BODY IMAGE: WHAT IS IT AND HOW DOES IT INFLUENCE US?

How does Body Image affect us physically, emotionally and psychologically?
How can we move beyond its negative influences?

How we feel about our body or about our body parts affects how we feel about ourselves. What do you like or dislike about your body? How do you feel about your hair, your face, your eyes, your nose, your lips, your shoulders, your breasts, your hips, your butt, your thighs, your legs or your feet? Did I leave anything out that you especially like or dislike about your body?

When one feels too fat or too thin or too ugly or too dumb they may also judge themselves to be inferior, unworthy, etc. These emotions are best dealt with when allowed to be released. When expression of these feelings is blocked, the feelings don’t just disappear. These blocked emotions influence what we attempt to hide about ourselves, how we want to appear, the kind of clothes we wear, our posture, how we sit, stand, move across a room, speak, shrink into our shoulders, expand our chest or tuck in our belly.

Repetition of unconscious emotional attitudes (e.g. feeling small or wanting to appear powerful) contribute to developing and maintaining unconscious habit patterns in the physical body.

Over time, we can become aware of some of these body patterns, as a tightening in our neck or back or pelvis or find ourselves collapsing our spine, slouching, grinding our teeth or jutting out our shoulders or our chin in a funny way. All of these can be understood as unconscious consequences of negative Body Image.

Often times a person’s body image is unrealistic. For instance, at an extreme, the anorexic who weighs 90 pounds thinks and feels that she’s too fat. Or, less unusual, a female or male may think they are ugly because they don’t look like Angelina Jolie or Brad Pitt while they are viewed as “attractive enough” by most people they meet.

Body image can be Conscious and Unconscious.

When body image is conscious we can identify what we like or dislike about our body. However, we might remain unconsciously identified with negative ideas, attitudes or feelings about ourselves based on that negative body image.

For example, the smallest sibling in a family might, as an adult, unconsciously feel small among groups of people. This could cause her/him to unconsciously want to stand out to be noticed in public; but, when alone, tend to slouch their back while feeling unloved, unchosen or depressed without someone to perform for, all the time remaining unconscious that this is exactly how it felt to be the smallest sibling in their family origin.

Or, an only child might, as an adult, speak loudly with an arrogant demanding tone of superiority or self-importance, expecting to be heard, listened to, chosen as the center of attention while remaining unwilling to acknowledge, even to themselves, that they have a fault, because that’s what it was like for them in their family of origin.

Regrettably, all of us are challenged to identify the impact of our unconscious negative body images since all of us carry unconscious influences from early childhood emotional experiences. We can either attempt to identify and correct these unconscious negative body patterns or,
when left unaddressed, they will continue to develop into more rigid body patterns over time, like unflossed teeth can lead to more serious dental problems.

So what can we do about our negative body image? What can we do to free ourselves of some of these old physical/emotional/psychological habit patterns?

Some people are spending tens of thousands of dollars today, for nip and tuck cosmetic surgery to change their body with the hope of changing their body image to feel better about themselves.

Dan Bienenfeld’s Hellerwork is another way. By releasing stored emotion from the past and restoring the body to its more balanced, aligned orientation, old physical patterns can be replaced with new healthy ones which, in turn, can also free the individual from negative thoughts and feelings they have been carrying since childhood.

Psychotherapy that focuses on identifying and releasing stored memories is another way.

Please send your questions and comments to www.steve@shrinkdifferentradio.com

Dr. Steve Wolf
Founder
Wolf Training Institute
www.tamingyouranger.com