

I Choose To Love Every Body
By: Amy Barnhart Miller, Student Counseling Services

How do you define beauty? Who decides if you are beautiful? Who decides if the people around you are beautiful? The more than 3000 advertisements that we are exposed to every day suggest that only “thin is beautiful” and yet most of us will never achieve the “thin ideal” that is portrayed in these images. Unfortunately instead of becoming mad at the advertisers for forcing these false, harsh expectations on us we often begin to hate ourselves for not meeting them. Being repeatedly bombarded by these messages can also cause us to have negative attitudes about other people that do not live up to the expectations. Each day we accept these messages that are being portrayed as truth we are in danger of being left to judge ourselves and others by standards that are not real.

Recently I read a poll that was conducted by *Fitness Magazine* and was very sad to see what they found. This poll focused on what people would give up in order to avoid getting “fat”. A shocking result indicated that more than half of Americans would rather lose their job than get “fat.” Unfortunately for this half of America – giving up your job will not keep you thin (unless of course you can’t afford food because of it). Is being “thin” really all that important? It is so hard to judge because we often do not pay attention to the massive amounts of negative media that we are exposed to and rather the message just sticks with us without being fully thought out. These messages do not simply suggest what we should be but what we definitely should NOT be. We are steered away from ever being comfortable with our weight (unless we happen to be a size 4 or less) because the message is that people that are “fat” are stupid, lazy, out-of control, slobbish and greedy. I know I don’t want other people to think I’m stupid or lazy. By accepting these messages we further hurt those people that are already being attacked by the constant “thin is it” advertisement that we all have to deal with.

But, we have choice! We can choose to value ourselves and others for something other than weight. We can choose to defy the advertisers and say that weight is not what defines a person’s worth. I would argue that we could all benefit from reexamining how we define beauty so that we can define beauty for ourselves. So, how do you choose to define beauty? Is beauty purely physical? Or could it be something more? I choose to love every body!

Beauty is an experience, nothing else. It is not a fixed pattern or an arrangement of features. It is something felt, a glow or a communicated sense of fineness.

~ D. H. Lawrence~