



**national association
to advance
fat acceptance**

April 2020 NAAFA Newsletter

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"Maybe you just didn't want to shimmer badly enough"

by *Lindley Ashline*



Video of the Month



Zoom Call - SNL

This is a difficult time for all of us, and good comedy can be an enjoyable break. If you missed it last weekend, the SNL crew did their show from home. This skit shows a company conference call on Zoom. I hope this makes you laugh as much as I did.

youtube.com/watch?v=3byTN8NTCkc

Quick Links

[NAAFA.org](https://naafa.org)

Facebook

[Main](#)

[Toronto, ON, Canada](#)

[Capital \(DC\)](#)

[Clark County, NV](#)

[SF Bay, CA](#)

[Los Angeles, CA](#)

*(Originally published on The Body Liberation Guide.
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Hi friend, what would happen if paint became a Big Thing?

In fact, what would happen if one specific paint brand became a Big Thing, to the exclusion of all else?

What if that paint brand became so popular that you were expected to use it in every room of your house? To the point that visitors wouldn't come past the threshold if they didn't see it on the walls of your foyer?

To the point that delivery drivers would dump your packages on the sidewalk in disgust if they peered in your windows and didn't see that paint in your living room? To the point that people would ask you in casual conversation which brand you used, and scold you if you named a competing brand?

What if you lost friends and family members over whether your bedroom was painted in the right brand?

What if your "incorrect" preference for other paint brands made your life harder in a dozen different ways?

But how would anyone even know which brand of paint you'd used? Let's say that this paint, unlike any others, has an unusual and beautiful shimmer to it, a distinctive look that would instantly tell anyone looking that you'd used this brand.

Except that 95% of the time, the paint doesn't actually work. Oh, it goes on your walls just fine, but it doesn't shimmer. It just looks like ordinary eggshell paint, no matter what you try. You invest in tutorials and watch hours of YouTube videos, apply half a dozen coats, and get . . . plain paint.

When you contact the company, the company shrugs and says you must be applying it wrong.

When you talk about it on Facebook, you're met with a barrage of scorn, because your concentration and willpower in applying this paint clearly weren't up to the task (since, after all, it isn't shimmering).

Everyone seems to know the solution to your lack of shimmer:

[Orange County, CA
End Bullying Now](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)

[YouTube](#)

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- Maybe it's because you didn't let the paint dry slowly enough.
- Maybe it's because you didn't use a hair dryer to make sure the paint dried fast enough.
- Maybe it was too humid on the day you painted. Or too dry.
- Maybe you didn't set your intent carefully enough before you opened the can of paint.
- Maybe you added one too many coats. Or one too few.
- Maybe you didn't really want your walls to shine.

Everyone else's paint seems to shimmer. Every lovely interior design photo you see online features shimmering paint. Every friend's house you visit sparkles gently. You're bombarded with advertisements for that paint brand. It's all over Instagram. Shimmer, shimmer, shimmer.

What's wrong with you?

Here's what you don't see: The friends who aren't inviting anyone over for dinner because their walls stubbornly refuse to sparkle. The people who took triumphant photos of their shimmering home offices, only to walk into the room after a week and discover that the shimmer was gone. The Photoshop and video effects being lavished on Instagram posts and advertisements to disguise the fact that not even company-paid influencers or the company itself can get that paint to shimmer most of the time.

I trust that you've figured out this is a dieting analogy. It doesn't work at least 95% of the time, and yet we've set up an entire hierarchy that places smaller bodies over larger ones and asks the impossible of big bodies: that they shrink to fit an arbitrary standard.

Your walls are worthy and functional, even if they don't shimmer.

Your body is worthy, even if dieting hasn't worked for you.

COVID-19 and Our Well-being

by Barbara Bruno

This has been a frightening time around the world. We're all in this together, yet most of



us are also physically apart. Distancing can exacerbate fear, sadness, worry and loneliness. Believe it or not, we can aim to come out of this crisis in ways we can determine now--in advance. I want to come out more compassionate, wiser, and stronger. What qualities might you aim for?

You may have difficulty getting to sleep, staying asleep, or sleeping too much. You may have lost your appetite, or find yourself eating everything in sight. You may be experiencing regrets and disappointments, fears and concerns. You may be mourning someone you lost, due to this virus or other reasons.

As Mister (Fred) Rogers once said, "Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our

feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting and less scary."

New York state, where I live, has established a mental health hotline for both frontline workers and others who are suffering: 1-844-863-9314. The hotline is staffed by several thousand volunteers. (Most other states have their own hotlines.)

Much of our suffering is caused by our minds, which are like machines that constantly move our thoughts into the past or the future. There are ways to deal with this mind machinery; for example, by doing meditation. Here are some ways to help stop your mind's chatter: (1) We can bring ourselves back to the present by noticing objects that are around us right now (as opposed to where our thoughts have been). (2) We can breathe in and out, noticing how long it takes us to inhale and exhale. For example, I tend to inhale to a count of four, and exhale to a similar count. You can sit, eyes closed to cut down on outside distractions, and simply breathe and count. Every time you notice your mind has wandered, come back to breathing and counting. Meditation involves a lot of bringing our minds back to the present.

Another kind of meditation (3) involves noticing whatever comes up. When we bring our thoughts back, we can say to ourselves, "Thoughts." We don't have to get into what the thoughts were. If our nose itches, we can say "nose." If we hear something, "ears." If we see images, "eyes." If our back hurts, "back." And so on. While it's useful for meditation practice to try such exercises for around 20 minutes at a time and a couple of times a day, we can do them almost any time. Some people even meditate while walking--but make sure your eyes are open. You can look downward or keep your eyes a little unfocused.

Check out this article on taking care of your mental health during this crisis:
<https://tinyurl.com/qs29bvj>

A good way to help yourself get to sleep is to do a body scan. This involves mentally traveling slowly through your body, just noticing things about it. Start at the bottom of your right foot, noticing if it hurts or tickles or something else. Move through each toe of that foot, noticing it and maybe even wiggling it. Gradually work your way through your foot and up to that ankle. Notice temperatures of various body parts. After you've gone all the way up the leg, start at the bottom of your other foot and move up. You can then go from your bottom through your organs, then through fingers, wrists, and up each arm. Move up into and through your back,

shoulders and neck, and starting at the base of your skull, move up through your head to its top. At the top of your head, you can imagine looking down the front of your face, then going through eyebrows and eyes, cheeks, nose, mouth, chin. This is a helpful video on body scanning: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5akULIUnZwl>

Having and keeping a routine can be helpful. I am part of a telephone chain, wherein I phone a group of other residents in my community every day to see how they are doing, if they need anything, and just to connect. Having to make those phone calls helps me to get my mornings going. If you can, establish regular times to go to bed and get up. Pets and children, as well as virtual school and work, provide regular scheduling.

Connecting with friends and family can be a lifeline and one of the blessings of technology. I am writing this article during the time of Easter and Passover, and many families are celebrating virtually through Zoom, Skype, Facetime. Those of you more tech-savvy than I probably know many other outlets.

Other ways to help your mind: Some people are writing letters to their loved ones. This is a great opportunity to let those you love know what you love about them. If you have concerns about things, you can address them in these letters. Also, remember to be kind and loving to yourself. Everyone can use extra kindness these days.

A wonderful way to help your mind is through journaling. A journal can be like a best friend, a therapist, a companion. Journaling helps you get the thoughts, concerns, et al., out of your mind and onto a paper or computer. Anne Frank named her diary Kitty; Kitty helped her survive her time hiding in Amsterdam from the Nazis. It has also helped untold numbers of people ever since that time.

While houses of worship are closed at this time, many are offering virtual outreach through technological means. The pope's Palm Sunday service from the Vatican was on television; those few clergy who were in Saint Peter's Cathedral practiced "social distancing." Two spiritual teachers I like have helpful videos: Tara Brach at (<https://tarabrach.com/facing-pandemic-fears>) and Eckhart Tolle at (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MG1XcntrT4>).

Good ways to help your body are to move it. There are lots of options, from walking inside your home to walking outside in fresh air, if that is possible for you. Getting sunshine on your face can be a pleasure. (Just remember to keep physical distance of six feet or more from other people.) I am fortunate to live in a suburb and at this time of year, I can see and hear many birds. Cornell University has a bird detection website. If you do not go outdoors, there are many options for movement inside your residence. My senior community, Kendal on Hudson, has posted fitness routines on YouTube. You can also find chair dancing videos for seniors and younger folks, and probably a lot of other resources. As the saying goes, dance as if no one is watching. One of my early yoga teachers--who also taught first grade--encouraged us simply to wiggle.

My husband gave me a link to a physician in the UK who recommends breathing exercises, if infected: <https://tinyurl.com/y8qensqx>

Other body kindness includes bathing, soft comfy clothing and warm drinks. If you have pets, they can provide much cuddling and companionship. Dogs require walks, and pets of all sorts require maintenance. Helping to take care of others is good for us. If there are ways to do outreach, such as telephone calls, texts, emails, letters, etc., reach out. If you are fortunate enough to contribute to charities such as Feeding America, your fortune is other people's blessing. Some people cook or shop for those who would be at risk by being in public.

We in NAAFA have some advantages that others may not have. As I learned from psychologist Deb Burgard, those of us who have been members of oppressed communities learn skills which we can apply from one community to another. Resilience, ways of surviving

and even benefiting from oppression, can include being part of support communities like NAAFA; surrounding ourselves with representations of people like us (such as fat art or music by or about fat people). We can read books by others who have thrived in the face of oppression. If we've been hassled for our size, how have we comforted ourselves?

Speaking of comforting ourselves, we may have extra benefits helpful against COVID-19, including better survival rates against pneumonia and infectious diseases. Even though the article uses the "o" words and the phrase "normal weight," see: <https://tinyurl.com/y8ydx98m>

We have many more options for comforting ourselves. One of my all-time favorites is chocolate. Art museums around the world offer virtual tours. Many people have commented on binge-watching Netflix. Those who are skilled with their hands are cooking, sewing (including face masks), and other crafts. People with yards are gardening. Some are organizing their homes. Also, when watching TV or listening, remember your ABCs: Anything But COVID. It's very helpful to turn off bad news.

One resilience skill that goes very far is humor. There are many humorous links on the internet, including this art link: <https://www.sadanduseless.com/recreated-art> and these music links: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=wdcSONbo7Ng> and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DwlNt3Wxrl

You can tell my age group by the writers (Dave Barry) and movies I love to laugh at: "My Cousin Vinny," "LA Story," "Uncle Buck," "Airplane," and "Planes, Trains, and Automobiles" among others. What are yours?

And finally, this quote about being in lock down:

"Just be careful because people are going crazy from being in lock down! Actually, I've just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster while drinking coffee and we all agreed that things are getting bad. I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts a different spin on everything. Certainly not to the fridge as he is acting cold and distant. In the end the iron straightened me out as she said everything will be fine, no situation is too pressing. The vacuum was very unsympathetic . . . told me to just suck it up, but the fan was more optimistic and hoped it would all soon blow over! The toilet looked a bit flushed when I asked its opinion and didn't say anything but the door knob told me to get a grip. The front door said I was unhinged and so the curtains told me to . . . yes, you guessed it . . . pull myself together."

Meme of the Month



Know Your Rights

by Fat Rose and the #NobodysDisposable Coalition

#NoBodyIsDisposable

GUIDE TO SURVIVING COVID-19 TRIAGE

[TinyURL.com/
CovidKnowYourRights](https://TinyURL.com/CovidKnowYourRights)

They tell us:

us disabled people,
us fat people,
us old people,
us people with health conditions,
that we are the most likely to get really sick.

So, while spring breakers partied?

We retreated.

While runners raced?

We isolated.

While people lived?

We hid.

Because we all knew when they got really sick,
they would be first in line.

And we all knew when we got really sick, we'd be last.

But, hey, we'd be first to get our ventilators "reallocated"
to someone younger, thinner, more able bodied.

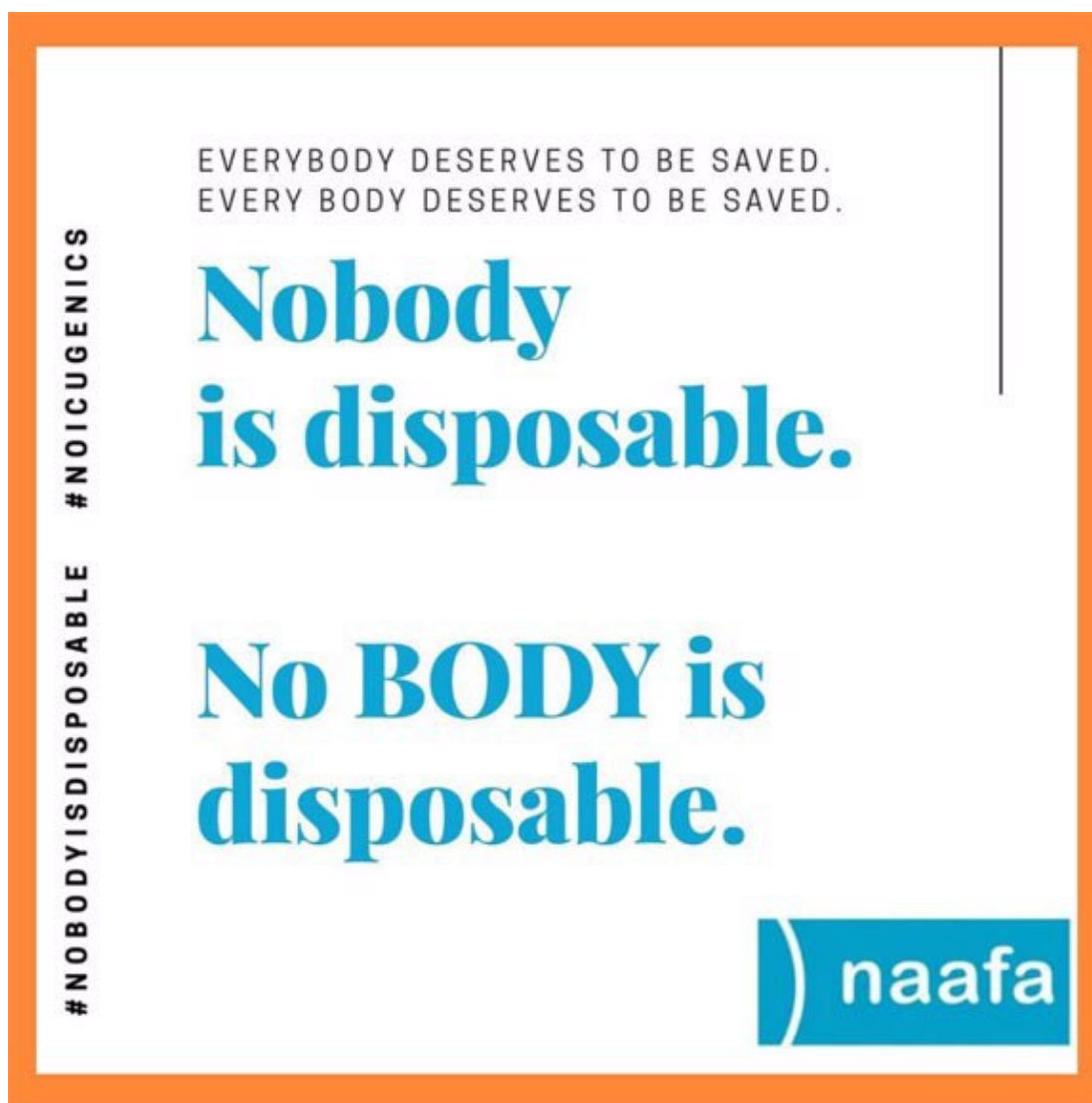
I guess they were thinking we'd be ok with that?
That we're disposable.

They think we lack value.
Turns out it's their values that are lacking.
They said it was a hard decision?
It was the fastest hard decision we've ever seen.

We say no.
#NoICUgenics
No pitting providers against patients.
No putting profits over people.
No pushing healers to discriminate.

We will think outside the box.
Crips and Fatties created this guide to survive, and we will.
After this, it's not business as usual.
We'll adapt, but we won't go back.
#NoBodyIsDisposable

Note: The most current version of this Toolkit has moved to NoBodyIsDisposable.org



NAAFA Chronicles No. 51

For this month's Chronicles entry, here's NAAFA's 51st newsletter, the January to April 1982 supplement.

http://www.naafaonline.com/newsletterstuff/oldnewsletterstuff/Chronicles/Jan-Apr_1982-Supplement.pdf

There's more at the "Chronicles" tab in the newsletter section of the NAAFA website.

Media and Research Roundup

by Bill and Terri Weitze

March 2020: the Fat-Assed Prepper Survival Tips for Preparing for a Coronavirus Quarantine, a living document started by a group of fat friends, provides a fairly thorough list of preventative measures fat people can take to avoid COVID-19, as well as how to proceed if you get sick.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Zz7Echlvq05wFDZ1EysJkGiMJTpzXxi998M2lj2hYhg/edit>

April 3, 2020: Lauren Rowello tells how the medical establishment's fatphobia created unnecessary and possible life threatening problems as she battled COVID-19.

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/covid-19-treatment-weight-gain_n_5e824943c5b62dd9f5d401f6

April 17, 2020: Author Christy Harrison explains why recent media reports claiming body size is an independent risk factor for COVID-19 are misleading, highlighting problems with the underlying studies (see last two links below). The second link is to Harrison's article published in Wired.

<https://christyharrison.com/blog/covid-19-and-weight>

<https://www.wired.com/story/covid-19-does-not-discriminate-by-body-weight>

<https://doi.org/10.1002/oby.22831>

<https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciaa415>

Founded in 1969, NAAFA, the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, is a non-profit human rights organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for fat people. NAAFA works to eliminate discrimination based on body size and provide fat people with the tools for self-empowerment through public education, advocacy, and member support.

On the web: <http://www.naafa.org>

Comments: pr@naafa.org

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