



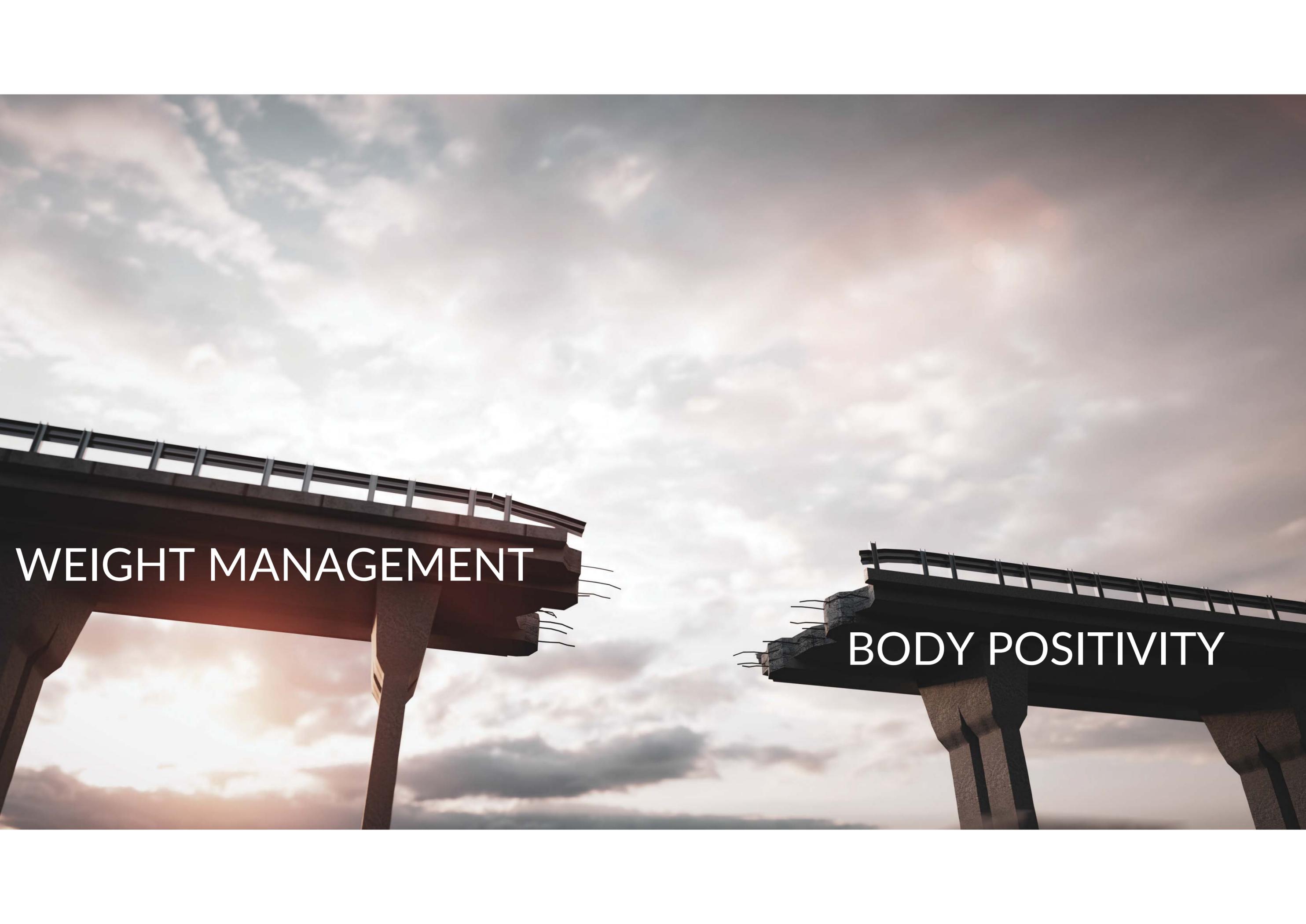
Body Positivity & Weight Management: Is There a Middle Ground?

Robyn Pashby, PhD

www.dchealthpsychology.com

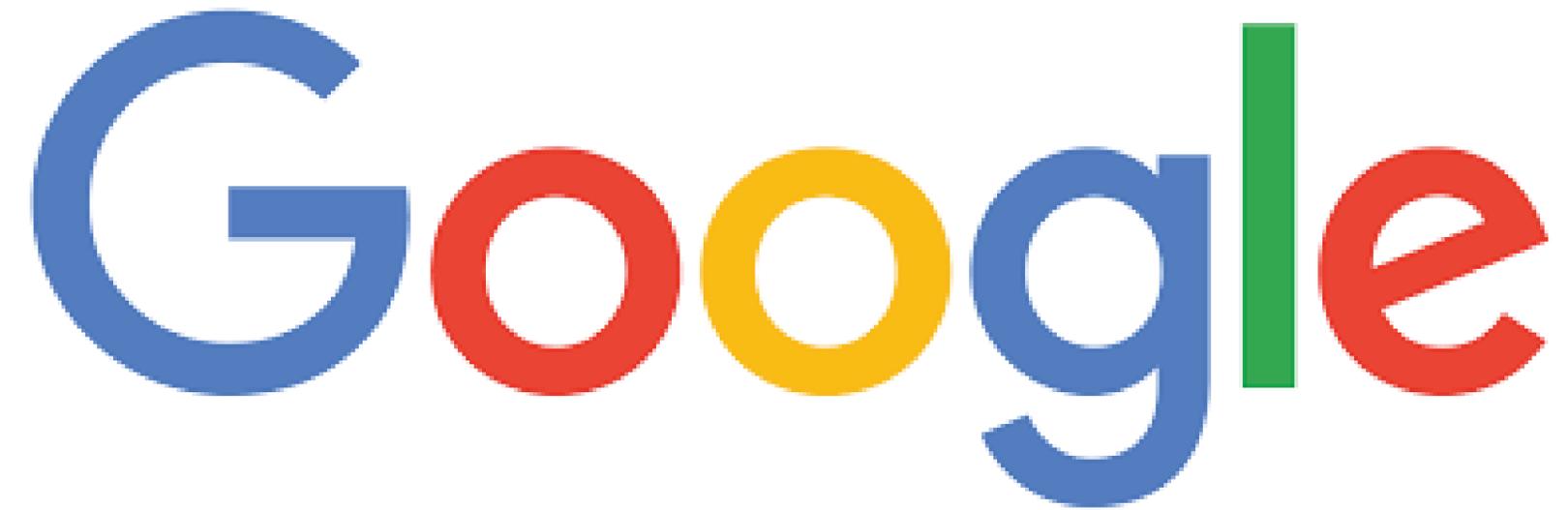
www.healthpsychadvisors.com



A dramatic sky with soft, scattered clouds in shades of grey, white, and light blue. The sun is visible on the left side, creating a warm, golden glow. In the foreground, the dark, silhouetted structure of a bridge or overpass is visible, with its concrete pillars and metal railings. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

BODY POSITIVITY



Body Positivity and Weight Loss

655,000,000 results

2/25/23

Body Positivity

"Body positivity" originates from the fat acceptance movement from the 1960s.

It is often equated with anti-diet culture.

BP was created to empower those with marginalized bodies, and currently "seeks to challenge dominant societal appearance ideals and promote acceptance and appreciation of all body shapes, sizes, genders, and skin tones."

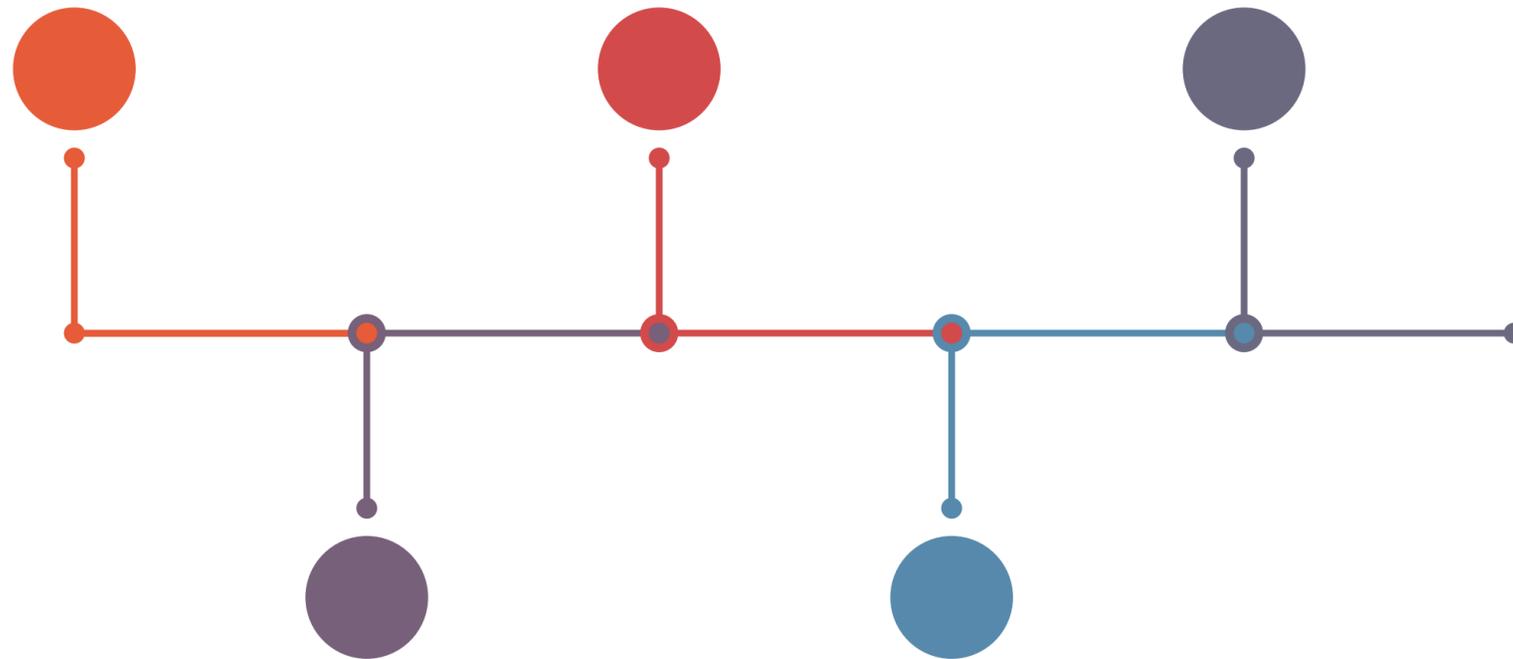


History

In the 1960s, NAAFA (The National Association to Aid Fat Americans)* campaigned for equal rights for people of higher weights and criticized the diet industry

1996
thebodypositive.org
founded by a therapist with a hx of eating disorder

Today "BoPo 2.0" criticized for practicing "performative positivity"



Fat Manifesto 1973
"equal rights for fat people in all areas of life" - published by the Fat Underground

Body Positivity
hashtag on IG 2012
& today #bodypositive has 18,534,428 posts

*NAAFA now known as National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance

NAAFA NEWSLETTER
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION TO AID FAT AMERICANS, INC.
P. O. BOX 745 WESTBURY, N. Y. 11590

October 1970

in-Chief: "MEG" Gwynne Eastern Editor: Lew Louderback Western Editor: M

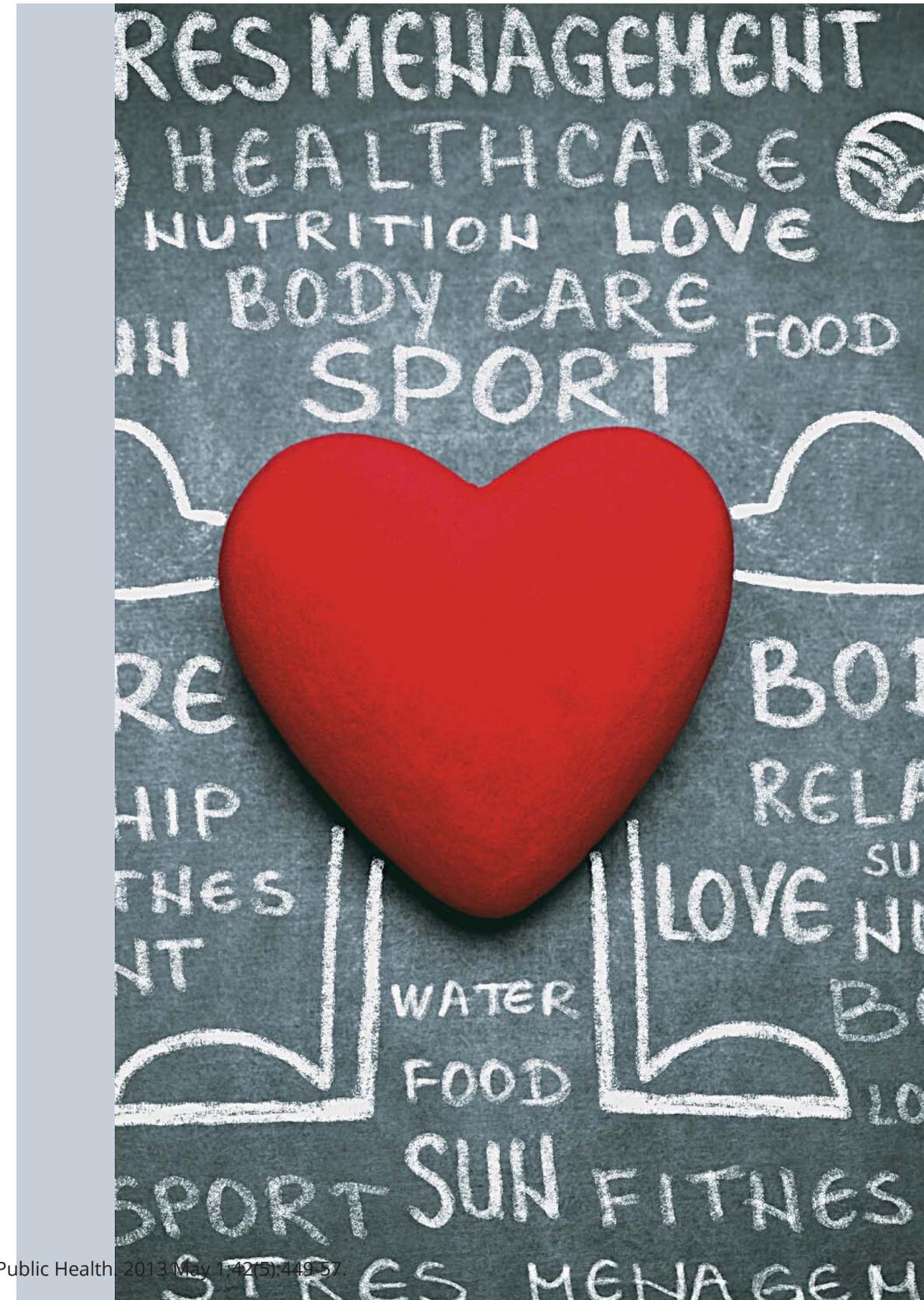


NEW YORK TIMES INTERVIEW: Bill and Joyce Fabrey (right) talking about NAAFA at interview given by the Times. With them are Marvin Grosswirth, NAAFA's Public Relations Officer, and Press Shirley Stoler, an Honorary Life Member. Other NAAFA members at this meeting are S. Lubin, April Vandetta, and John G. Trapani, Esq. Photo courtesy the New York Times

Weight Management (or obesity treatment) have been conflated with ("Diet"ing)

The 'diet culture' has grown from what originated in ancient Greece with the word *diaeta*, meaning not just food but “way of life.” It was meant to encompass food, drink, lifestyle, and exercise...not just a way to lose weight.

"Dieting" today is a focus on losing weight, for any reason, but often focused on appearance or size.



History

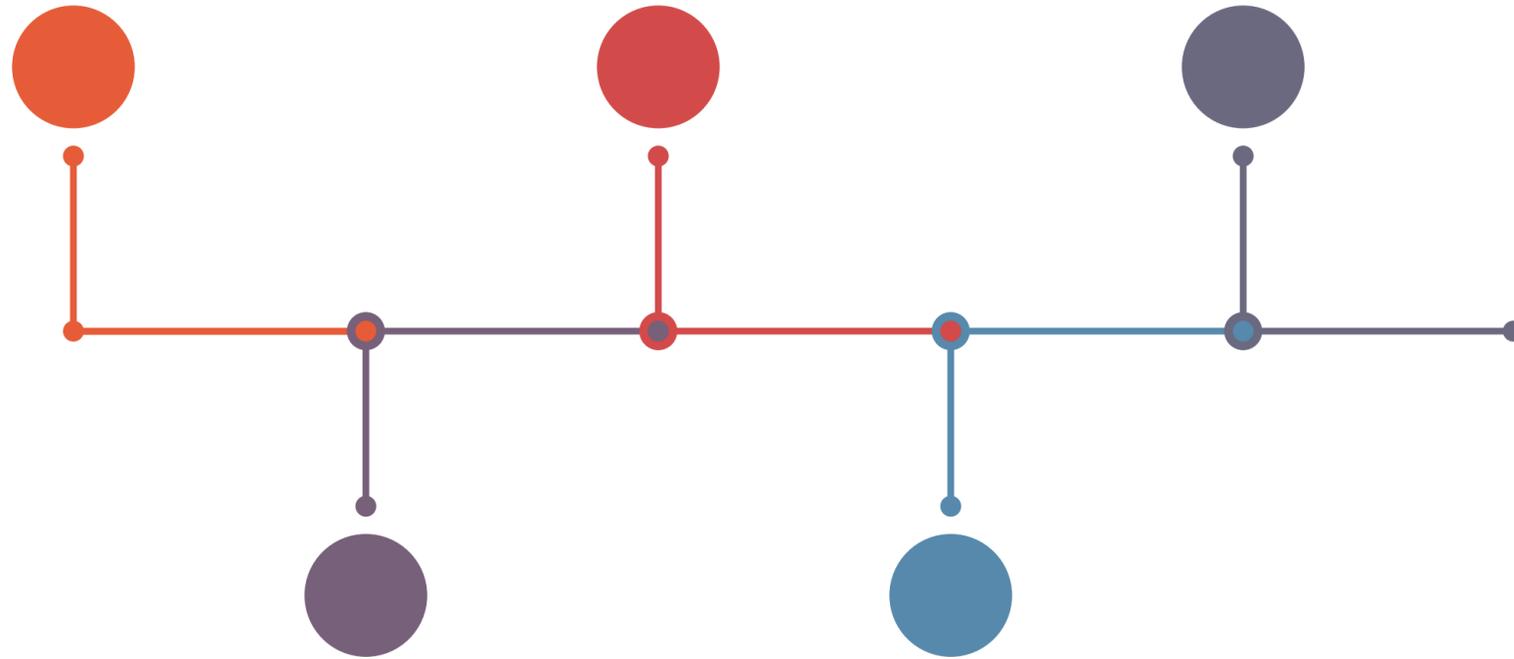
1558 first "diet" book by Italian Luigi Cornaro "The Art of Living Long" advised readers to limit themselves to 12 oz of food and 14 oz of wine a day

1940s "Reducing salons" enveloped people between 2 sets of rollers that would the body up and down to 'slenderize'

By 1962, the first support groups for weight loss (soon to become WW by 1963) began in NYC

1863 William Banting swore off carbohydrates for weight loss and wrote "Letter on Corpulence" which was so popular, "Banting" became synonymous with "dieting" in England

1959 Metropolitan Life Insurance Company published tables of average body weights for heights (Wt/Ht) by gender and at different ages



<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/the-seesawing-history-of-fad-diets-180981586/>

Melissa Wdowik

<https://source.colostate.edu/the-long-strange-history-of-dieting-fads/>



tumblr.

TIME

US WEEKLY

Real
Daily

Good Housekeeping

Psychology Today



reddit

Forbes



Cleveland Clinic



Instagram

“

"I kind of feel stuck between people bashing me for having obesity and telling me I should lose weight, and the other half that says you should love yourself and that means you shouldn't lose weight. I'm bad for wanting to lose weight, and I'm bad for not losing weight."

”

Sarah Bramlette
(from NYT)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/07/well/eat/fat-acceptance-weight-loss-body-positive.html>

“

"I worried that people would think I betrayed fat positivity, something I do very much believe in even if I can't always believe in it for myself. I worried I would be seen as betraying myself. I worried I would be seen as taking the easy way out, even though nothing about any of this has been easy, not one thing. I worried."

”

Roxane Gay
(From Medium)

<https://gay.medium.com/the-body-that-understands-what-fullness-is-f2e40c40cd75>

“

"If you're skinny, they judge you for being skinny and if you're fat, they judge you for being fat."

”

Elida Mejia Elias age 18
(From WaPo)

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2023/02/17/teen-girls-mental-health-crisis/>



Weight?



Health?



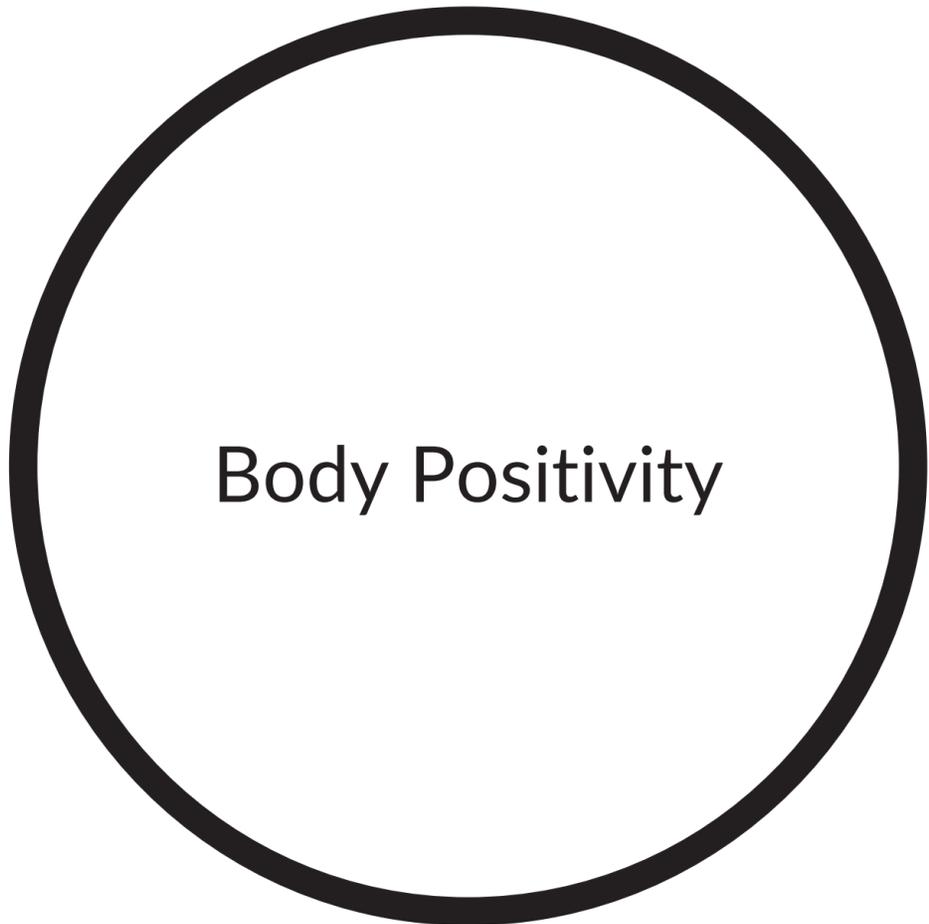
Health

Body Image?



Autonomy?





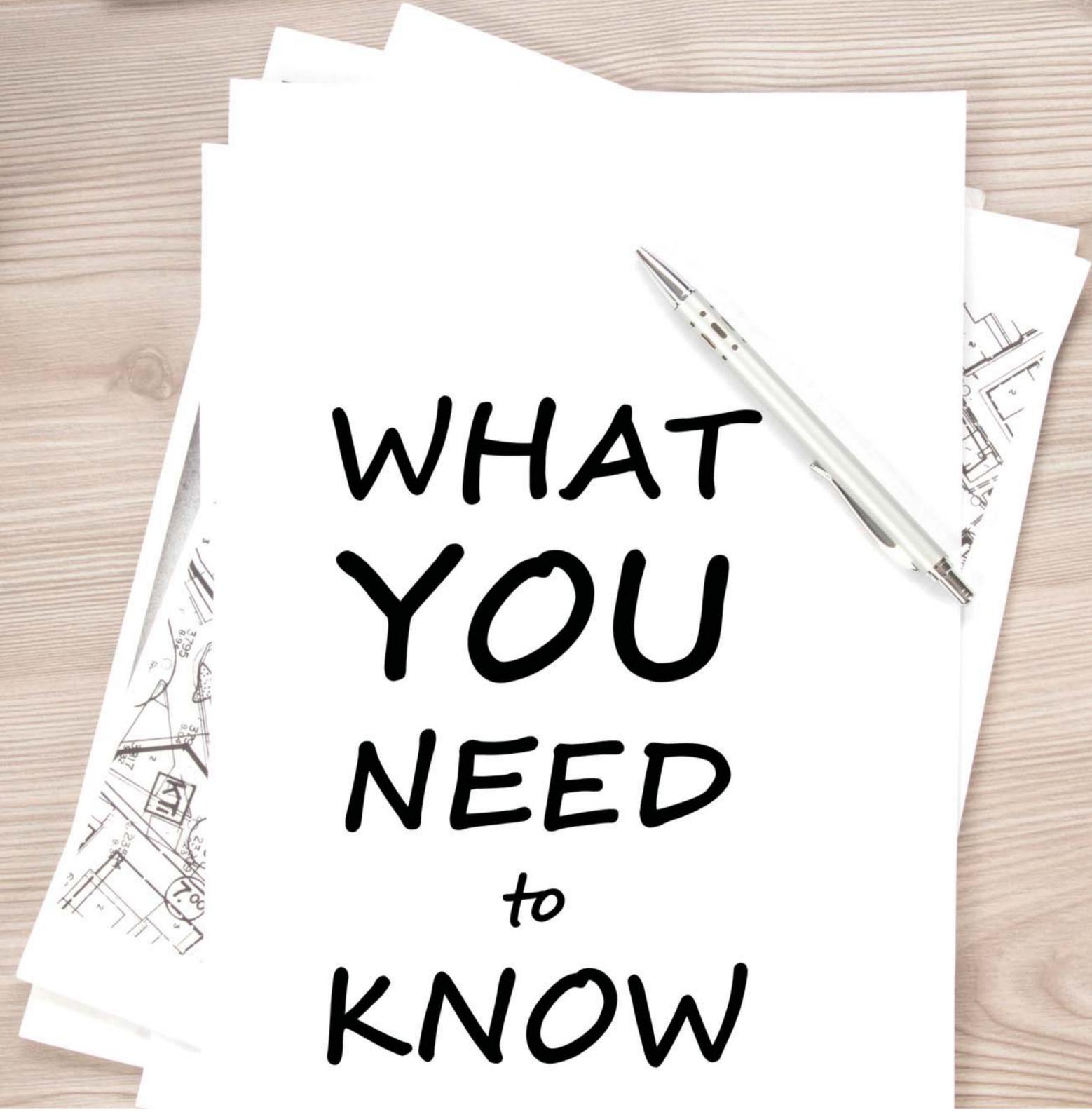
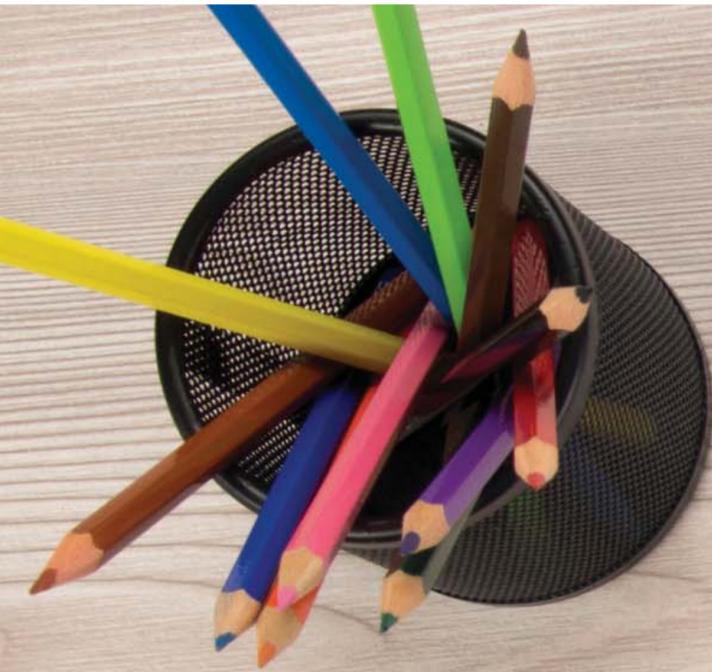


Body Positivity

Weight Management

I DON'T REALLY KNOW







GOOD CHOICE

BAD CHOICE



GOOD CHOICE

BAD CHOICE

This false choice is a problem.

“

"I kind of feel stuck between people bashing me for having obesity and telling me I should lose weight, and the other half that says you should love yourself and that means you shouldn't lose weight.

I'm bad for wanting to lose weight, and I'm bad for not losing weight."

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Sarah Bramlette

to be...
point of view

Bad

"I'm bad for wanting to lose weight, and I'm bad for not losing weight."

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Roxane Gay

relation of
point of view

Traitor [

"I worried...I worried...I worried..."

someone
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Elida Mejia Elias age 18
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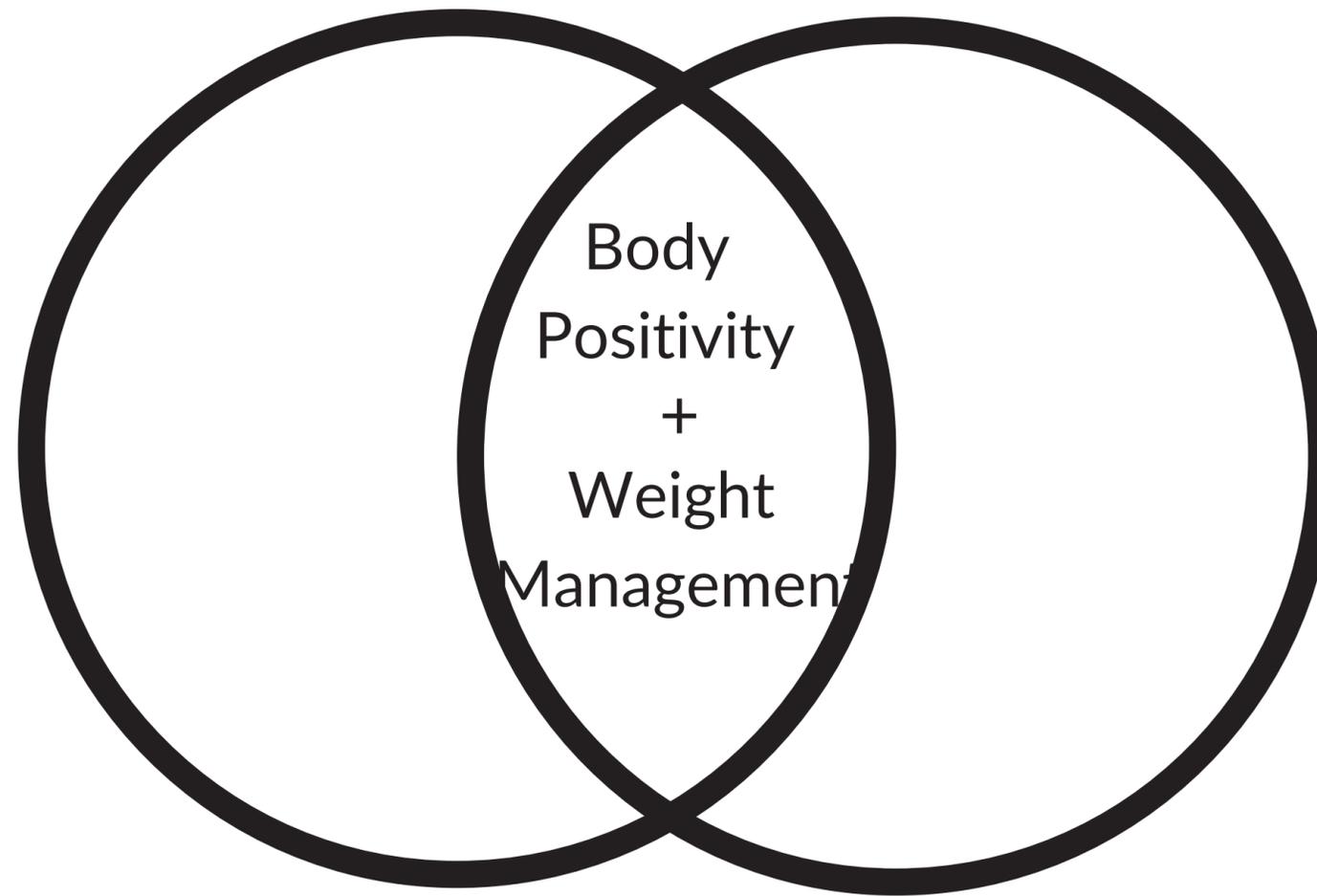
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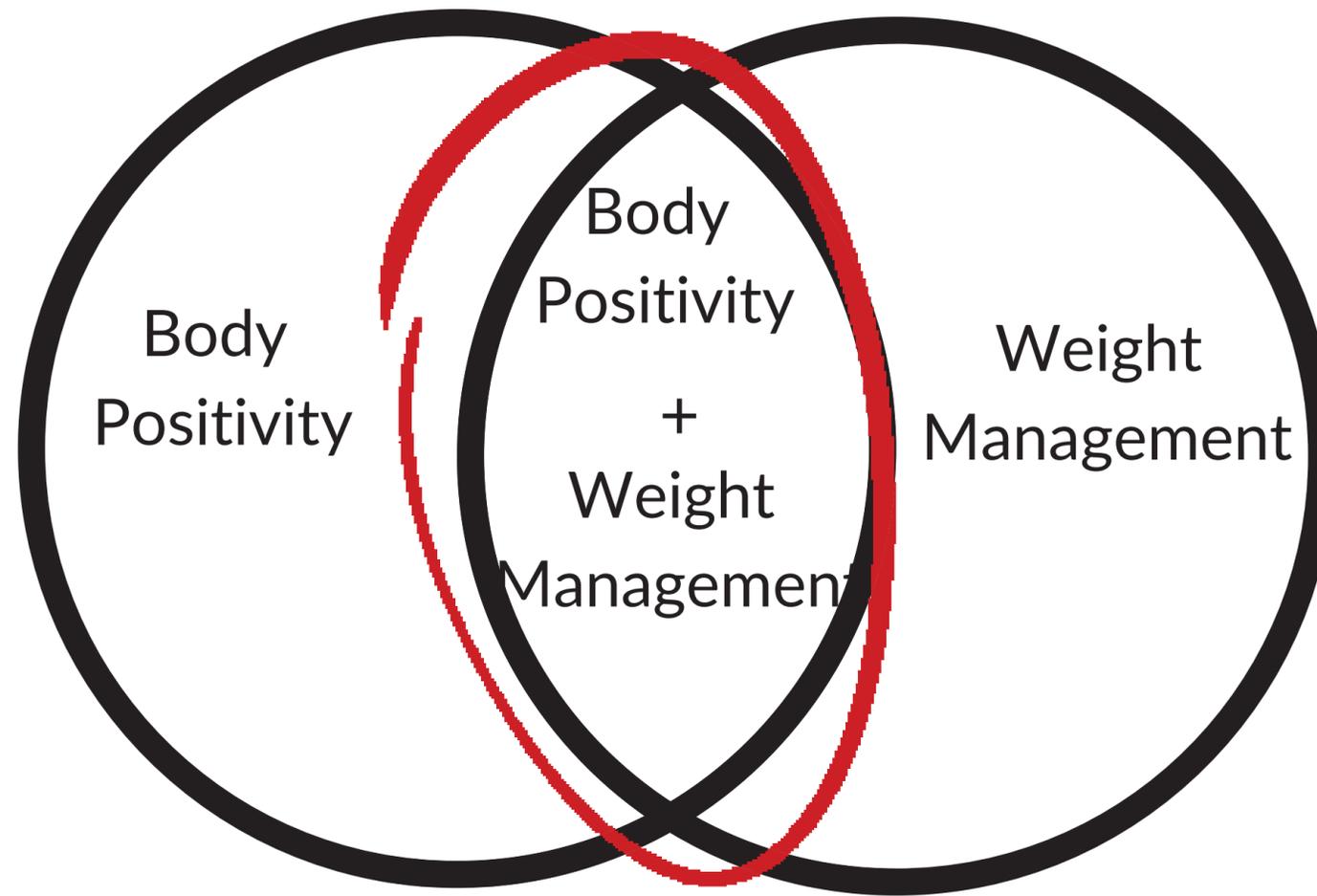
from disc...
discriminating / dɪˈskrɪmɪˈneɪtɪŋ
distinctions.
esp. discriminatingly adv.

discrimination

"They judge you...They judge you..."

treatment based on prejudice
or sex. 2 good taste or judgment
the power of discrimination made with





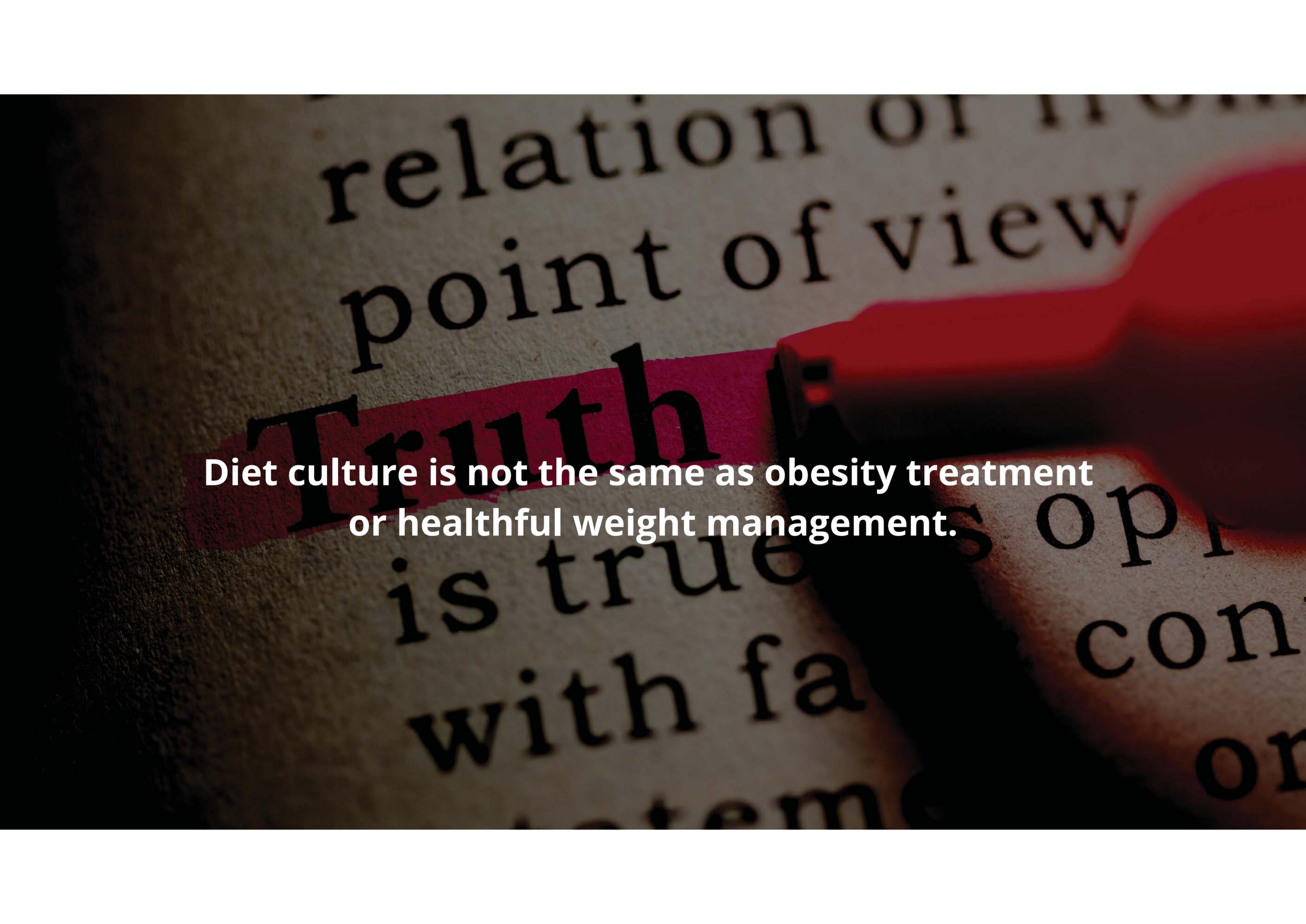


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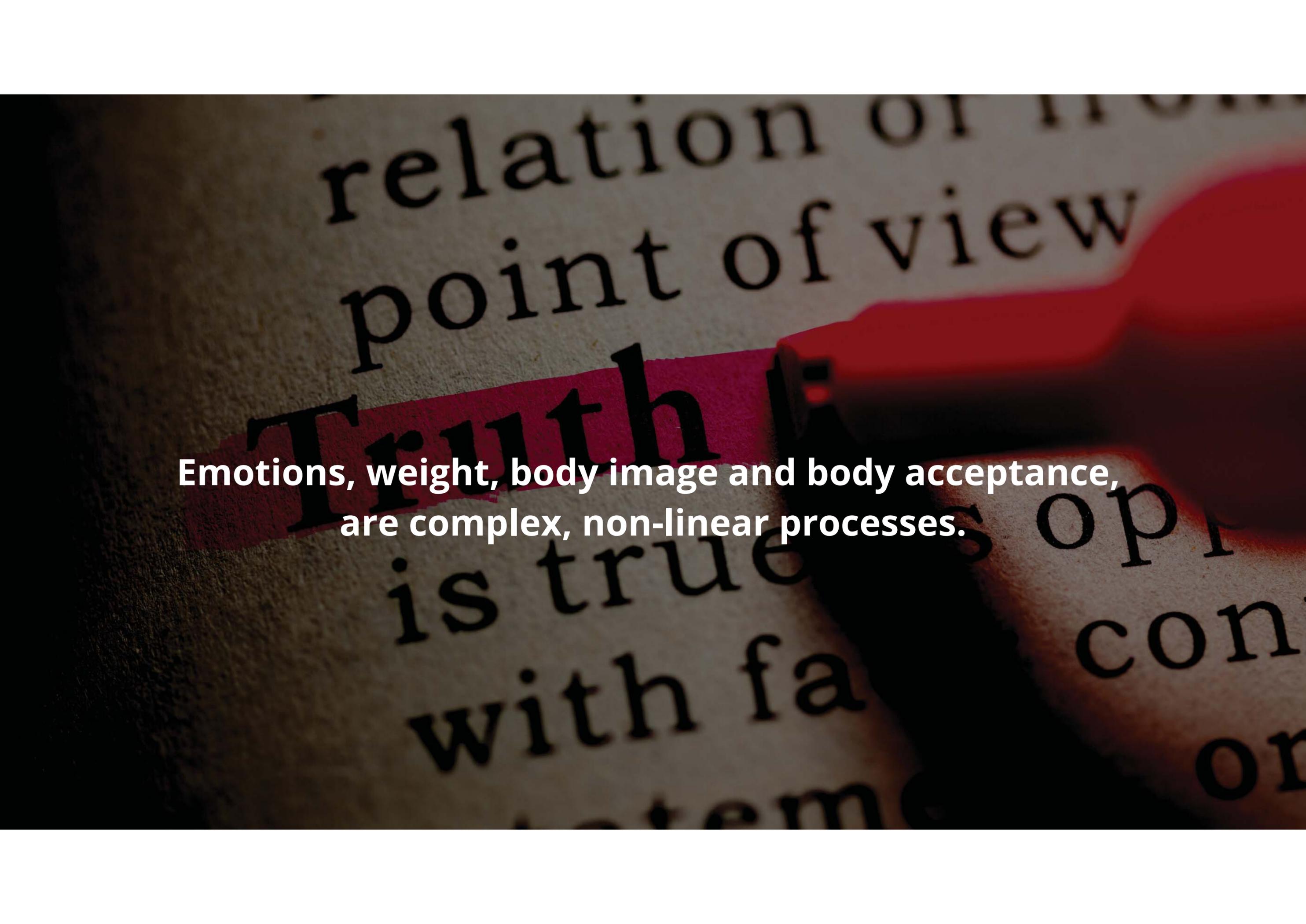
Truth is true
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**Diet culture is not the same as obesity treatment
or healthful weight management.**



Truth

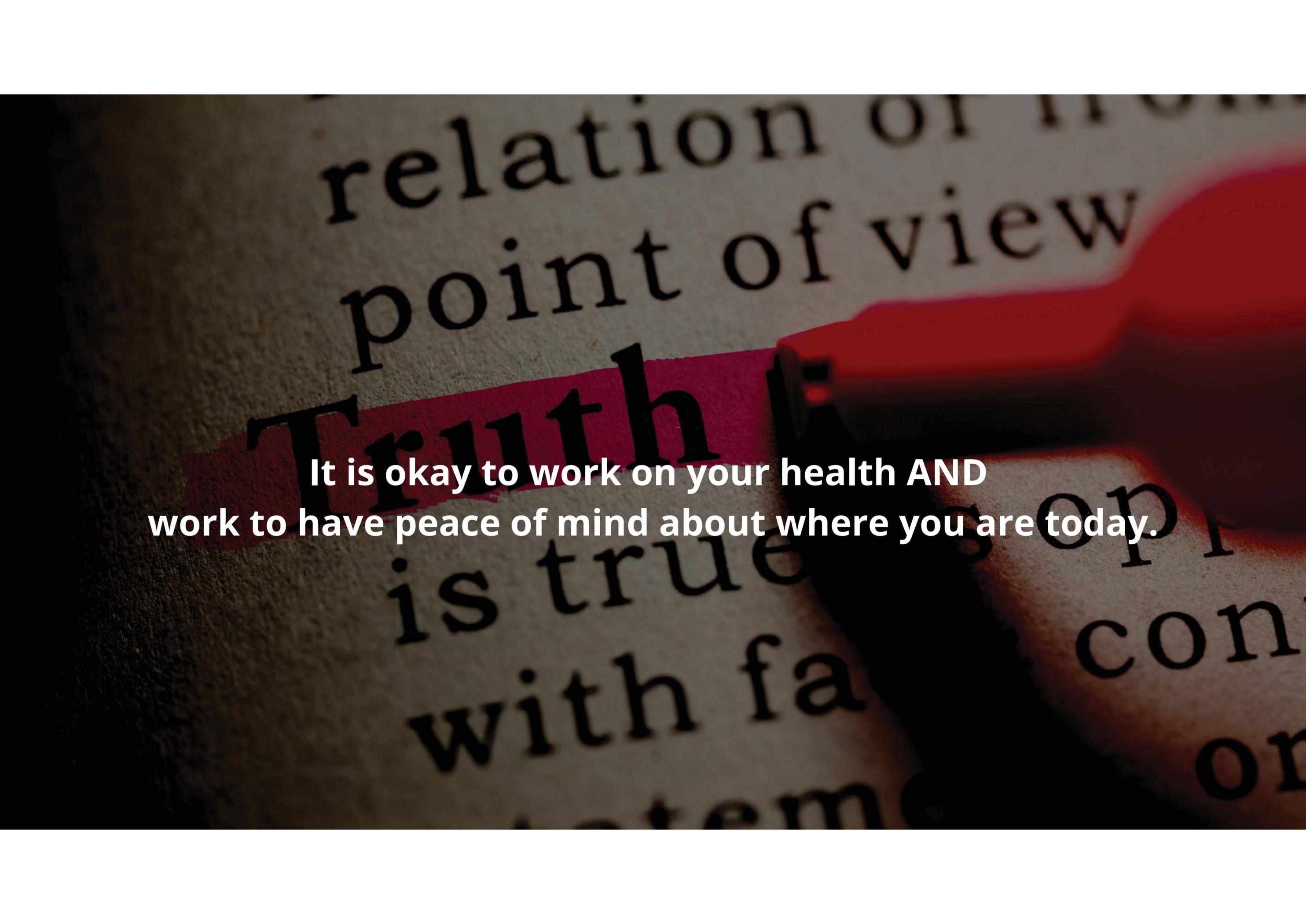
Emotions, weight, body image and body acceptance,
are complex, non-linear processes.

relation of
point of view

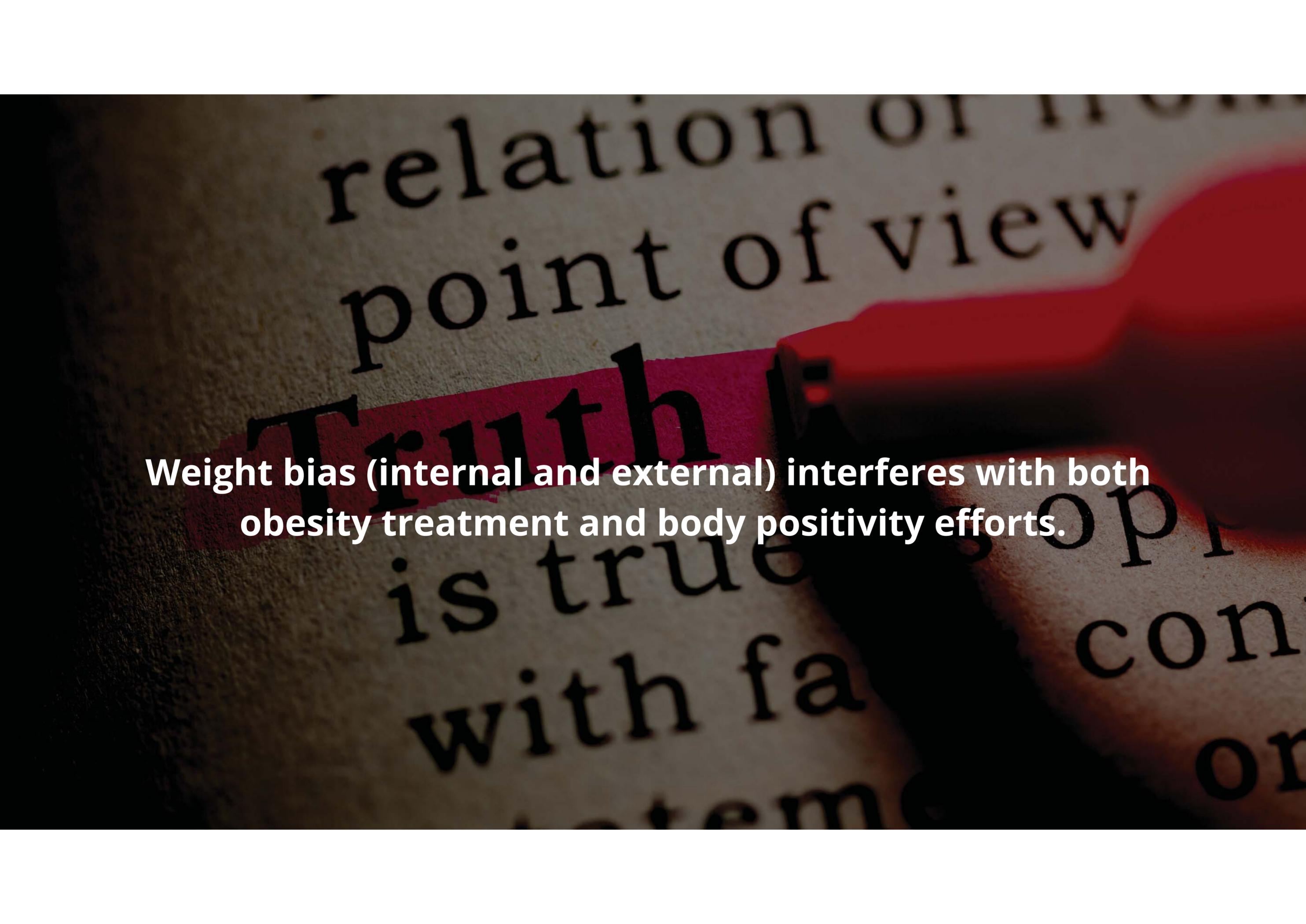
Truth

More than one thing can be true.

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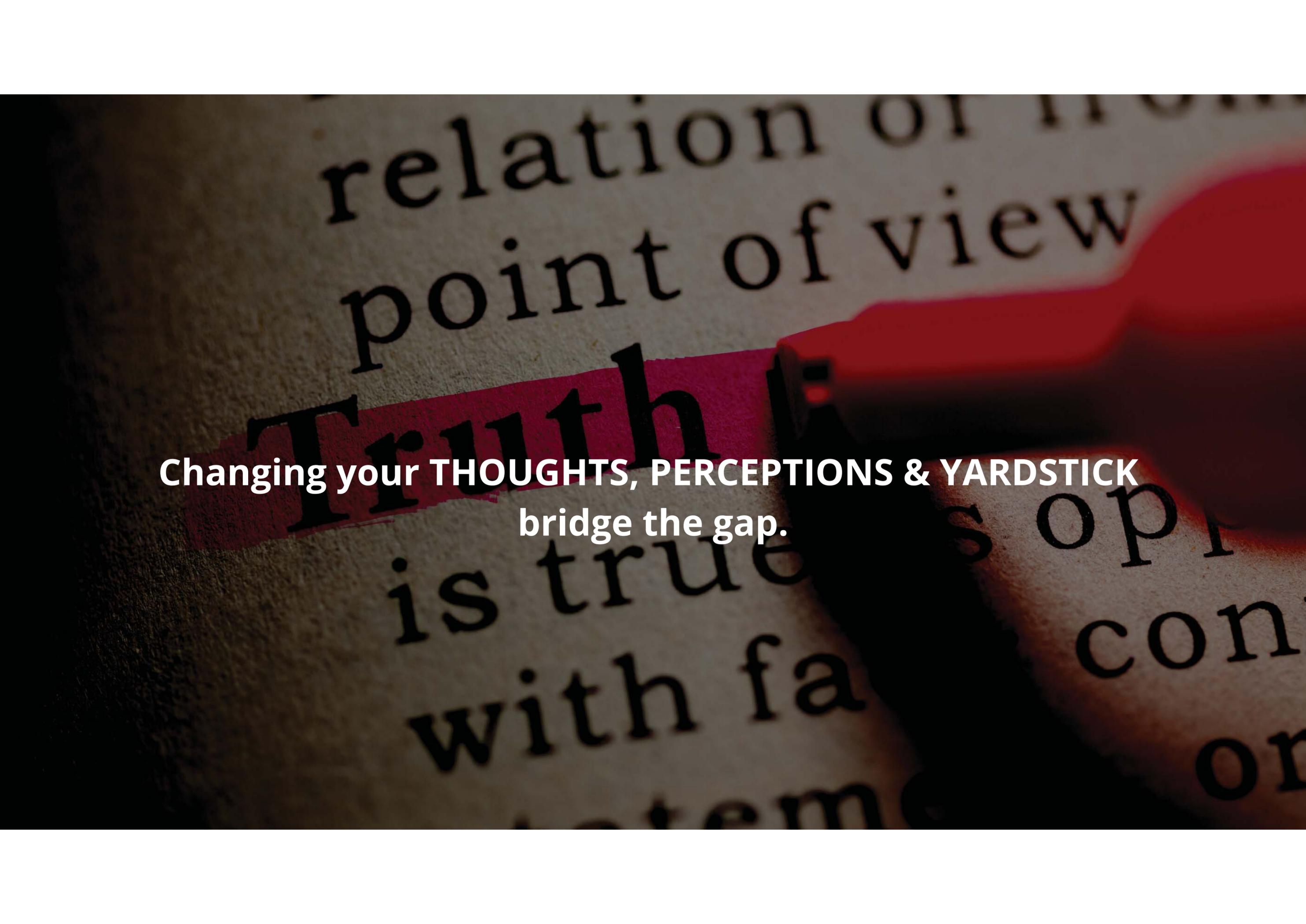
**It is okay to work on your health AND
work to have peace of mind about where you are today.**



Weight bias (internal and external) interferes with both obesity treatment and body positivity efforts.



**Self compassion supports both
obesity treatment and body positivity efforts.**



Changing your **THOUGHTS, PERCEPTIONS & YARDSTICK**
bridge the gap.

Change your thoughts.
Change your perspective.
Change your yardstick.

THOUGHTS.

challenge shoulds, negative self-talk & either/or thinking.



I can't love my body
and work to manage
my weight.



**I can love and respect
my whole self today
and also desire and
work for change.**



I am 'bad' if I want to
lose weight and
"bad" if I don't/can't.

OR

I am 'bad' if I don't
always love my
body.



I am not 'bad' if I fall somewhere in between. I do not "always" have to feel body positive. I don't have to ascribe to diet culture to manage my weight.



Whether or not I lose weight, I can focus on appreciating how my body functions to help me improve my wellbeing and live my life.

PERSPECTIVE.

focus on *appreciating* your body's *function*

1. Internal processes. An example, “My body has functioning lungs that can breathe in oxygen.”

2. Physical capacities. An example, “My body can walk my dog.”

function

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fummeln to
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Alleva, J. M., Diedrichs, P. C., Halliwell, E., Martijn, C., Stuijzand, B. G., Treneman-Evans, G., & Rumsey, N. (2018). A randomised-controlled trial investigating potential underlying mechanisms of a functionality-based approach to improving women's body image. *Body Image*, 25, 85-96.

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5. Communication. An example, “My body can communicate using body language.”
- 6. Self-care. An example, “My body can sit quietly and rest when tired.”**

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**Body functionality appreciation = broader conceptualization of beauty
(e.g., bodies of all sizes are beautiful and worthy of respect).**

(Tyka & Iannantuono, 2016).

Body-functionality gratitude exercises may lead to reductions in internalized weight bias.

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Acceptance of physical limitations, if present, enhances our ability to focus on and appreciate body functionality.

YARDSTICK.

focus on metrics that matter (e.g., not just weight, size, appearance)



Measure yourself by what YOU value.



Work *with* your own body and your own health status where it is RIGHT NOW, not last year or last decade, to set small, achievable goals.



● **Accept that you will have changing body functionality due to age, illness, disability, pain, injury and weight changes over time.**

BODY POSITIVE

THOUGHTS
PERSPECTIVE
YARDSTICK

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

<https://www.tarafaulmann.com/podcast/>

<https://www.tarafaulmann.com/podcast/>





BODY POSITIVE

Find your bridge.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT



A white dog, possibly a Samoyed, is walking towards the camera on a wooden suspension bridge at night. The bridge has a net railing and is illuminated by a central light source, creating a strong perspective effect. The background is dark with some trees visible.

Thank You

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