

10 “Will-Powers” for Improving Body Image

Written by: Michael Levine, Ph.D., and Linda Smolak, Ph.D.

1. Twice a day, everyday, I **WILL** ask myself: “Am I benefiting from focusing on what I believe are the flaws in my body weight or shape?”

2. I **WILL** think of three reasons why it is ridiculous for me to believe that thinner people are happier or ‘better.’ I will repeat these reasons to myself whenever I feel the urge to compare my body shape to someone.

3. I **WILL** spend less and less time in front of mirrors—especially when they are making me feel uncomfortable and self-conscious about my body.

4. I **WILL** exercise for the joy of feeling my body move and grow stronger. I will not exercise simply to lose weight, purge fat from my body, or to “make-up” for calories I have eaten.

5. I **WILL** participate in activities that I enjoy, even if they call attention to my weight and shape. I will constantly remind myself that I deserve to do things I enjoy, like dancing, swimming, etc., no matter what my shape or size is!

6. I **WILL** refuse to wear clothes that are uncomfortable or that I do not like but wear simply because they divert attention from my weight or shape. I will wear clothes that are comfortable and that make me feel comfortable in my body.

7. I **WILL** list 5-10 good qualities that I have, such as understanding, intelligence, or creativity. I will repeat these to myself whenever I start to feel bad about my body.

8. I **WILL** practice taking people seriously for what they say, feel, and do. Not for how slender, or “well put together” they appear.

9. I **WILL** surround myself with people and things that make me feel good about myself and my abilities. When I am around people and things that support me and make me feel good, I will be less likely to base my self-esteem on the way my body looks.

10. I **WILL** treat my body with respect and kindness. I will feed it, keep it active, and listen to its needs. I will remember that my body is the vehicle that will carry me to my dreams!

I will choose to take care of myself and my body!

References:

Freedman, R., *Body Love*. NY: Harper & Row, 1988.

Levine, M.P., & Hill, L., *5 Day Lesson Plan on Eating Disorders*. Columbus, OH: NEDO, 1991.

Maine, M., *Father Hunger*. Carlsbad, CA: Gürze Books, 1991.

Rodin, J., *Body Traps*. NY: William Morrow, 1992.

For more information, contact the National Eating Disorders Association at 603 Stewart St., Suite 803, Seattle, WA 98101

Information and Referral Helpline: 800-931-2237 or www.NationalEatingDisorders.org

© 2002 National Eating Disorders Association
Permission granted for duplication and reprinting for educational purposes given the National Eating Disorders Association is credited.