Body Image and How to Love Yourself the Way You Are

Since the time the pandemic has started, people all over the world were forced to get back home and stay there. Even now, when the vaccine is available, not all countries are functioning the regular way. People now prefer to stay at home, and manage work and life balance that way. While doing so, there are many who have taken the social media by storm showing how they are managing their body and maintain weight while staying at home. Their number is huge. But at the same time, there are a lot of people who are not doing anything like this and worrying about how they are falling behind from the rest of society.

Body Image and Societal Standard

We have undoubtedly made a lot of progress in every sphere of life. We are using technology, AI and IoT in our everyday life. We are traveling to every remote corner of the world. We are taking our work in the global market. But when it comes to ourselves, where are we currently standing? Have you asked yourself that?

Society has been playing a determining factor in our life, especially for our bodies. Societal standards of beauty and elegance decide how we should look. This is much more common for women. The complexion should be fair. The hair should be flawless and naturally beautiful. The body should be slender with a perfectly proportionate waist, neck, arms, thigh, legs, and butt. The body should be hairless of course, shaved or waxed to the T. The breasts should be identical and perfectly shaped and big. We have been fed these ideas for generations by popular media. From movies to television, from the depiction of women characters in bestselling books to the sizes of clothing designed by almost 90% of designers of the world, we have been reinforcing these ideas again and again. And we are completely oblivious of the effects of this on our lives.

The Effects of Negative Body Image

Negative body image is not just about having a complex about your own body. This is currently a social, psychological and physiological issue for many. How? Well, we have been neglecting the effects of the societal standards of beauty on us. And now, we are impacting ourselves directly. How? Take a look.

- While fair skin is considered to be the right body image, the business of fairness cream has a high grossing market in developing countries especially in Asia, South East Asia and Africa. Women even go through cosmetic surgical procedures for their complexion.
- As white-skinned women are termed as "perfect" by society, the women of color are looked at from the POV of sexual objectification. As a result, one in four black women within 18 years of age gets sexually abused. More than 20% of black women have been raped once in their lifetime. Apart from sexual abuse they also have to deal with other kinds of crime like humiliation, insults, name-calling and coercive control.

- There is a remarkable rise of teenage girls going through the dangerous surgical procedures named Bariatric Surgery that include Gastric Bypass and Sleeve Gastrectomy which practically changes their anatomy in order to maintain the bodyweight. These surgeries come with risks like cardiovascular diseases, high cholesterol, severe sleep apnea, type 2 diabetes and so on.
- Women are dieting to the point of malnutrition which causes kidney and cardiovascular problems.
- Due to being obese and not fitting the so-called beauty standards, many teenage girls deal with bullying and suffer from depression. The suicide rate due to the same is pretty high too.

So, basically, a bit of fat around the stomach, thighs, butt, a bit of acne, marks and stretch marks are the reason why people, especially women are suffering like this globally.

Positive Body Image

If after reading the above-mentioned part you are already recognizing some of the symptoms in you or around you, then it is really time to focus on positive body image for you. What is positive body image actually? Don't worry, it is not rocket science. It is just about falling in love with who you are, even if you have fat, body hair, a dark complexion or marked skin. You have to understand that these are natural. Your body is surviving all kinds of trauma in life, even currently a global pandemic. So, if you are not working out and maintaining diet 24x7 to have the right body as per the society, it's fine. Actually, it doesn't matter at all.

Developing Body Positivity Image – Love Yourself

Loving is the most spontaneous thing a human being is capable of. We love our parents, friends, partners, even pets. But why do we fall short in love when it comes to loving ourselves? We remain in the longest relationship with our bodies first. So, we must love our body just as it is. It should be this simple. How can you do that for your body? Take a look.

- Learn to admire yourself. Your layers of fat, marks, surgical scars, moles, acne, stretch marks, and body hair, all of these make you beautiful. These are not the things that you need to hide. If you feel disgusted at these, the world will reflect the same behavior. Feel and show love to these and then show the world how to love you.
- Don't be hard on yourself. It is not a race. If someone is happy to work out and maintain the body, it's great. If someone is not ready to do so, and dealing with many other issues in life, it is perfect too. Everyone's journey is not the same.
- Be mindful of your thoughts. You don't need to be depressed or sad just because a clothing brand wasn't farsighted enough to make clothes for you. It is their fault, not yours.
- Don't compromise with any kind of bullying, violence and crime because of your body. Your skin color or the shape of the body doesn't justify the crime of others or their insensitivity.

Be proud of yourself. Think of your body as your most trusted companion in the journey of life. Think about how your body is supporting you and give love to it. Once you start loving yourself, the world will follow too.