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When you are done, look it over. What can you completely cut out of your life? What can you edit? You can and should curate what you see. Shield yourself from anything you can identify as harmful to your sense of self. Limit your exposure to content that doesn't validate your lived experience or acknowledge you as part of the audience.

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Super white, heteronormative shows that reduce people of colour and queer folks to props with no storyline of their own are diminishing. It doesn't matter if there is no explicitly anti-gay messaging in the show. The absence of representation in itself is damaging. Similarly, the lack of body diversity on TV shows and in films impacts our ability to accept bodies of different sizes.

Notice how fatness is framed when it is presented in the shows you watch. Is weight gain tragic? Is the fat character a hopelessly single sidekick, obligated to be a jovial, self-diminishing caretaker for the thin main characters?

Look at your Instagram feed. Are the only folks of size on your feed plus-size models with flat stomachs and hourglass figures? Is it full of ableist, thin, white, and heteronormative representations of beauty? Of course, thin, cis white men and women can be beautiful, but so can everyone else.

Being exclusively exposed to thin, cis white beauty as a gold standard is what is damaging. Curating a more inclusive feed will be helpful, but after a lifetime of seeing only one representation of beauty, it wouldn't hurt to give thin-white-cis-het-centered content a total break. Decolonize your social media feed. Grace yourself with a more diverse view of the human experience by filling your feed with people of different ages, body sizes, levels of physical ability, cultural backgrounds, and gender expressions. Queering and un-whitewashing your media is a crucial step in accepting that there are many ways to show up in a human body, and all of these forms are beautiful and quite all right.



