

Critique of mary worley's article: fat and happy

[Health & Medicine](#), [Obesity](#)



As obesity escalates towards becoming an epidemic in modern day America, pressures to stay fit have become overwhelming from media and doctors. Mary Ray Worley, a member of the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (NAAFA), believes that modern day society is completely intolerant of obesity so much as to say that they "would rather die or cut off a limb than be fat" (492). She has made it a priority to convince Americans to accept obesity which she fights for in her essay, *Fat and Happy: In Defense of Fat Acceptance*. She believes that people should not be ashamed of their bodies, or try to change them to fit in with the crowd.

She discusses a new outlook on body image and believes that we all should create "a new relationship with our bodies, one that doesn't involve self-loathing" (496). In her essay, Worley compares twentieth-century society to a NAAFA convention she attended. Worley describes her home as a place where "you're grateful if you can find clothes that you can actually get on, and forget finding clothes that actually fit you." In Worley's eyes American culture has always treated obese people as a lower class and pushed aside anything that was designed for a fat person.

On the other hand, at the convention she finds a planet created specifically for overweight people. The convention opened her eyes to an entirely different planet that is free of inhibitions with nothing to be ashamed of. There she could find clothes that shaped to her body perfectly and she was entertained by belly dancers of all shapes and sizes that "were exquisitely beautiful and voluptuous" (493). She then goes on to discuss how society

views fat people and how she believes healthcare professionals are prejudice towards them.

Mary concludes by arguing that like her, all obese people can learn to love their bodies and “ play and dance without self-consciousness” (496).

Appearance seems as if it's almost everything in today's society, especially with women. Worley explains that society feels that losing weight is easy and that “ it is acceptable to shun fat people and make them the butt of cruel jokes” (492). Without a question, it is not fair that overweight people go through their entire lives being criticized and taunted for their weight.

Worley explains how rude comments discourage fat people from exercising because they are embarrassed and “ they don't have the support they need to continue” (494). It is the stares and snide remarks that give overweight people low self-esteem. Worley justly states that “ you're entitled to the space you take up” (496). No person should feel like they need to hide away from the world. Not all of Worley's claims have valid points however. She stated that “ health professionals are among the most prejudiced people around” (494). She is implying that the majority of health professionals are prejudice towards all of their overweight patients.

Yet her reasoning was not supported and her claim was fueled solely by resentment. She also explains that overweight people do not like going to doctors or weight loss clinics for medical needs, because “ the goal is usually to lose weight as quickly as possible, as though to snatch the poor fat soul out of the jaws of imminent death”(494), in contrary to focusing on just being

healthy. This is true with some health professionals, but it should not hinder someone from finding an adequate physician or nutritionist. Worley further excuses obesity by giving many reasons as to why obese people don't try to lose weight.

She excuses inactivity by the embarrassment of exercise; however, she does not address any other contributors to obesity such as diet. There is no excuse for eating unhealthy on a regular basis. It is alright to treat oneself once in a while, but junk food on a daily basis is not excused. Poor eating habits are not excused for overweight or thin people, because healthiness is not determined by how fat someone looks. Worley also states that "body size is primarily determined by one's genetic makeup" (493).

Although there is evidence to support that the overall size of one's body is genetically determined, DNA however, does not force oneself to have an extreme excess of body fat. Worley may have discussed that exercise plays an important role in overall health and happiness, but she did not focus on the many other factors that lead to obesity and health issues. Worley is right to say that one's happiness and healthiness should not be determined by weight. All people, fat or thin, should feel comfortable in their own bodies. No person has the right to tease or criticize someone else's body to lower someone's self esteem.

On the other hand, people that are overweight cannot blame their health problems on other people. They need to take charge of their life by exercising, eating healthy and seeking good medical advice. It is not right to

make hasty generalizations against health professionals, because there is a reason why doctors go through eight or more years of schooling. All current knowledge of obesity has been derived from physicians and scientists studying the anatomy and physiology of the body. Overall, one's goal should not be to lose weight, but to be healthy and feel great.

Living a healthy lifestyle will lead to higher feelings of self worth, which can overcome the psychological effects that fat jokes create. Worley encourages her readers to “ be proud of yourself and never dread unwanted attention” (496), and that is possible. Not everyone may accept obesity, but it is the overweight people themselves that must learn to make good lifestyle choices and accept themselves in order to truly be fat and happy. Works Cited Worley, Mary Ray. " Fat and Happy: In Defense of Fat Acceptance". Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum. 9th ed. New York: Pearson, 2005. Print.