

~ What you can do for yourself ~

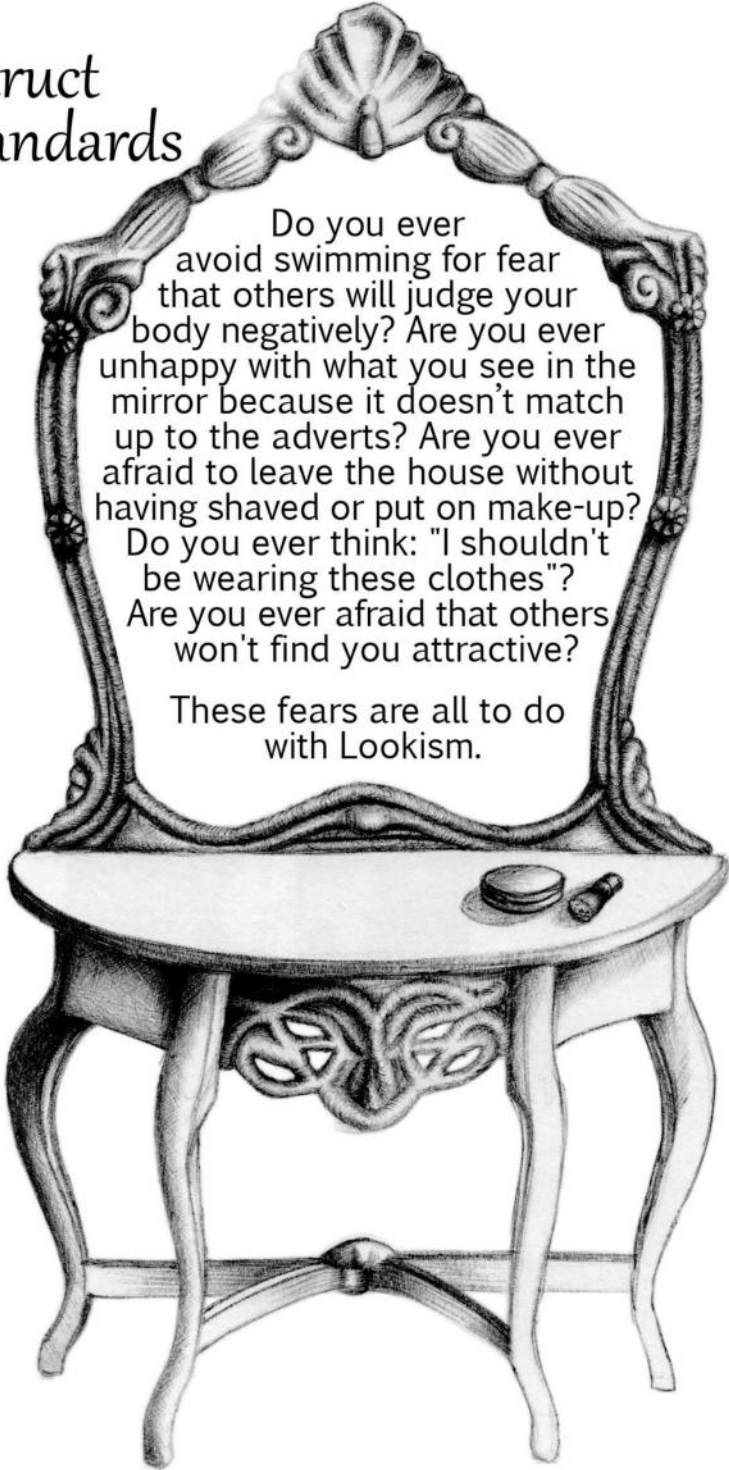
- ♥ Rethink your own beauty standards. Ask yourself where they come from and what impact they have on your self-esteem.
- ♥ Do what makes you feel beautiful and good! Be as you are or change your look - as you wish.
Just don't make it a compulsion and don't do it because yourself or others are putting pressure on you.
- ♥ Search for media in which the people presented are those you can identify with and empower yourself.
- ♥ If you are affected by lookism, consider preparing yourself in advance for situations you might potentially face and think how you would react to them. To react can be self-empowering, but it can also cost energy. You don't have to fight every battle on your own.
- ♥ Seek support in difficult situations or talk to a trusted person about your experiences.

~ What you can do for others ~

- ♥ Do not judge others by their looks! Do not make conclusions on health, gender, race, character, ability, intelligence or other qualities based on looks.
- ♥ Do not comment on the appearance of others negatively. Remember that also positive comments could perpetuate standard beauty norms.
- ♥ Before you speak about yourself (negatively or positively), consider what effect your statements may have on others, and how this could affect their self-esteem.
- ♥ Point out to others when they are making lookist comments.
- ♥ Try to support people who are currently affected by lookism; but be sensitive to when and how you intervene. If you are unsure, ask if you can help and what kind of help (from you or others) she/he/they would like, in order not to patronize the person involved.
- ♥ Let's sabotage lookist advertising!

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Deconstruct beauty standards



Do you ever avoid swimming for fear that others will judge your body negatively? Are you ever unhappy with what you see in the mirror because it doesn't match up to the adverts? Are you ever afraid to leave the house without having shaved or put on make-up? Do you ever think: "I shouldn't be wearing these clothes"? Are you ever afraid that others won't find you attractive?

These fears are all to do with Lookism.

The term Lookism refers to discrimination based on appearance.

This may relate to physical characteristics, clothing, style, etc. There are certain norms in our society about how people should ideally look. For example, women should be slim, whilst men should be muscular.

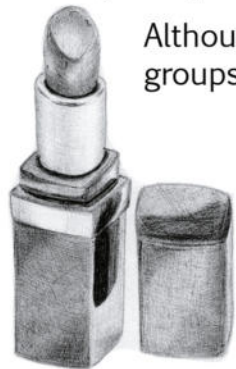
In everyday life, we are all judged based on our appearance, and we also judge others. We presume people's health status or their character based on appearance, or their gender because of certain physical features. We associate clothing with income, social status or political attitude. We have internalized these beauty standards so much that we apply them to ourselves too.

What is considered to be beautiful and worthwhile can be different depending on the social context. Your favorite clothes may be unsuitable for your job, for example, or you may belong to a subculture in which alternative aesthetic ideals apply.

~ Consequences of lookism ~

On the one hand, lookism can make us perceive persons positively based on their appearance: we find them attractive, likeable, loveable, and treat them accordingly. However, if individuals do not conform to individual and/or social norms, then can be subject to rejection, negative looks, comments or even physical assault. People that face discrimination will often be made responsible for their own experience (victim blaming) with the claim that they have the option to change their looks.

Lookism can also be part of other forms of discrimination, such as sexism, racism, transphobia, ageism or ableism.



Although all people are affected by lookism, some individuals and groups of people are more likely to be affected.

- ♥ Overall, women are defined heavily by their physical appearance. Likewise, they often face discrimination when their clothes are perceived as too tight or too revealing (slut shaming).
- ♥ The discrimination and devaluation of fat people is also part of lookism (fat shaming).



- ♥ People affected by racism are often evaluated using western white ideals of beauty, such as light skin and straight, light hair or big, round eyes.
- ♥ Trans* individuals are often assigned an incorrect gender due to external characteristics, based on features such as facial and body hair, hair length or breasts.

Existing beauty ideals perpetuated in advertising and media, or by our fellow human beings, can damage our self-esteem.

Social norms can create a compulsion towards self-optimization, whereby one's behaviour can become increasingly consumerist in order to comply with a beauty ideal. We spend money on clothes, cosmetics, fitness or diet products, whilst capitalist companies benefit from our insecurities and our efforts to overcome them.

In order to be able to afford this, we are forced (even) deeper into wage labor. All of these "investments" take time and energy, distracting us from social problems and helping to maintain hierarchical structures (such as patriarchy, white supremacy, etc.).

~ Body Positivity ~

Body positivity is to contradict the notion that only certain body types are acceptable, instead acknowledging that all bodies are equally valuable. All people deserve to live free from the prejudices of others. The body-positive movement stands for positive self-perception and for a more diverse representation of different body types, in media and advertising. Fat bodies, queer bodies, handicapped bodies, non-white bodies, old bodies and many more are to be shown and therefore represented.

Body positivity also means that deciding what is good for you and your body is up to you personally. The appearance of a person does not automatically indicate their particular health conditions.