Once upon a time I would regularly stand sideways in the mirror to scrutinise my body. Standing on the end of the bath I would use the huge wall sized mirrors to view myself from every angle possible. I would pick at bits that I particularly hated about myself to really ruminate and focus on, and trust me there were many.

In all of this extensive scrutiny my belly was the main focal point of my relentless barrage of self hatred. From taking selfies on dodgy cameras in the 2000s, to checking every reflection opportunity regardless of how skewed it may have been: the TV screen, changing rooms under dodgy lighting, and window reflections. I wouldn’t call it vanity although I understand that it may sound that way. It was never to admire myself, or to check my make up but instead to check how fat I was, and how much of a failure I was for not having lost any weight.

I used to stand in first position (ballet) and check my belly, my waist and shoulders from the back and side. Eventually I started measuring my waist multiple times a day because in my mind the weighing scales just didn’t show “progress” quite as well. I was in the depth of my eating disorder. Regardless of which eating disorder I was engaged with the same insecurities prevailed; the same poses regardless of how much weight I lost, didn’t lose or gained.

I will never get those hours back. For a long time, part of recovering from an eating disorder is removing triggers from the home: bread, cereal, weighing scales, mirrors, or whatever it is that you struggle with in particular. I only just recently graduated to getting a full length mirror again. I found it helpful in the process of learning to not obsess over my reflection and body shape or size to not have one. With just a head sized bathroom cabinet mirror to check for toothpaste, mascara smudges and whether I could push it another day without washing my hair. I’d consider these the basics. Now I have a full length mirror that
I briefly check my overall outfit in sometimes. No belly checks. No shoulder blade analyses. No standing in first position and taking measurements.

I may have gained weight and realising just how much no one gives a fuck is brilliantly liberating. Sometimes now when I’m watching TV, or sat on the bed idle I actually like to rest my hands on my belly. Sometimes it pokes out from under my top in front of my friends and I’m not embarrassed anymore; it’s my belly and I’m healthy. It doesn’t mean anything more or less than that. It doesn’t need to be toned or trimmed or flattened. Sometimes it’s quite comforting to poke and prod my belly whilst sat around. I have no idea why or what exactly caused this seismic shift in mentality, but I’m quite affectionate of my belly and if I see it jiggling in a video it doesn’t upset me like it used to.
See here, I am having the time of my life running through ridiculously deep autumn leaves. My belly is jiggling. Yes I noticed it. I’d be lying if I said I didn’t but look at that smile; that is more important to me.

Using my body to feel good and strong is more important to me. Wearing clothes that are comfortable and I feel nice in is important to me but the size label in them isn’t. I am proud of my recovery from my eating disorder. It was one of the hardest battles of my life and an experience I will never forget. This experience fuels my passion for nutrition, health and empowering others to make peace with their bodies and food. Soon, my belly and me are going to start training to be a Beat online mentor.
There’s serendipity in this. Maybe all those hours I spent body checking, weighing and measuring myself wasn’t a ginormous waste of time. Something good can come from this in relation to my purpose on this earth; from that experience I have gained a passion, a purpose and a drive to help others. I feel that this is finally going to start happening in real terms with this volunteering opportunity and I’m really proud of that, perhaps more proud of that than my little belly.
The power of practicing gratitude has the potential to be something quite incredible. Culturally in the West we are conditioned almost to always want for more, or with our bodies ironically we want for less. Less waist, less weight, less is more when it comes to beauty and looking good, or so we are told. We are primed to be perpetually discontented, dissatisfied and looking to others who always seem to have more of whatever it is we want: friends, tech, clothing or, ticking more beauty standard ideals with their appearance.

Like any other skill in our tool box of tricks to get us through our days reasonably content and in one piece, it takes a bit of practice in order to change our thinking patterns. The good news is that it can be done and that it can be an effective tool to develop a healthier relationship with your body and body image.

In a study conducted by Armstrong State University, USA, gratitude and cognitive restructuring were compared for effectiveness in reducing body dissatisfaction amongst college age females. The group studied had not sought clinical help for body dissatisfaction and eating disordered related issues. The importance of body image and dissatisfaction is that the feelings we have towards ourselves often permeate other areas of our lives: body dissatisfaction has been associated with depression (Jurasico, Perone & Timnko, 2011) and social anxiety (Cash, 2011) for example.
Cognitive restructuring is a CBT technique. CBT is an established treatment for many mental health and well-being complaints including: bulimia, anxiety, depression. By comparing a gratitude based intervention to an established intervention such as cognitive restructuring, the effectiveness of each intervention on body dissatisfaction can be compared.

The strength of using gratitude based interventions for body dissatisfaction is that it increases appreciation for non-appearancce based aspects of one’s self and life: gratitude interventions have been found to be causally related to improvements in intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of well-being including: increased happiness, decreased depression, improved pro-social behaviour, decreased aggression, improved sleep and concentration (Watkins, 2014).

There does need to be more studies in order to confirm or dispute similar findings. However, with this in mind gratitude is a promising intervention for people experiencing body dissatisfaction without a clinical diagnosis of an eating disorder.

Gratitude works is by changing perspective on what is important in life and how and what we judge ourselves and ourl ives to be worthwhile. This study illustrates the potential effectiveness that can be had from introducing and working on gratitude in order to improve well being and happiness.

With this. Line of thought fresh in my mind, and my own practicing of gratitude lately I will be exploring some personal experiences of gratitude and how practicing gratitude has helped me alter my automatic thought patterns over time. As a disclaimer I am not suggesting gratitude is a cure-all, but more of a handy tool to help contribute to a changing way of relating to the world around us.

References:


August 21, 2018 / Leave a comment

Dumping “Body Image” in Return for “Body Love”
Diet culture is everywhere. It is pretty difficult to avoid, especially when dental adverts are colluding success rates with weight loss rates, and big influencers like Kim Kardashian are partnering with companies like Flat Tummy Co. to promote appetite suppressing products to their hoards of followers. It is difficult to believe that being in a body that doesn’t fit the beauty ideal of slim, toned and strong is OK. It’s hard to believe that you too are an acceptable body or that you can run a marathon.

Bryony Gordon and Jayda Seza ran the marathon this year in their underwear to show that runner’s bodies come in many different shapes and sizes. Being a different size to the bountifully pushed ideal does not mean you can’t enjoy physical activity, that you can’t be strong and most of all that you can’t be
healthy. There are so many brilliant body positivity activists now showcasing that you can be “bigger” and healthy. There is a wave of activists fighting back against the body fascism and fat phobia in the name of “health”.

Since recovering from my eating disorder admittedly with a helping push from my meds increasing my weight in a way that was out of my control, I learned to relinquish any form of “control” over my body. I knew this time around on Quetiapine that it worked for me, but for it to keep on working for me I had to stay on it. Without it I relapse, plain and simple. A toss-up occurred between keeping a sense of control over my “recovered” weight and remaining mentally unwell, or relinquishing such control and giving the Quetiapine a real chance to work in the longer term. This was a very scary time for me. I have spent a decade of my life at war with my body, trying to control it and living in the safety confines of my eating disorder. Suddenly, recovery took a whole new turn – I wasn’t only maintaining a “healthy” weight, I was letting this medication cause havoc with my appetite and metabolism. If I had any hope of maintaining some stability with my moods though, this was it. Having tried most other medications suitable for my illness that this was the one that worked if I let it – and by let it I mean staying on it regardless of the weight gain. I made the only decision I could if I wanted to really start building any sort of future for myself. I stayed on the medication.

I learned a lot during this time. I learned that being well in a bigger body was definitely the right decision. My fitness journey into running, climbing and falling in love with movement, in addition to my studies in anatomy and physiology have caused a complete dimensional shift, and ultimately an entirely different view for me, on what body image is.

Although I am no longer a skinny, my stomach has an extra padding of fat as opposed to the almost concave structure of previous years, and my thighs touch for the first time in my life. I have boobs, which are great although still slight, and it is easier to catch myself at an angle wherein which I have a double chin on show. I can shake my arms, and they wibble a little, and I have speckled cellulite over my thighs and bum when I tense. Speaking of which, I still have absolutely no bum. I need a larger size of clothes than I ever have previously yet still, no bum, and you know what? I am the most comfortable I have ever
been with my body.

Yes, it looks a certain way in pictures and mirrors – but really, my body is not a picture. My body was not made solely to look a certain way. My body was made to function, to breathe, contract, relax, move, jump, run and skip for joy. My body lets me enjoy the senses of living be they the smell of fresh bread or dog shit on my shoe. My body brings me enjoyment in food, and digests it pretty well as energy in order to continue functioning as the amazing, complex piece of biological machinery that I am. Not only do I function, but my body allows for me to have a mind and a conscience. My body allows for emotions, and it fights diseases so I can still keep on enjoying experiences and living healthily. My body is not a picture. My body is so much more than that.

The sum of all this? I value my body more for what it can do, where it can take me, and the experiences it can give me. I’m no longer so hung up or concerned with looking a particular way, but more in doing particular things. Sure sometimes I have a momentary dip in confidence, sometimes I catch myself iterating diet culture messages of too much, need to lose weight, pain is gain and all that tom fuckery – but my choice in responding is to try to check in with myself when I notice these thoughts cropping up. I remind myself I am more than my mirror image and always will be.

I want to climb walls, and climb them better. I want to gain strength and resilience, and run all these races that I’ve signed up for. I want to dance, and move, and shake and enjoy what my body makes achievable for me every single day. I want to celebrate my strengths, and work on enjoying my body in more ways than I can possibly imagine. I can eat wonderful foods thanks to my body. I can conquer feats I never before thought would be possible for me like The London Marathon. I can have sex and enjoy all the sensations that brings. I can get myself around every day, and my legs do a fucking fantastic job of getting me around London on my bike. My arms do a great job at allowing me to do all the things I enjoy: writing, reading, playing the ukulele really badly, climbing, eating, drinking, and in a hap hazardous way they contribute to my atrocious list of dance moves that I like to bust out when the party’s right. My eyes, they let me see all these beautiful sights that make me thankful to see everything I can: nature, skylines, sunrises and tropical storms. I can smell the warmth of the rain, and the freshness of cut grass and fresh coffee. The complexity of these joys cannot be captured in a photo or a mirror. Life is richer than that and so am I, and so are you.

My awkward smile may hint at the joys I have been experiencing, and my over excited crazy photos may capture a moment, but how my body looks, fuck that. It’s not important. I am healthy. I am capable, and I am taking advantage of those biological wonders that nature has blessed me with. So it no longer matters that I don’t fit into my skinny jeans, and it no longer matters that my arms aren’t spindly spaghetti features. My face is no longer structured by emaciation and malnourishment, and my waist is no longer so tiny it’s to die for, quite literally. My body is giving me life, and it is up to me to capture and cherish that fact.

So for as far as my body image goes, it’s not about image; it’s about sensations, feelings, experiences and love. Instead I will say that my body image is largely irrelevant but my body love is engaging with a pattern of exponential growth.

So there it is. I fucking love my body – and I bet yours is pretty darn fabulous too regardless of how it looks.
Flushed: Inside Bulimia

*Trigger Warning* – If you are experiencing or have experienced an eating disorder this post may be triggering for you.

To the buzz of 7am she hits ‘snooze’. 7.10am. Snooze. 7.20am. Snooze. Each day is dreaded and deferred for as long as can be; it is a school day. Another day of skulking along in the shadows of school walls, of silently answering the register and trying to climb the stairs to classes without collapsing into the dizzy embrace of starvation. Running her hands over her body she smoothes over her stomach, ‘how fat am I today?’ feeling the angular jut of her hip bones, ‘are they more than yesterday?’ Conveniently she doesn’t have time for anything more than her morning coffee, the warmth of which gives her a hazy buzz of faint energy to push her on the school bus where she sits by the window trapped behind her own panes of glass that suffocate her with self-hatred, anger and despair.

The noise of chaos has wound to at the full throttled pace at which it will be all day, “Fat bitch. Don’t eat. You don’t deserve to eat. You’re a fat pig. You’re a fucking ugly mess. Exercise. Burn the calories. You can survive off the fat you’re carrying you greedy bitch” and on it goes, tallying calories upon calories, adding, subtracting and goal setting.

If she could just avoid all food completely, if she could just get past those dinner time hours she would be...
fine, if she could just lose 40lb, she would be calmer, happier, and loved maybe? Instead of heaving into the porcelain whirlpool each and every night, homework would be done, extra study like she used to maybe. She could pull that grade up that’s been slipping so stealthily through her grasped hands. She’s not a D Grade student; predicted A’s the doubt is setting in with teachers. Her future is slipping into disappointed prospects and being flushed away just like every other part of herself, her life, her everything.

In class she answers ‘yes miss’, ‘yes sir’ so barely there, a shell of her former self. No longer is she told ‘quieten down please girls’, ‘stop the chatting’ or ‘I’m separating you three’ – now, ‘I can’t hear you’, ‘can you speak up?’ ‘Oh there she is’ on resignation that speaking up is no longer an option.

Lunch is a compulsory routine in the gym alone whilst the echoes of everyone else having fun and hanging out bounce between the corridors and through open windows from the field. Being with people is exhausting. Cracks are showing. “I’m really tired too” – they retort to her passing sighs, “no, you don’t understand” fatigued, she’s unable to muster the strength to say anything; this is a whole new type of tiredness. Speaking, thinking, just existing is a task so soul destroying that she wishes for nothing more than to disappear. Unable to concentrate in class, her head meets the desk discretely and she drifts off unable to stay awake until finally that last bell of the day rings.

The kettle simmers and the taste of her hot chocolate is so soothing, the sugar rush so gratifying: shakes subside and weakness eases. Ready for bed she naps. She hears of her friends talking about hanging out after school, those days are gone. The thought of being around people for any longer than absolutely necessary rises an intolerable frustration. Loneliness is much easier; there’s no pretending to be OK, forcing smiles or hiding behind breaking defences.

Frantically grasping at and pulling boxes of cereal from the cupboard, pouring bowl after bowl she eats so fast she cannot even taste or chew before she even realises that she is in the kitchen. Frenzied with hunger and despair she has mastered the art of eating cereal and toasting slice after slice, smothering it a centimetre thick in butter and marmalade. In between toasting she lathers up pieces of bread and whilst raiding the outside freezer taking solace in knowing no one will notice. Grabbing frozen bread rolls that are too many to be counted, grabbing at frozen meals she piles a heap of chips in the oven whilst defrosting the bread in the microwave, stuffing it all in whether it is fully defrosted or not, whilst another defrosts into a soggy mass of starch in the microwave. Peeking into the food caddy, are there any leftovers from their dinner last night? How about the bin?

She slows down, bent over nearly double, unable to stand fully for the pain of her distended stomach. Pounding the stairs fearing that she might explode in agony she heaves on 3 time after time, again and
again. Saliva, snot and tears stream down her face and arm, her red raw knuckles and puddle of urine on the floor from heaving so hard are the mess she finds herself in every day. This is her secret life, this is what she is becoming, and this is her world of lies, shame and hidden torment. She hates it, but hates to be without it more. It is an addiction.

Always home alone, there is comfort to be found here from the tip toeing around afraid of making a wrong move and listening to the screams, tears and punching of walls. Bingeing is a whirlwind of turmoil that she so desperately wants to stop but by comparison the retching is peaceful for her, a tranquil haven from reality. It is never enough until she hits exhaustion, until she is collapsing on the floor from violent heaving, and resting in the haze of the aftermath.

Climbing into bed entirely unaware if her parents even came home that night she writes a diet plan for the next month. Her goal weights are beyond emaciation yet she remains a ‘healthy weight’. Diet plans, diet pills and fad diets consume every other waking moment. Tomorrow she vows to not eat. Tomorrow is a new start. Tomorrow will be different, until it pans out exactly the same and with each grinding day, the obsessions entrench, the self-hatred deepens and the original conflict hides beneath another surface, another layer, another mask to wear.
What It Really Means To Love Your Body

“I looked in the mirror and loved what I saw. If I can do it, you can too” – Insta Influencer

Of course you do, you epitomise the current beauty ideal: Gym Bunny Barbie, Health Freak Barbie, Can Survive In These Proportions Barbie – but this image is still unattainable for most.

#BodyPositivity #LoveYourself

Apparently loving how you look is still the secret elixir to loving yourself and your body. Loving yourself still equates to enslaving yourself to your reflection. I mean, it’s important to not hate what you see but apparently, according to this particular Insta influencer, aesthetics remain key to happiness and health.

Good for you but I call bullshit.

When you love someone else how do you say what it is you love about them? Do you say, they have chiseled abs, a stunning jaw line and a booty worth twerking about? Of course you do during the lust phase, the honeymoon period of not being gable to keep your hands off each other. What about a year down the line, or five? After you’ve dealt with their death shattering snore, their farts at the airport security from nerves and little habits that are generally quite annoying, what do you say then? Valuing a partner on looks alone won’t sustain a relationship.

A deeper connection. The way they know what to say to cheer you up? The way they so badly don’t know how to cheer you up but you find it funny in hindsight? How about the conversations that never end and stimulate your mind and soul to no end? And the way they put a packed lunch in your bag even though you said you didn’t want one because they knew you’d get hungry and eat it anyway? None of those things are banging on about abs and jaw lines, so why should we focus on loving ourselves in this way? Putting the sole focus on body positivity on loving your reflection is pure, utter and complete bollocks.

The process of starting to love yourself includes more depth than this. It includes acceptance and appreciation, gratitude and developing core self-esteem. It is a process of the mind and a matter of perspective. I’ll use myself as an example. I don’t love how my body looks, far from it. I’ve gained a lot of weight these past couple of years from my medications, being unwell and generally neglecting myself at times. Self neglect when unwell with mental illness means more than not showering enough or brushing your hair, it includes not eating properly, not changing, not exercising, not sleeping, or over sleeping and neglecting every aspect of self-care there is.

I’m actually ‘technically’ according to the archaic BMI chart overweight at the moment. At the same time I don’t hat my body, far from it. In fact, I like my body more than I ever did and not because of how it looks. I accept that my body is at its biggest and I’m working on managing that in order to remain healthy. I accept my belly, and the scars on my arms and that a lot of my clothes no longer fit. I don’t like it and I accept it.
The reasons I love my body are more of an appreciation. My body allows me to run and climb. It allows me to have energy to do things in the day. My heart beats and my lungs breathe with ease. My muscles are stronger than they once were and this allows me to progress at my sports activities if I put the effort in. I am capable of different experiences like the view from the top of a great big hill over a beautiful landscape, all thanks to my body. I feel different textures which can be soothing for me. I smell the beautiful wafts of perfume and baked bread thanks to my body. I can enjoy sex thanks to my body – here’s a hat tilt and wink to my nervous system and vagina for all the orgasms. I can see beauty. I can express myself fun entirely uncoordinated dancing. The list really is endless, but thanks to my body I am alive and can experience many wonders of living thanks to my body.

That’s some pretty dope shit and you know what the crux of all these things is? I can’t see any of this in my reflection or a picture alone. Yet I love my body for all these things.

Through psychological work over many years I learned to respect, appreciate and accept my body in a holistic way. Becoming toned, health food obsessed and going to the gym most days didn’t change my perspective and feelings towards my body, therapy did. I didn’t even heal through an Eating Disorder service or therapeutic programme for eating disorders. I did it via a course of schema therapy. I am very lucky to have received this on the NHS I know, and I wouldn’t recommend going down the roads I did to land in the place. Now I’m on the other side of that part of my life though, I acknowledge this isn’t necessarily the answer for everyone. I also learned to stop caring what others thought of me and my body. I enjoy my body and this provides my motivation to live a healthy lifestyle in order to maintain good physical and mental health. I exercise because it makes me feel good holistically in addition to reaping the health benefits over the longer term. I exercise because I love my body, not because I hate it to want to change it or look a certain way, and this is why I’m not buying the “I looked in the mirror and loved what I saw” as a phrase of self empowerment and body love.

Our love for ourselves goes deeper than our reflection, just as our love for other people does. It comes from our mind, our heart and a healthy dose of self compassion. Acceptance and gratitude are also helpful ingredients for the elusive loving yourself recipe. And if you don’t love yourself yet, but you are embarking on a journey of gratitude, acceptance, and self compassion honestly, it only gets better. It pays to pay attention to our mind and how we think about ourselves. Not everyone needs intensive therapy in order to achieve this, and if you do, that’s OK do. This is the part where I say, if I did it, so can you. You’ve got this, at whatever stage you’re at.

I can honestly say I know how it is to hate yourself – and now look at all the things I think are pretty neat about my body. Reach out, ask for support, but most importantly work from the inside out and eventually maybe you’ll look in the mirror and say, “You’re not looking perfect dear body of mine, but I think you’re pretty neat and I love you anyway like I’d love a cat with three legs and one eye”.

*fist bump*
Ditching The Weighing Scales For Good!

How I moved away from compulsively weighing, through the weight anxiety to finally ditching my scales for good.

My set of scales are pretty standard and I’ve had them for years. I don’t even remember where I was in my journey with food when I bought them. I’ve read many times that an important step in recovering from an eating disorder is to get rid of your scales. There were a few reasons as to why I’ve resisted taking this step.

Initially it was because I know banishing them from the house would not stop me from weighing myself or ease my anxiety when I was still recovering. I knew that I had to get to a place of using them less and placing less importance on their result with them around. Otherwise I would just buy another set, or would obsess when I went to someone’s house who had a set. It just didn’t feel like the right approach for me at that time.

Once I was more recovered I was put on medication that affects weight. A third of people on Quetiapine in the long-term develop diabetes and become overweight enough to negatively impact physical health. I was anxious about this happening to me and how not feeling in control of my appetite and weight could potentially trigger old behaviours. I did gain weight each time I went on Quetiapine.
Despite this, I stuck it out and have been taking it for the longest time that I ever had previously. Finally, I decided that the positive effects of Quetiapine outweigh the weight gain, and potential metabolic alterations it can cause. The decision to push on with taking it despite weight and appetite changes that at times felt bordering on out of control is that those side effects have eventually subsided. Who knew? I have stopped taking Quetiapine many times previously out of fear and anxiety of potentially feeling out of control with my appetite, and the unknown. Each time, I get very unwell again. It’s just a general shit show.

14 months later and I am not scared anymore. I’ve adapted. Yes I gained weight and ironically since I’ve stopped weighing myself regularly or trying to control my diet in any way there have been no drastic changes. I’ve pretty much stayed about the same and in this time, despite being near my highest weight I am more comfortable with my body than I have ever been.

Possibly due to some radical acceptance being practised. Ultimately though, this disproves my earlier theory that I had to monitor my intake and weight because of my medication. It also proves that my body has a way of adapting, staying well and maintaining some form of homeostatic harmony.

According to the BMI chart I’m probably still overweight, and I’m also pretty healthy. Most would agree that the BMI is an outdated and archaic measurement of health but it’s still used. There’s another myth disproved by my own experience, that BMI is important. I could play Bingo with previous misconceptions at this rate!
I fend off infections and illnesses well, I exercise, I enjoy it, I’m not unfit, I eat pretty balanced and I’m partial to a pain au raisin lately. Yeah I’ll look at food labels sometimes to see if it’s particularly high in sugar or saturated fat but it is more of a glance over to understand the composition of different foods. It is not the be all and end all, just more of an awareness about what’s in my food choices.

In general I feel the need to follow the path I’m advocating. No hypocrisy, no secrets, and full transparency. It’s time to listen to my body. It finally feels like the right time to take such a step. I feel confident that I won’t buy more in a panic or feel lost without them. This is a pretty big step and hopefully perhaps the final one in moving completely out of eating disordered behaviour, comforts and rituals.

5 Reasons Why You’re Not Losing Weight On Your Diet

When your body is trying to tell you your diet or lifestyle change isn’t as healthy as you thought
We are constantly bombarded with how unhealthy we are as a nation. We’re getting more obese year on year, our children are more obese than they’ve ever been, we don’t exercise enough, we eat too much and we don’t eat enough of the “right” foods. The government have even written a Childhood Obesity Plan in order to try and tackle the growing problem of our nation’s health. It’s natural to respond to these messages by trying to be healthier in your own diet. That’s perhaps largely the purpose of some of these messages.

Many people set out on diets with great intentions: they want to feel more energised, be more active and hit their daily fruit and veg quota of 7 a day. Alongside those intentions is a dieting industry that is massive just waiting to help you on your way with ‘quick fixes’ and ‘easy plans’.

For example, at Be:FIT 2017 when I was looking at a product the sales person assumed I wanted to lose weight and tried to sell me a formula for that. I was a healthy weight and had no interest in losing weight. It seems that everyone is fair game regardless of their health status because the dieting industry’s message is quite clear, we could all do with losing some weight. Not all diets are healthy and sustainable though. There is a massive failure rate for dieters. The storm of trying to lose weight can look very overwhelming and bleak.
If you have decided that you want to lose some weight, or revamp your diet then there are some tell tale signs that your diet isn’t all that healthy despite how many celery sticks and crackers you trying to fill up on.

1. You’re always hungry:
   If you’re always hungry then your diet isn’t sustainable. Your body makes hunger signals in response to a need for energy and nourishment, e.g. food not some spiritually embodied meal replacement shake. Identifying real hunger from emotional, boredom or habitual hunger however can be tricky but ignoring your hunger regardless of the reason for it isn’t leading you anywhere healthy.

2. Your diet is stressful:
   If you find yourself hangry and stressed because you can’t find a suitable something to eat that you fancy then that’s pretty stressful. This could indicate that you’re diet regime is too restrictive. Food is a form of sensory enjoyment and when that enjoyment becomes a huge stress and you find yourself wishing you could be non-human so you didn’t have to eat because it’s too much stress then it’s time to re-evaluate the sustainability of your diet.

3. Eating becomes about emotions:
   We all comfort eat to some degree. A classic break up scene involves copious orders of pizza and ice cream in front of the TV. Emotional eating becomes a real problem when eating patterns and behaviours become a way of experiencing, expressing of stuffing down emotions, whether that’s overeating or under eating. It can go either way. Responding to emotional overeating with a restrictive diet to “undo the damage” will only fuel your disharmony with food. There’s a whole range of good advice, books and support available out there to help with healthy expression of emotion and regaining confidence with food.

4. Fat becomes a feeling:
   Fat isn’t a feeling. It isn’t an emotion either. If ‘feeling fat’ becomes a regular rhetoric for you when you’re feeling something unpleasant then it’s time to do some digging about what you’re really feeling. When fat becomes a feeling, whether you actually are fat or not becomes irrelevant and you
can find yourself feeling ‘fat’ even when you’re very underweight. It also entrenches the negative connotations to the word fat, which gives the word way more weighting than it deserves.

5. **Guilt and shame start hanging around:**
A diet that is very rigid can mean more chance of swaying from the plan. This creates and heightens feelings of guilt for eating a ‘bad food’ such as chocolate bar. No one died from a heart attack because they ate a chocolate bar or two on occasion. Feeling so emotionally worn down because you ate something doesn’t have a place in a healthy relationship with food. None what so ever. If the shaming is coming from someone else for your food choices and it keeps happening it may be time to stick up for yourself. I don't mean punch them, but in a reasonable way saying something along the lines of “I’d rather you didn't comment on my food Karen” might help avoid internalising their judgement or snapping with a “FUCK OFF KAREN!!”.

February 5, 2018 / Leave a comment
Binge-eating carries the idea of eating a lot in a short space of time. So with that in mind, can you really binge-watch television? You can’t actually watch a show any faster than anybody else. A 45 minute TV show takes 45 minutes to watch, no matter how many episodes you watch back-to-back. I would suggest that the term has been reappropriated for somewhat humorous effect and become a new word in its own right. Treatment for Binge Eating Disorder. Binge eating disorder is an eating disorder in which a person eats a large amount of food at one time (binging), in order to cope with relationships and the stresses of life. Unlike bulimia, where a person throws up the food they eat after a binge, a person with binge eating...