my body can heal itself." "My body can feel good! It has before and it can again!" "I am learning to trust that my body can grow strong enough to overcome this illness. In fact, my body IScapable of overcoming this illness." "I respect all that my body already does without a bit of effort on my part - I respect the effortless beating of my heart and the respiration in my lungs." "I am learning to believe and trust in my body and it's abilities (much as I do when I am strengthening my connection to my friend, or partner - I am believing in them - and I am learning to believe in my body)". "I trust in my body's ability to balance itself, to feel safely, to be a place of comfort and health and well-being." "And I am developing trust in, and honoring, my body's signals - signals requesting rest, food, relaxation, stimulation, exercise..."

### #6, Patience & Commitment.

Commit to the lifelong journey of befriending and developing a healthy relationship with your body. As in any relationship, we will make mistakes. We will do things unintentionally. And we will need to be forgiving towards our own shortcomings.

Patient with ourselves and patient with our body. When we recognize that we have fallen short, we can recommit ourselves. We can respect that any relationship ebbs and flows, and what's most important is staying determined and committed to seeing things through.

*To your pleasant discovering & healthy & rewarding mind-body-soul connection,*

*Bracha Oriana Fishman*