

"Successful weight loss takes programming, not will power." - PHIL MCGRAW

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Want to lose weight? Take a long hard look in the mirror. That should be enough to get you started, shouldn't it? Wrong. The inner critic in you is more likely to sap your confidence, leaving you feeling like a failure — embarrassed that you lack the willpower to stop eating, start moving and shed the pounds.

That's the verdict of a new report from the British Psychological Society (BPS) that says feeling ashamed of our bodies — and being stereotyped as lazy or lacking self-control because of being overweight — could actually be making it harder to become healthier.

Our weight can be affected by a combination of factors, including genetics, responses to childhood trauma, a lack of available healthy food and sedentary lifestyles. Now add fat shaming to the list. The report claims it doesn't help the obese, but only leads to further weight gain.

Start looking after yourself
So how can you tame your inner critic? Well, for one thing, don't be fooled into thinking that your weight is out of your control. Jane Ogden, a health psychology professor at the University of Surrey and author of *The Psychology of Dieting*, believes feeling like a victim of your biology, society or the food industry can be just as bad for your self-esteem as fat stigma. "You are not defined by your body weight," she says. "To make a change, you need to stop viewing exercise as something you should do to be a better person and start thinking about it as a form of self-care, which you deserve because you are a good person."



Actress Sonakshi Sinha admitted on a TV show that she is often body shamed by online trolls. "I'm not a number on the scale," she responded



TV chef Manjeet Chauhan knew it would be difficult to diet. Giving her career, so she lost weight by limiting her portions



Tackle negative thoughts
Criticism from others can make your thoughts about your weight worse, but positive inputs could change your thought patterns, says Dr Angel Chater, an author of the British Psychological Society report. "If eating less and moving more was a simple matter, we wouldn't have the current obesity levels," she says. "There is good evidence speaking to a psychologist can help people living with obesity. Psychologists can help you understand factors that lead to overeating, what is eaten, when and how much, as well as understanding barriers to regular physical activity."

This view is echoed by Dr Helen McCarthy, a consultant clinical psychologist who explores weight loss without dieting in her book *How to Retrain Your Appetite*. "Psychologists can help with understanding self-defeating behaviours, how and why they developed. Then strategies can be used to bring change." One strategy she suggests is talking to yourself as if you were a close friend, rather than allowing your inner voice to be a bully.

Time to open up
You should talk to family and friends, be open and share your experiences, says Ogden. "Find out what works for other people." Seeking support and being kinder to yourself may not seem like it would have much impact, but challenging negative thoughts can be the first step towards a healthier relationship with food and your body. Start thinking about exercise and healthy eating as self-care that you deserve.

Actor Chris Pratt was body shamed for being "too thin," but he hit back at trolls with a humorous post on Instagram



COMPACT IMPACT

Laptop bags that can add zing to your daily schedule
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Paul Adams Rocco bag in Napa leather ₹36,000	Corneliani laptop briefcase in wolver leather Price on request	Fabriano laptop bag ₹27,240
Levi's laptop pack ₹2,299	PUMA laptop backpack ₹1,049 on Amazon Fashion	Brune leather briefcase with brogue detail ₹9,999
Limeroad synthetic leather bag ₹3,043	United Colors of Benetton laptop bag ₹2,999 onward	

HOW TO

- If you're looking to make a good impression at the workplace, opt for a briefcase-style laptop bag that's smart and easy to carry. Leather and nylon ones are best as they are durable and lightweight.
- Want something fun? Nylon laptop bags come in a spectrum of colours. Opt for a rectangular backpack in a fun colour for a casual Friday look.
- Always measure your laptop and consider what else you may be carrying (a notebook, pens, extra power bank etc.) before investing in it. You don't want to end up struggling later.

take a hard call

Out of character

The act of cheating could be your subconscious telling you something about your long-term relationship



At times, right when the moment comes for commitment, you end up making the big mistake. We're talking about cheating. You could be in a steady relationship with a partner for a couple of years. But on a boys' night out, you sometimes have too much to drink. Out of the blue, you end up going back home with a friend of a friend or an acquaintance from work. And end up spending the night together.

The problem is that maybe you've never done something like this before and, although you feel bad and guilty about it, you can't stop thinking about this woman and what a great night you had.

Out of turn
Relationship experts say that even though the act of cheating is sometimes

totally out of character, your subconscious could be telling you something. Many people wrack their brains, wondering why they did it and what they should do about it.

As crazy as it sounds, therapists say that this could sometimes mean that you're trying to sabotage your long-term relationship. Panic may have set in at the thought of getting married or being with one person for the rest of your life.

If this is out of character, then you're either not ready for that kind of commitment or being with one person for the rest of your life.

But cheating on your partner isn't the answer and it's not fair. Maybe you need some time apart to work out what you want.

— Daily Mirror

my picks



Devendra Parulekar Founder, SafronStays

Movie
ANDAZ APNA APNA. IT NEVER FAILS TO CRACK ME UP. YOU CAN TAKE SCREENSHOTS OF THE MOVIE AND USE THEM AS MEMES.

Book
I'M AN AVID READER. ONE BOOK I LOVE IS *INSANELY SIMPLE: THE OBSESSION THAT DRIVES APPLE'S SUCCESS* BY KEN SEGALL.

App
I LOVE INSTAGRAM. IT HELPS YOU UNWIND, VIRTUALLY. ALL THE FOOD LOOKS LIP-SMACKING GOOD. YOU WANT TO TRAVEL TO EVERY PLACE YOU SEE AND IT'S JUST BURSTING WITH LIFE, STORES AND COLOURS.

Gadget
THE AMAZON FIRE STICK BECAUSE IT ALLOWS ME TO BINGE WATCH MY FAVOURITE SHOWS.

Holiday
IT'S CONVENTIONAL, BUT COOL. THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE AIR, WHETHER IT'S THE BEACH, THE CULTURE, THE ROADS, THE FOOD... THE VIBE TAKES YOU TO ANOTHER WORLD.

— As told to gtynda.alves@timesgroup.com

NOTEWORTHY PAPERBACKS

American Dialogue: The Founders and Us
By Joseph J. Ellis
This latest book by the eminent historian Ellis moves back and forth in time between the nation's founding era and our own, charting the "ongoing conversation" that shapes American democracy. Ellis "draws connections between our history and our present reality with an authority that few other authors can muster." — Jeff Shesol noted in *The Times*.

Bridge of Clay
By Markus Zusak
Zusak's long-awaited follow-up to *The Book Thief* is set in Australia, where five brothers confront the death of their mother and the disappearance of their father. Jen Doll wrote in *The Times* that "the characters are clearly loved, and the artistry of language will leave you gasping at times".

Prisoner: My 544 Days in an Iranian Prison - Solitary Confinement, a Sham Trial, High-Stakes Diplomacy, and the Extraordinary Efforts It Took to Get Me Out
by Jason Rezaian
Rezaian, an Iranian-American former *Washington Post* Tehran bureau chief, weaves family history into this account of his arrest on espionage charges. *Times* reviewer Michael J. Totten called it a "memoir that reads like a thriller".

All the Lives We Ever Lived: Seeking Solace in Virginia Woolf
by Katharine Smyth
In this memoir, Smyth uses *The Lighthouse* as the through-line for her life, connecting Woolf's novel to her own memories as she grapples with her father's death after his descent into alcoholism. *Times* reviewer Radhika Jones wrote that the book "could itself become solace for people navigating their way through the complexities of grief for their fallen idols".

All My Puny Sorrows
by Miriam Toews
In Toews' seventh book, an adult single mother travels from Toronto to Winnipeg to care for her sister, a successful concert pianist who has attempted suicide. Writing in *The Times*, Curtis Sittenfeld praised "his intelligence, his honesty and, above all, his compassion," calling the novel "irresistible".

— The New York Times

book reviews

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ALL THE LIVES WE EVER LIVED
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