

How we feel about ourselves and our bodies

Sometimes we all have mean or unkind thoughts about ourselves. Like we're not smart enough. Fast enough. Or that we don't have the coolest hair style. These thoughts have to do with our body image and self esteem. In this video we're going to look at what those things are and how we can be kinder to ourselves and our bodies.

First, let's learn what body image and self esteem means.

Body image is how we think and feel about the way we look. It's the relationship we have with our body. Self-esteem is how we think and feel about ourselves inside. It's okay to recognise our weaknesses. Everybody has them. But we also need to recognise our strengths, because we all have these too! Having a positive body image and a healthy self-esteem means we're able to think about ourselves in a balanced way.

Try imagining negative body image and low self-esteem as a parrot. A poisonous parrot. It's mean and unhelpful and makes nasty comments about you. It says "you'll never look as good as your friends". And "you'll never be as fast as them either". Listening to this poisonous parrot can make us feel upset. It can affect the way we live, behave and how we think about ourselves and our friends. But we don't have to put up with that parrot!

The next time you hear it say something mean to you, just think "oh, there's that parrot again, they're lying and I don't have to listen to them" and try focusing on something else. Remember though, this parrot is poisonous and it won't give up easily. So you have to stay strong and keep answering it back. Eventually it'll get tired of you not listening and you'll hear it less and less.

When it comes to your body image and self esteem, you're never alone. There's always someone to help you if you feel upset. Here are some signs that you may need support:

- Perhaps you spend lots of time focusing on one part of your appearance or body
- You see a part of your body as something that needs fixing
- You spend lots of time trying to change or hide a part of your body that you don't like
- You always think you're not good enough
- You avoid people or situations
- You feel unhappy quite a lot
- Or you do things because you feel you have to, not because you want to

As well as talking to an adult you trust, there are things you can do to feel better. Like being kind to yourself. What would you say to a friend who's feeling like this? Say it to yourself. Do things you enjoy and that make you happy. Focus on what you have done well. Think about how you feel, not just how you look. And thank your body. For example, try saying this: "thank you legs for helping me to walk". Remember that all bodies are different and that's okay.

It's also important to be kind to others as well as to ourselves. If you think a friend is worried about how they look or feel, you can help them by:

- Talking to an adult you trust, like a teacher, school nurse or parent
- Telling them that you're their friend and you want to help them
- Sharing something you like about them
- Or doing something together that you both find fun

Remember, be kind to yourself, your body and other people too.

If you feel like you want more help about anything in this video, you can talk with your doctor, a school nurse or visit the Health for Kids website.