



**Times change, attitudes change and people change. We are not all meant to look, think or even weigh the same. People can be healthy even if they do not look "thin." Most importantly, everyone is deserving of a basic level of respect and dignity.**

**That's what HEALTHY BODY ESTEEM is all about:**

**We can all learn how to feel good about our bodies and how to take care of them, whether or not they match the ideals or expectations of others.**

**Some of you might be wondering, what about the health aspects of being a larger size or weight? Let's discuss that, because there are some misconceptions about what it means to be healthy at any size.**

**It was recently disclosed in a study by the Cooper Institute that there is bias against obesity by medical professionals. In other words, this bias against obesity is taught in medical school and has spread like wildfire throughout the medical profession. As a result, medical professionals' bias shows in a variety of ways, including the "health warnings" we see in the media almost every day, many of which cannot stand up to strong factual scrutiny.**

**With the exception of those with mobility issues, people of all sizes can attain certain levels of fitness and become healthier, even if they do not lose weight in the process. Muscle weighs more than fat, so a person's body may become healthier and have more energy even if it does not appear thinner. What's important is maintaining fitness. There are millions of people whose health is threatened by their lack of fitness even though they may look thin.**

**What are the facts then?**

- 1. Millions of people are dieting to lose weight at any given time, yet the obesity rate has been skyrocketing for years.**

**It should be noted, however, that the U.S. National Institutes of Health changed the standards of what is considered "overweight" and "obese" in 1998, making over 50% of the U.S. population "overweight" and 35% "obese" literally overnight!**

2. **Over 90% of weight loss diets fail and dieters invariably "yo-yo" to a higher weight than before. Why? Because the body changes chemically during a diet, which the body perceives as a famine.**

**The body reduces the body's metabolic rate and increases the set-point (the person's average weight) as well as fat storage capability. The body does this automatically in order to survive the current "famine" and prepare the body for the next "famine." So when the dieter resumes normal eating, that person does not know their body has changed internally and quickly regains the weight plus more.**

3. **In the U.S. alone, over 25 million people (mostly women) suffer from eating disorders, many of which result from an unrealistically thin body imagery portrayed as the ideal in the most popular media sources (magazines, television and film) and the fashion industry.**

**The glamorizing of the unhealthily thin as role models sends a devastating message to young women and men that their bodies are inadequate. As a result, young children and teenagers diet and smoke cigarettes in futile attempts to stay thin or become thinner than they are...often leading to eating disorders.**

**What's the alternative?**

**In 2003, ISAA created the [Respect Fitness Health initiative](#) to provide an escape route from the "diet-of-the day" and gloom-and-doom predictions. Simply put, people must learn to respect themselves in order to believe that they are deserving of a basic level of respect and dignity from others. What makes a person beautiful or handsome is how they perceive themselves and the world around them. In addition to that, everyone clearly could benefit from attaining and maintaining a level of fitness and learning how to make healthy food choices for themselves and their families.**

**The Healthy Body Esteem campaign is centered around the "Respect" aspect of *Respect Fitness Health*.**

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