

Expert Relationship Advice: 4 Ways to Build a Healthy Relationship with Your Body



By [Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D.](#)

If you hope to build healthy relationships with other people, the best [expert relationship advice](#) is to start on your relationship with your body.

Body shaming is a real issue. [Selena Gomez](#) responded to it and so did Tyra Banks. Even celebrity [Emma Stone](#) wasn't immune from an encounter. The repercussions of this are a soaring number of cases of eating disorders and depression. For instance, the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders reports that at least [30 million](#) people of all ages and genders suffer from an eating disorder in the US.

Social and political forums are scrambling to find ways to eliminate body shaming activities. One of the best defenses you can build against forming a negative self-image is to concentrate on building a healthy relationship with your body. "I am not a woman whose self-worth comes from her dress size," says [Kristen Bell](#) when confronted with negative comments about her physical appearance. "Comparison is one long, agonizing death and does not interest me at all."

Working on your relationship with your body will help you build healthy relationships with others. Here are four tips from [relationship expert](#) Dr. Amy Osmond Cook.

Expert Relationship Advice for Loving Your Body

1. What you eat is what you are: The focus of a healthy diet shouldn't rest on deprivation or discouragement. Instead, healthy eating is about providing fresh, nutritious, quality foods that nourish your body. We have the power to choose what fuels our body. One trend that supports a healthy relationship with our body is cooking at home. [Market research](#) shows the meal kit delivery services industry generated almost \$1.5 billion dollars in sales over the past three years and projections estimate a multi-billion dollar growth in the next five years. [Culinary schools](#) that cater to the amateur chef are popping up in cities across the country, offering hands-on instruction from professional chefs. The idea is to embrace healthy eating, which in turn, allows us to celebrate our bodies.

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2. Make exercise a routine: The benefits of an exercise routine extends beyond better health. A commitment to daily exercise helps other aspects of our lives, especially our jobs, by developing self-discipline, time management skills, and increased productivity. "Some employers take a healthy workforce for granted, until they aren't," says [Ryan Westwood](#), CEO of Simplus, who encourages exercise in the workplace.

"Employed athletes who pursue passions outside of the workplace bring that self-discipline to their job," says [Cody Ferraro](#), cofounder of InXAthlete, and a former collegiate Lacrosse player. "What an employer gets is a productive, self-motivated employee who has a strong concept of time-management."

Along with the physical benefits, exercise enhances mood and

staves off depression. “Even moderate physical activity improves muscle strength, maintains healthy joints and bones, and it can help reduce high blood pressure,” said [Tonya Fisher](#), executive director of Bainbridge Island Health and Rehabilitation. The [American Psychological Association](#) says that researchers have also explored exercise as a tool for treating, and perhaps preventing, anxiety. A strong body boosts a strong mind, and that reinforces a healthy relationship between both.

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3. Find a purpose: An essential defense against negativity is finding meaningful ways to spend your time. “Living on purpose feels alive, clear, and authentic,” say [Barb Leonard, PhD, RN, PNP, and Mary Jo Kreitzer, RN, PhD](#). The article also points out that purpose influences health, including life extension, reduced risk of heart disease and Alzheimer’s disease, and it allows for better pain management. In a world seemingly brimming with shallow, superficial conversations, finding a deeper meaning that adds value to your life is a solid strategy for being a part of the world but not consumed by it.

4. Surround yourself with great friends: Whether conscious or not, experts say we are defined by the people with whom we spend the most time. “Your best friend could be a key contributor to your success,” said CNBC contributor [Ruth Umoh](#). “[Research](#) shows that having a close friend boosts your resilience and helps you bounce back from hardships.”

One of the reasons why celebrities can bounce back from harsh criticism is their social support system. Although it may seem the more popular the star, the bigger the entourage, experts say quality outweighs quantity when it comes to friendships. “Although being friendly can get you more friends, you don’t need hundreds to help you through life,” says [Susan Krauss Whitbourne, Phd](#). “You may have to prune your friendship tree

as you get older to be sure that you give enough attention to the ones who will really matter for your well-being.”

By focusing on diet, exercise, personal fulfillment, and great friends, you will develop a healthy relationship with the one person who matters most: you.

For more information about and articles by our relationship expert Dr. Amy Osmond Cook, click [here](#).