

# COMBATING THE THINNESS MYTH

The thin myth stands in many people's way of letting go of disordered eating behaviors. In this section we will define the myth and discuss how to dismantle it within yourself.

- "I'll have a healthy relationship, once I lose 10 pounds."
- "I'll start enjoying my life again once I'm thin enough."

Both of these statements and others like them are uttered every single day by people of all body types. Thoughts like these play into the myth of thinness, **the belief that being thin will solve every other problem that a person is facing in their life**. This myth is built by noticing and listening to messages that communicate thinness as the ideal. We also may associate thin looking people as happier because of celebrities and influencers that we see online. It's important to remember that comparing our own lives to those of celebrities is already setting us up for failure. Additionally, **people of all sizes experience difficulties**. That's because thinness cannot make someone happy or fix all of their problems. By beginning to understand this myth and breaking it down, you can go after your life goals without worrying about being thin **first**.

## CHALLENGING THE MYTH

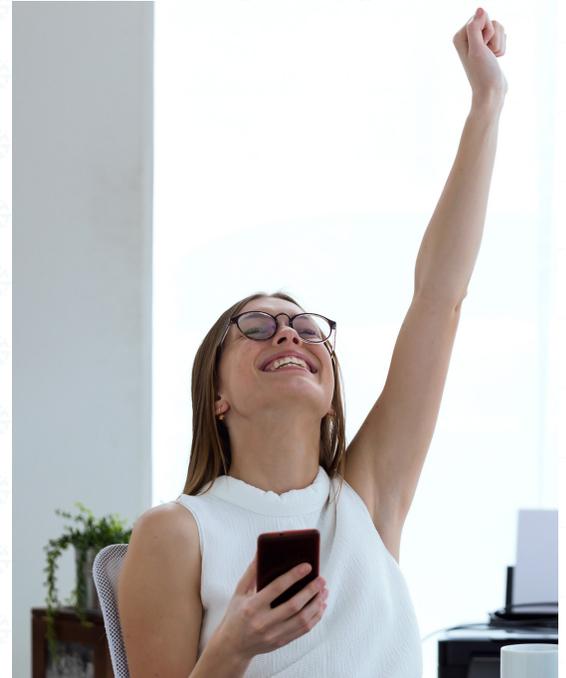
The first step to challenging the thin myth is to **notice where it appears in your life**. Sit down with yourself and try to identify why you want to be thin? What things do you think you will be able to accomplish if you become thin? In considering your answers to these questions, ask yourself if it's logical. For example, if you identify that you want to be thin because you want to be healthy, look at the behaviors you are engaging in to see if they are, in fact, healthy. All disordered eating behaviors are associated with serious health concerns and being thin does not equate to being healthy. Do you truly need to be thin in order to accomplish the things you want to do? If you think that being thin is what will lead you to your promotion, or make you a better friend, consider the steps that you could take immediately to work towards those things. **The truth is that even if you hit that magic number or size—it will not fix all of your problems.** It will not automatically give you a promotion, make you a different person, or heal past wounds. Therefore, it does not need to feel like an obstacle in improving those things.



## REACHING FOR YOUR GOALS

Once you have recognized and challenged the myth of thinness, it's time to **set realistic expectations for yourself and your goals**. Select one of the things that you have promised yourself you will be able to do/will do once you are thin. Take that and turn it into a goal to work on now— with no caveats or prerequisites.

For example, if you feel that your relationship would be healthier or happier once your thin, start working on your relationship now. If you want to start pursuing your dream career after losing some weight, start pursuing it today. Start taking actions that get you closer to your goals instead of assuming everything will work itself out if you can just become thin. **The thinness myth often stands in the way of someone and what they truly want to be doing and to accomplish.** Below is a worksheet that can help you to combat the thinness myth. Once you work to break that myth down you can start doing the things you truly want to do now.



## WORKSHEET: COMBATING THE THINNESS MYTH

### WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE THIN?

*What things do you believe you will be able to accomplish if you are thin?*

*I want to be thin so I can feel better in strengthening my relationships, romantic or friendly.*

### DO YOU HAVE TO BE THIN TO ACCOMPLISH THESE THINGS?

*Spend time reflecting on the logic of what you state above. Do you have to be thin in order to accomplish what you wrote down?*

*Not really. I can strengthen my relationships as I am now. I am not any less capable now.*

### SET A REALISTIC GOAL

*Select an accomplishment you identified above and set goals to work towards it right now - with no caveats or prerequisites.*

*Goal: Strengthen my relationships.*

*Steps:*

- 1. Begin prioritizing "unplugged" social outings.*
- 2. Call/text to check in on friends x times per week or month.*
- 3. Be more intentional in gift-giving or conversations. Take notes in my phone if needed for ideas down the road.*

EXAMPLE



# WORKSHEET: COMBATING THE THINNESS MYTH

In this worksheet you will identify and make a plan to change areas of your life where the thinness myth is limiting your achievement.

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## **DO YOU HAVE TO BE THIN TO ACCOMPLISH THESE THINGS?**

*Spend time reflecting on the logic of what you state above. Do you have to be thin in order to accomplish what you wrote down?*

## **SET A REALISTIC GOAL**

*Select an accomplishment you identified above and set goals to work towards it right now - with no caveats or prerequisites.*