

Let's talk about fatphobia and the view I have developed through being fat in society. The body positivity movement has been stolen and ruined by thin white women. The political movement was started by black fat women to fight against the systemic oppression and marginalization of fat and marginalized bodies like disabled bodies in society. It's about a societal issue rather than individuals' views of their own bodies. It is about societal acceptance and accessibility, not loving/feeling positively about your body or having body confidence. "People with marginalized bodies should be accepted" has been changed to "All bodies should be accepted" when that isn't the point of the movement because those bodies are already accepted. It has been taken so that thin women can post photos of themselves when they look bloated, are unposed, or have cellulite/stretch marks to show off what they are personally insecure about and what they want people to know is normal. That is showing what is already normal and accepted as normal in society. That isn't what the movement is about, it's about accepting and including fatness and other marginalized bodies the same way as we accept socially acceptable bodies.

Disabled and fat are the worst things people could imagine being. An example of this is people saying "if I looked like you or had your disability, I would kill myself.". People have eating disorders, surgeries, and hurt themselves because the worst thing they could imagine looking like is like me. Fat is an insult on its own showing that being fat makes you inherently gross and ugly. When people feel insecure about their bodies, they say they feel fat even though fat isn't a feeling but the actual size of your body. You can feel bloated, swollen, insecure, etc. but you can't feel fat. People who worry they are fat compare their bodies to fat people's bodies so they can feel better about themselves as if those fat people aren't real people who deserve love and acceptance the same as who they're being compared to rather than to be used to boost socially acceptable bodies. People who are fat are told they are not fat because the very acknowledgement of how their body actually looks is seen as an insult. They are told they aren't fat, they're curvy, thick, beautiful, anything but fat because if they knew what they actually looked like, their self-hatred would be valid. The body positivity movement has been taken from its intended community and given to socially acceptable bodies to talk about their personal insecurities. "I used to think I was fat, but I was never fat. I was beautiful/thin. I wish I could go back in time and tell myself I was not fat.", "It's normal to have cellulite, stretch marks, rolls when you sit, or look bloated after you eat", "Body dysmorphia is telling you you're bigger than you are, you aren't fat!", etc. Yes, body dysmorphia is a real issue but it isn't ok that many people's greatest fear is being fat and that the "body positivity movement" is trying to prove that you're not fat as a way to show you you're not undesirable, unattractive, and unloveable. That is blatant fatphobia. When I had an eating disorder and was dying of malnutrition, I still wasn't thin. Now that I have recovered, I am fat. People compare me to my past self and think that I must be super unhealthy now when in fact I was unhealthy when I was smaller. When I eat vegetables, fruit, or the same/less amount of food as other people eating with me, people compliment me saying "I'm so proud you're eating healthy" as if I couldn't possibly eat healthily on a regular basis because I am fat. I don't overeat, I don't have an eating disorder like binge eating disorder, and I don't eat an unhealthy diet but people cannot understand or accept that this is how my body naturally is at its healthiest. People who think they're being body positive say it's ok to be fat as long as you're healthy, but they would never say that to an unhealthy person who wasn't fat. For thin people who eat unhealthily and don't work out, people call them lucky and wish they

could be like that. It isn't about health, it's just fatphobia and classism because healthy food isn't accessible to many communities. It's fatphobia because thin people are accepted and allowed to be thin in any state of health, but fat people are only allowed to be fat if they are perfectly healthy. People often think of body neutrality as a better movement than body positivity because they mistake the point of the movement as having body confidence. Having body neutrality is a great way to approach your own body, but even the body neutrality movement isn't neutral. Instead it is often being grateful for what your body can do rather than how it looks. It's saying "while I may not look how I want to look, at least I'm not disabled." As if disability, similar to fatness, is inherently awful. For disabled people whose bodies hurt or prevent them from doing what able bodied people can do with ease, how are we supposed to like our bodies or even feel neutrally about them?

Media like TLC makes a mockery of being fat. They turn it into a disease and blame fat people for it. They show people with binge eating disorder and portray that as the reason all people who are fat are fat. Then people who aren't fat think that fat people are disgusting and unhealthy when most fat people are just as healthy as anyone else. People who hold the view of medical weight bias believe that fat people are only fat because they are eating unhealthily and don't exercise. They see their weight as a manifestation of something they are doing wrong so they don't allow fat people to be accepted in society because they see that as enabling their unhealthy behaviors. Unlike with representation of queer people or people of color, they push back on positive representation of fat people because they don't want to normalize what they see as damaging behavior. They feel justified in their fatphobia because they see it as not enabling people to make themselves fat. The reality is, most people who are fat are just as healthy as most people who are thin. Studies have proven weight has no real link to health issues so it isn't justified to keep pushing fatphobia as "motivation" for fat people to lose weight in order to make them healthier. Fat people deserve positive representation and respect for their bodies the same as everyone else. In scripted shows, fat people are the butt of the joke. They are the ugly and awkward ones that no one wants to be friends with or date. Their bodies are made fun of through the use of fat suits and "glow-ups" (Monica from Friends, Fat Schmidt from New Girl, etc.). They are always shown eating or overly interested in food to add to the joke that is their fatness. Even media that believes it's being body positive is still fatphobic. The fat girl can never be the popular and pretty girl. The fat girl is always insecure and feels like the popular boy can never like her. When the boy likes her, it's despite her body or he grows to find her attractive rather than actually being attracted to her body at first the way he would if she were thin. When people have plus sized models, they are rarely actually plus sized or even midsized and always have their weight distribution in a way that is socially acceptable (big ass, boobs, hips with a small waist, no love handles/rolls, and flat stomach). Fat people can only be beautiful with an hourglass frame and flat stomach. Apple shaped bodies or people with rolls or big stomachs are seen as grotesque. While thin people are complimented about their personalities and bodies, fat people are complimented by ignoring their bodies such as "you have a beautiful face, I love you for your personality/no matter what you weigh, you have a beautiful heart/soul, etc". Fat bodies are just as sexy, attractive, and beautiful as thin bodies, disabled bodies are just as sexy, attractive, and beautiful as abled bodies, and other marginalized bodies are just as sexy, attractive, and beautiful as socially acceptable bodies. The only reason why we think

otherwise is because of the constant fatphobic and ableist messaging that is ingrained in society. I have never seen a body like mine be the princess, the it girl, the hot one. I've only ever seen my body portrayed in a way that is mocked and something that makes that person less valuable.

Being fat is disabling. Stores don't have our size and when they do, it's not the same quality/fashion as the straight sizes. Plus size clothes are meant to hide the fact that you're fat rather than be fashionable and make you feel content as yourself the same as straight sizes. Fat people have to worry about not fitting in seats on buses/airplanes/rides/etc. and possibly having to pay for an extra seat even though we shouldn't have to just because of how our body looks. We don't fit in aisles meaning we have to bump into things/people when trying to get through the same as other people or we're not able to get through at all. We don't fit in chairs, booths, desks at school, etc. We have to pay more for insurance because our body has been falsely linked to our health (many studies have proven that obesity isn't a disease and being fat doesn't make you any more likely to develop diseases. Yes, diseases are linked to an unhealthy diet, but not to fatness itself. Thin people with unhealthy diets are just as likely to develop these diseases as fat people with unhealthy diets). Because of this medical weight bias, fat people die due to negligence. When we come to doctors with real issues like chronic fatigue, pain, illness, etc. we are told we feel that way because we are fat and are prescribed exercise and restrictive dieting as treatment. When those issues are found out to be unrelated to our weight but actually serious medical problems, it has progressed further than it ever should have and the treatment is more complicated and risky than it should have been if we were taken seriously the first time. Privilege means your life is not made harder because of a specific part of your identity (race, sexuality, gender, weight, class, disability, etc.), it doesn't mean you have an easy life. As a thin person, you don't face discrimination for being thin similar to how white people don't face discrimination for being white. While some people may make rude comments about how you're too thin or must have an eating disorder, this isn't discrimination or systemic marginalization. It is similar to white people being called too pale; it may be rude but isn't racist because you can't be racist to a group that has all of the systemic advantages. As a thin or socially accepted body, you will not understand how it is to be fat in society. Yes, you may feel insecure or even hate your body but you will never face systemic discrimination for your body. You won't have to worry about stores having clothing that fits you, you won't have to worry that you won't fit in places you need to go, and you won't have to worry that doctors will neglect your health concerns because of your weight.

If you're not in a marginalized body please don't use the body positivity movement to talk about your personal body confidence. Having cellulite, stretch marks, rolls when sitting, bloating, etc. does not mean you have a marginalized body. Most people have those and that does not lead to systemic discrimination. The body positivity movement is not for you the same way the LGBTQ+ pride movement is not for cisgender and heterosexual people. It's amazing if you have gone through a journey of self-love and have gained body confidence, but that is not what this movement is supposed to be about. You're allowed to feel however you feel about body and that is morally neutral. It's hard to like or even feel neutral about one's body when society and people in my life constantly are sending the message that my body is gross, unattractive, ugly,

shameful, unloveable, etc. Even when I have accepted that I'm fat and that it's ok because that's how I'm supposed to be, I am still fed messages daily that it isn't ok and that would wear anyone down. I often dislike and feel detached from my body not because of how it looks, but because of how it makes me feel as a chronically ill person. I don't have the privilege of being able to be grateful for what my body does for me because it can't do enough for me. That is ok. I've gone through periods of body confidence, detestation, and neutrality and I'm sure I'll go through them all again. I want to see change in how society treats people in marginalized bodies like mine. I want to see multiple disabled and fat characters in each show/movie/etc. rather than portraying them as a token catchall for diversity. I want to see the protagonist or popular/attractive character in your favorite show be fat, I want to see disabled and plus size models that are actually fat, and I want to see fat and disabled princesses in movies because everyone deserves to see themselves represented positively. I want to see a shift in accessibility to accommodate fat bodies the same way society accommodates thin bodies. I want widespread awareness of the harm of medical weight bias and transparency that studies have proven that fatness isn't unhealthy the same way that thinness isn't inherently healthy. I want the body positivity movement to be given back to the people who started it and who they started it for.

Fat Liberation Sources and Research:

Diets & Weight Stigma are Making You Mentally Ill | Therapist Talks Fat Liberation:

https://youtu.be/tWqGulkvCWY?si=_ioEFWT5LeRPthLZ

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/stop-counting-calories>

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-do-food-manufacturers/>

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2023/07/05/its-time-to-bust-the-calories-in-calories-out-weight-loss-myth.html>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17077059/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2990627/>

<https://www.npr.org/transcripts/893006538>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6052856/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/bmiforpractitioners.pdf>

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=106268439>

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/frsc.2020.00033/full>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3217555/>

<https://sportsmedicine-open.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40798-018-0125-4>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6503652/>

<https://synapse.koreamed.org/upload/synapsedata/pdfdata/2004dmj/dmj-42-179.pdf>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-01-02/the-problem-with-the-body-mass-index-bmi/100728416>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/determinants-of-health>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2930234/>

<https://elemental.medium.com/the-bizarre-and-racist-history-of-the-bmi-7d8dc2aa33bb>

<https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2019-22747-005>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3041737/>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/wellness/healthy-bmi-obesity-race-/2021/05/04/655390f0-ad0d-11eb-acd3-24b44a57093a_story.html

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-gravity-of-weight/201603/adolphe-quetelet-and-the-evolution-of-body-mass-index-bmi>

<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/08/why-bmi-big-fat-scam/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1479667/>

<http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/9806/17/weight.guidelines/>

<http://www.assessmentpsychology.com/metlife.htm>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/obr.13196>

<https://schoolofbitchcraft.com/reflections-on-the-lindo-bacon-controversy/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_determinants_of_health#/media/File:Social_determinants_of_health_visualization.png

<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/03/news-weight-stigma>

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(06\)69251-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(06)69251-9/fulltext)

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10654-014-9961-9>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/obr.12272>

<https://bmccardiovascdisord.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12872-016-0310-7>

<https://www.cnet.com/health/medical/the-obesity-paradox-how-fat-can-be-good-for-you/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31158067/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2253567/>

<https://ourworldindata.org/obesity>

<https://www.jomes.org/journal/view.html?doi=10.7570/jomes.2017.26.4.237>

<https://www.chhs.colostate.edu/krcnc/monthly-blog/i-spy-a-fad-diet-your-guide-to-critically-evaluating-diet-and-wellness-trends/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4241770/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4855514/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4654677/>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328722751_Studies_on_Weight_Stigma_and_Body_Image_in_Higher-Weight_Individuals_A_Guide_to_Assessment_Treatment_and_Prevention

<https://www.endocrine.org/news-and-advocacy/news-room/2018/weight-cycling-is-associated-with-a-higher-risk-of-death>

<https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/193/monograph/book/76032>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5097076/>

<https://www.seattletimes.com/life/wellness/can-dieting-really-make-you-fat/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8015818/>

https://books.google.com/books/about/Thrive_At_Any_Weight_Eating_to_Nourish_B.html?id=zt-vDwAAQBAJ

<https://www.routledge.com/Weight-Bias-in-Health-Education-Critical-Perspectives-for-Pedagogy-and-Brown-Ellis-Ordway/p/book/9781032112169>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3041737/>

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370\(23\)00139-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(23)00139-6/fulltext)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5097076/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5764193/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6179496/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4988332/>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/508S57a>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02703149.2018.1524070>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02703149.2018.1524071>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/capr.12494>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6510538/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17890752/>

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2022-03-15/weight-discrimination-remains-legal-in-most-of-the-u-s>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4853419/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7260129/>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S174014452300058X>