

NAVIGATING BODY IMAGE IN HA RECOVERY AND BEYOND

*Created by: Mishi Garcia &
Nicky Chapman*



MEET YOUR HA RECOVERY BESTIES



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Michele (Mishi) Garcia: Mishi is no stranger to body image challenges as a former competitive gymnast and a 10 year career in the fashion industry. Afraid of people truly seeing her for who she was, she led with her body and was willing to do anything for the “perfect” body.

After years of being at war with herself, her body decided to push back with the loss of her period. The road to recover her period was one of the hardest realities for her to face as it required her to stop hiding behind her body and face her biggest fear, the fear of acceptance.

She’s now recovered her period and the relationship with her body, and now uses her personal history with HA, Holistic Health Coaching certification and soon to be Holistic HA Recovery Practitioner certification to help other women work through the roadblocks of recovery, find their self-worth outside of their body and recover their missing period naturally.

Mishi Lives in the heart of Chicago with her husband Dave and little Frenchie, Yoda! She is currently taking 1:1 clients struggling with HA, conception/fertility and cycle optimization. You can reach out to her directly at rosay.way@gmail.com to apply for coaching or connect with her on instagram [@rosay.way_wellness](https://www.instagram.com/rosay.way_wellness).

Nicky Chapman: After 15 years of eating disorders, extreme dieting & exercise addiction, losing her period with HA was a wake up call for Nicky. While her #1 reason for recovery was to get pregnant, she knew deep down that healing her relationship with food, exercise, and her body was necessary in becoming the mother she wanted to be for herself, and her daughter.

Healing meant challenging thought patterns, unlearning unhelpful body beliefs, rewriting stories, reevaluating her worth, practicing self compassion, and learning the importance of truly nourishing her mind + body. She used the foundations of holistic health to help her recover, and fall pregnant naturally upon her first recovery ovulation.

Nicky is an IIN Certified Health Coach who practices a holistic approach to HA recovery by addressing her clients lifestyle, dietary habits, physical state, mental health, and emotional well-being. She coaches clients through factors and behaviors preventing them from recovering, educates them on TRUE nourishment, and holds a safe space for their healing journeys.

Nicky lives in Victoria, Australia (currently as they are a military family and move around a LOT!), with her fiance, and 18mo daughter Romee. She currently has space for 1:1 clients who need support, guidance, accountability, and compassion in their own recovery journeys. You can email her at n_chapman@live.com, or contact her via her instagram account [@thewellnessantidote](https://www.instagram.com/thewellnessantidote) to discuss whether coaching may be a good fit for you.

A SPECIAL NOTE FOR YOU AS YOU GET STARTED

We came together to create this downloadable as a tool to help you overcome body image challenges in recovery, which is one of the biggest barriers that holds women back from not only recovering their period, but living a fulfilling and beautiful life.

As women we are conditioned to believe that we are made for a life dedicated to shrinking ourselves. We live our lives in a deprivation mindset, which bleeds into everything we do. We think less is better, we question our hunger, we hate our bodies and we choose deprivation over nourishing ourselves both physically and mentally. It's extremely deep-seated, and why so many of us struggle to put our health first over our body goals.

Our intention with this downloadable is to inspire you in your healing journey. To create a safe place to seek perspective and awareness, embrace vulnerability, release emotions, + unhelpful stories, and really envision what your life gets to look, feel and be. Because living a life free from disordered behaviours and body obsession gets to happen to you too!

Now all you have to do is allow yourself the permission and space for a new narrative.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

To get the most out of this you are going to need a journal, nothing fancy, just a place where you can collect your thoughts as you work through this healing journey.

Second, start with section one, 'creating curious awareness'. There's no room for judgment here, only curiosity. When judgment comes up, don't act on it, instead meet it with kindness and take the opportunity to get curious about where it came from. Something like "I see you thought, I know you're not mine, where did I learn this and from who?"

To help you really get to the root of these thoughts, understand where they came from and see that the unhelpful thoughts are in fact NOT yours, but learned, we provided you with journal prompts. Keep in mind, it's not a race, take as long as you need in each section before moving on.

Once you've completed the journal prompts in section one, move onto section two, 'rewiring your thoughts'. Despite what your mind has been telling you, you were not put on this earth to shrink yourself or spend your entire life on a diet. You are here to LIVE and experience all the magic around us! However, somewhere along the way, you got a little lost. Don't worry, we're going to help you come back home to your body and to do that we need to unlearn a few things. This section you will have prompts to then help you rewrite your story.

To round out the deep inner work you just completed, we must let go of what no longer serves us. The final section, 'letting go', is all about releasing and letting go of any beliefs or old stories that stand in your way of moving towards the life we deserve. You only have one prompt here, but it holds a lot of power and just might be the key to moving you forward.

Whilst journal prompts will help you work through hard body image days, it's an individualized practice that you have to show up for everyday. The goal here isn't to eradicate the negative thoughts, but instead create a better relationship with them; one where they no longer hold power over, or influence you, one where they don't spiral out of control, and one where you are able to move on with your day knowing & believing that they will pass, and that you're worthy of showing yourself kindness no matter what. To help you better the relationship with your thoughts, we provided you with tips, tools and resources that can be used in your daily life, especially the moments when you need the most support.

Lastly, we've been where you are and we know the journey will be tough, but make no mistake: You deserve happiness! So grab a journal and come on a journey with us, a journey back into your body and reclaim your power.

SECTION 1: CREATING CURIOUS AWARENESS

The first step to changing the way we see and think about our body is creating awareness around our thoughts, and getting curious about where they came from. What's important to note is, we were not born hating our bodies, it was learned. From a young age we were bombarded with societal messaging that teaches us to value "thinness" and tells us how we should look. The good news is, if you can learn to think one way, you can unlearn and learn to think another way. Without awareness you will always fall back to your default messaging.

"Awareness is a powerful catalyst for positive change"
- Cheryl Richardson

Step 1, evaluate your environment: Take inventory of your external world such as the people you surround yourself with, the places you frequent, the media you consume such as social media (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok), music, T.V., movies, news and celebrity gossip. Begin to take note of all the things that are body focussed and or diet focussed. Get curious about how they make you feel and how they influence the way you think about yourself.

Step 2, evaluate your internal world: Start to become aware of your thoughts. Don't judge them, just be curious (curiosity is key). What are they saying to you and about you? Are they true? If so, why do you believe them to be true? What evidence do you have? Is it possible that it's not true, instead it was learned? Reflect back to your environment and ask yourself if anything from your environment, past or present, may have influenced your thinking? Maybe your mom or other women in your life were chronic dieters or constantly commented on their body or food choices. Maybe your favorite influencer is focussed on weight loss. Maybe the magazines you read only promote lean women.

Journal prompts for creating awareness:

1. How do you feel in your body right now?
2. What negative thoughts or beliefs come up most frequently for you when you think about your body? Think about how you talk about yourself to others. Are you critical? If so, what comes up most frequently?
3. Can you remember when it started? If yes, explain what happened? If not, let's see what's behind your conscious thought. Could it be from something in your external environment? Maybe something a parent, friend, family member, coach or teacher said to you or you observed them doing when you were a child? What about a movie you watched or a magazine you read? Who and what influenced you?
4. What parts of your daily life bring up these negative thoughts or are a trigger? Think of your external environment, i.e. a lot of people are triggered by social media.
5. What do you make these thoughts and beliefs mean about you? .i.e. You're lazy? Unworthy? Unlovable?

Journal prompts to get clear on your current story:

Stories are like narratives that we tell ourselves (often subconsciously), over and over. They influence our thoughts, our actions, and our beliefs about ourselves.

Once we get thoroughly clear on our story (as best as we understand it), we nurture and support ourselves in dismantling, and rewriting it. Use the above journal prompts to help you get REALLY clear on your story.

1. What is the story I am carrying about my body? And how are these beliefs about my body negatively impacting my life?

SECTION 2: REWIRING YOUR THOUGHTS

As mentioned before, you weren't born feeling this way about your body. It's over time that we learn to believe we are unworthy, not enough, or need to change. It's over time that a 'body image' is installed to keep us compliant and small.

To heal your relationship with your body is not to learn how to have peace, but to UNlearn everything that's contributed to disrupting it.

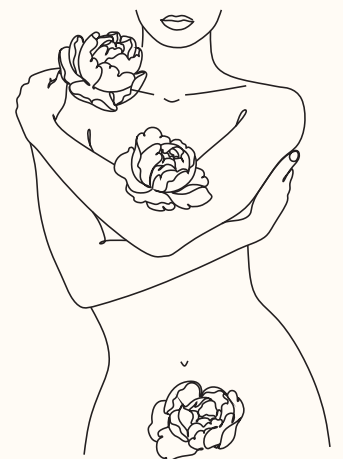
Rewiring your story is essentially about shifting your perspective so you can move beyond fears, judgment and limiting beliefs: and take your power back.

Journal prompts to rewrite your story: When answering the below prompts, consider what you want your relationship with your body to be.

1. What would it look like?
2. What would it feel like?
3. How would it impact my food/movement choices?
4. How would my relationships/social life be different?
5. How would my overall life be different?
6. What would I do that I'm currently denying myself of?

Rewrite your story: Imagine what life would feel like if you were completely at peace with yourself; if you no longer felt that need to search for external validation; and if you lived your life fueled from all that you already are rather than by others expectations of you?

1. If you could change the current story about your body, what would you want it to be?



SECTION 3: LETTING GO

Now is the time we allow ourselves to fully embody this new relationship with our body. One with more love, compassion and acceptance, but first you will need to let go of old ways of being.

You are going to want to fight this part. Maybe your identity is wrapped up in your old way of thinking or having the “perfect” body. Maybe you think that change has to be difficult, that we need to shame our way there i.e. hating yourself thin.

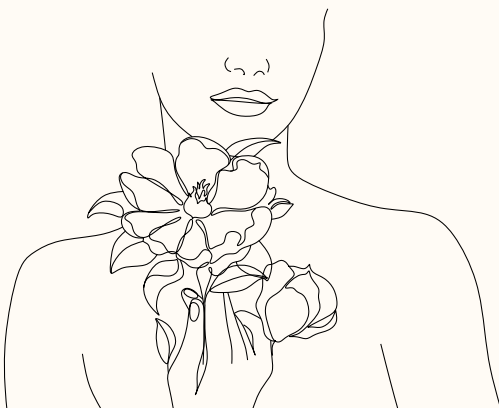
But it's time to release all ways of thinking that don't serve you and stand up to your inner critic and allow that part of you to relax. It's that rigid way of thinking that got us into this mess and we need a different mindset to heal it.

“We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them”

- Albert Einstein

Journal prompt to release and let go: As you go through this final step of healing your relationship with your body, approach it with kindness and compassion, the same way you would treat a friend in this situation. Use your new level of awareness to find compassion for yourself, knowing that it was never your body that needed to change, but society who needs to change.

1. What do you need to let go of to embody this ideal relationship with your body, let's call it our higher self. What is standing between you and your body being best friends? i.e. beliefs, old stories. What is standing between you and your ability to release the expectations you created for your body? i.e. that you have to be a certain size or weight



TIPS, TOOLS & RESOURCES

Tips to challenge bad body image:

1. **Challenge your thoughts:** You can't always choose your first thought, but you do get to choose how you react. Always seek a perspective that serves you, and build yourself up with some positive affirmations.
2. **Curate your social media:** Pay attention to accounts that make you feel bad about your body or trigger your inner critic. Choosing compassion is not weak-mute, unfollow or take a break until you're in a better place.
3. **Develop your own opinion:** We tend to care more about others' opinions, which are hyper focused on looks, but we haven't formed our own. Form your own and focus it around function vs looks.
4. **Surround yourself with positive people:** Hang around people who genuinely enjoy your company, aren't body focussed and make you feel good about yourself. You should leave their company feeling energized, not drained and or questioning yourself.
5. **Surround yourself with diverse people:** Surround yourself with people who aren't similar to you or interested in the same things as you i.e. gym friends. Find people who will challenge and expand your views and perspectives.
6. **Wear clothes that fit:** Don't punish yourself with your clothes and work with your body, not against it. Size up and find less restrictive clothes that make you feel good.
7. **Appreciate your body:** Instead of focussing on what your body looks like, appreciate what it does for you and all the ways it allows you to participate in life i.e. dancing, laughing, playing, traveling, BREATHING. Remember, life is for living, not looking!
8. **Show up for yourself daily:** Do something for YOU everyday i.e. go for a walk, journal, read, pick up an old hobby, anything that brings YOU joy. When you show up for yourself, you are showing yourself that you are worthy and deserving of love.
9. **Be the change you want to see:** Too many people are not living their best life because they are held back by their body image challenges. Change starts with you! Be the example that encourages others to begin the process of healing their own relationship with their body. Be the example you need!
10. **Set non-body goals:** Take the focus off your body and use your energy to focus on things that truly matter in your life. Think about your values and make goals that align to them i.e. community, connection, relationships, adventure, happiness
11. **Get out of the comparison trap:** The more we compare ourselves to others, the worse we feel about ourselves. Practice embracing who you are and what makes you unique! When you find yourself comparing yourself, say 3 nice things about yourself.
12. **Ground yourself in the facts:** You've done the work, you know where these thoughts came from and you know they're not yours. Remind yourself of the facts and silence the inner critic with compassion.
13. **Set up boundaries:** Pay attention to how you feel throughout the day, what triggers a negative body image experience for you, and set boundaries by limiting your interaction or avoiding them until you're in a better place. Shut down any conversations that involve your body or remove yourself from body focussed conversations and relationships.
14. **Practice self love:** For every negative comment think of 3 nice things to say about yourself.
15. **Practice daily affirmations:** Affirmations affirm our new beliefs/reality. They only work if you use them daily! Don't just say them but write them down in your journal, email yourself, put it on a sticky note and place it on your mirror. We've provided some below.

TIPS, TOOLS & RESOURCES

AFFIRMATIONS:

1. My body does best when it is nourished and loved.
2. Making peace with my body is healthier than restriction.
3. I was made for more than a life dedicated to shrinking my body.
4. The life I'm living matters more than the shape of the body I'm living life in.
5. My body is my forever home and I am grateful for it.
6. I appreciate my body for all that it lets me do.
7. My body does not represent my success or failures.
8. I am letting go of anything that comes in the way of being at peace with my body.
9. What matters most is how my body feels, not how it looks.
10. My very existence makes the world a better place, and I exist through my body.

PODCASTS:

- [Almost 30: The Journey to Body Acceptance](#)
- [Almost 30: Body Acceptance Roundtable](#)
- [Take the Cake: Buying Clothes and Body Acceptance](#)
- [Take the Cake: Body Image Meditation](#)
- [Take the Cake: Weight gain + what to expect when restoring your metabolism](#)
- [Rebuilding Trust With the Body: Self love is a choice NOT a destination. Self love, radical body acceptance and confidence with Jenna Kutcher](#)
- [The Purpose Show: Body Confidence with Jenna Kutcher](#)
- [The Good Effect: The five practices to love your body. Body acceptance psychology.](#)
- [Hungry for Happiness: Body Acceptance, how to take the focus off the body](#)
- [Hungry for Happiness: Why hating my body saved my life](#)

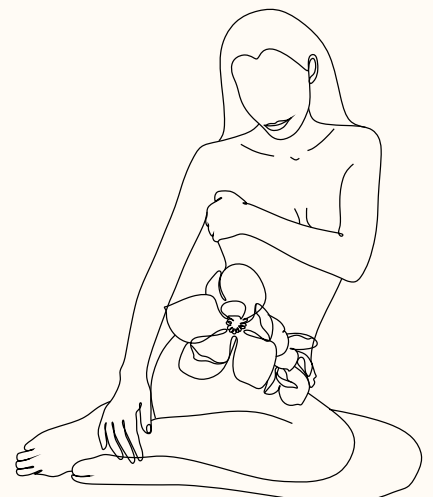
BOOKS:

[Hungry For Happiness: Samantha Skelly](#)

[Mother Hunger: Kelly Mcdaniel](#)

[Women Food and God: Geneen Roth](#)

[The F*ck it Diet: Caroline Dooner](#)



A FINAL NOTE

We know that in the moment negative body image can feel intense, and uncomfortable, and we hope that by sharing our story + these tools, you will gain some inspiration and insight to take with you through these times. These tools when implemented consistently have the power to help you change the narrative, and mend your relationship with your body. AS YOU DESERVE!

You can do it, we believe in you wholeheartedly, and are here for you every step of the way if you need.

Reach out to us:

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