



**F**

**A**

**T**

**a zine**

# ***Why we use the word “Fat”***

***By Layla Cameron***

What does it mean when someone says “I feel fat”? What are they usually referring to?

When we hear someone say ‘I feel fat’, they are usually trying to describe a negative feeling – such as feeling bloated, lazy, exhausted, unworthy, unattractive, disgusting, or uncomfortable.

Many of the negative feelings we associate with being or feeling fat are actually reflections of accessibility barriers. For example, in courtrooms, office board rooms, drop-in centres, waiting rooms, and public transit, larger bodies have often been left out of their design.

We don’t often look at this lack of consideration for fat peoples’ needs and comfort from the perspective that such inequalities are wrong. Rather, we tend to see these accessibility barriers as the consequences of fat peoples’ choices – we believe it is their fault and therefore they should be punished accordingly until they manage to achieve a smaller, more normative body.

And what’s particularly interesting to me, is that even if we believe that fat people should be exercising and going outside, or that they should have access to nourishing foods or adequate and comfortable housing, or higher education, business casual clothing, and even employment opportunities, we don’t make it easy for them have those things.

When you pair the lack of comfortable seating, with a lack of appropriate clothing, with the reality that just leaving your house as a fat person makes you vulnerable to harassment and violence from the people around you, we can see how just trying to exist in the world as a fat person can be very exhausting, and sometimes impossible.

It may even be making you uncomfortable that we are using the word fat so nonchalantly, or frequently. We do this for two reasons:



1. Fat is an adjective that I use to describe myself, just as I would also say that I am tall and have brown hair. For myself and many others, the word 'fat' is a neutral descriptor.

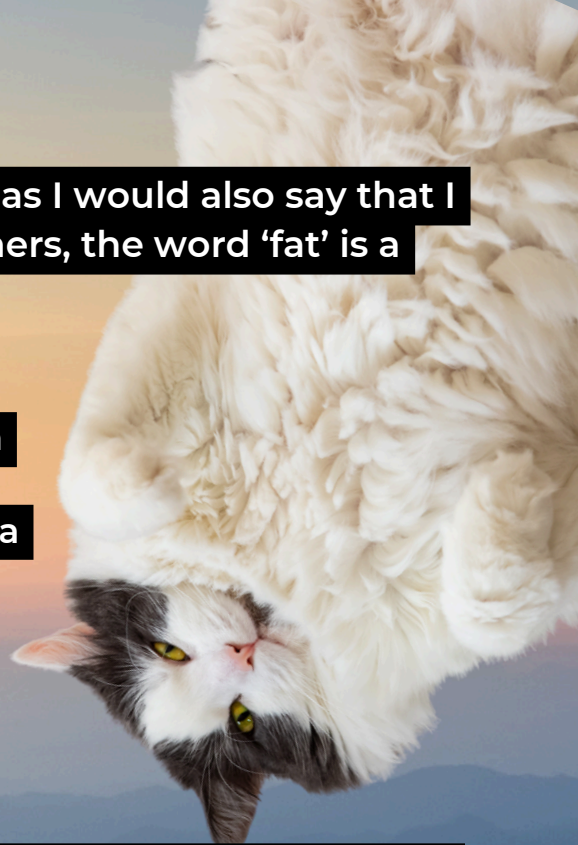
2. As someone invested in fat liberation, I also use the word 'fat' intentionally and strategically. While it is just a neutral descriptor, for me, it is also a political identity, similar to my identity as a queer person. Queer was also a slur weaponized against people who were told they didn't belong, or they weren't normal, but it has since been reclaimed as a valid orientation as well as political identity.

My identification with, and use of the word fat, similarly intends to strip the word of its harshness and redefine what it means to be fat, while also aligning myself and my work with communities that hold similar values.

I often refer to the language within the fat spectrum to categorize and acknowledge differences within fat communities. As you can see in this chart (found on the next page), made by Ash of The Fat Lip Podcast, these terms range from small fat, to mid fat, superfat, and infinifat.

While an imperfect way to differentiate between these categories (as you can see, clothing size is roughly used to draw the boundaries between these groups), this spectrum is really useful in terms of applying a more intersectional analysis to how fat people experience fat stigma in significantly different ways; for example, I can usually find clothing that fits me at plus-size stores, and while uncomfortable, I can likely find a chair in a classroom or on the bus to sit on.

I encourage you to use the word fat in relation to your own identity if that feels appropriate to you. However, the ongoing influence of fat stigma means that it is important to allow other folks to self-identify as fat, rather than identifying them as fat yourself.



# THE FATNESS SPECTRUM

*as used on thefatlip.com*

## Small Fat

1X-2X

18 and lower

Torrid 00 to 1

*Find clothes that fit at mainstream brands and can shop in many stores*

## Mid Fat

2X-3X

20 to 24

Torrid 2 to 3

*Shop at some mainstream brands, but mostly dedicated plus brands and online.*

## Superfat

4X-5X

26 to 32

Torrid 4 to 6

*Wear the highest sizes at plus brands. Can often only shop online.*

## Infinifat

6X and higher

34 and higher

Some Torrid 6

*Very difficult to find anything that fits, even online. Often require custom sizing.*

CHART MADE BY ASH of  
THE FAT LIP PODCAST

“Theres something  
**GROTESQUE**

About having to  
**QUOTE** from **MEDICAL**  
**SOURCES** to **DEFEND**  
**A LIBERATION**  
**MOVEMENT”**

— **Vivian**  
**MAYER**

# What Body Sovereignty Means To Me

An Indigenous Perspective by:

Shilo George (she/they)

## My body is sacred.

*No arguments. No caveats. No opinions.*

My body is a gift from Creator and thousands of prayers of my ancestors. My ancestors are my life collaborators and fully support my healing.

I have a sovereign right to my body, to my sacred responsibility to it, to my connection and to all choices about my body.



Three generations of my Cheyenne grandmothers: Buffalo Woman, Bonhist Medicine Woman, Mary

*Love & healing across generations*



Body sovereignty is timeless, healing, sacred and action.

Body sovereignty is my survivance and exists outside colonial understanding and imagining.

# We Get To Make Our Own Existence.

*Take up space to show your brilliance, wisdom, truth.*



Empowered

Defiant  
Non-Compliant  
Unafraid



Worthy

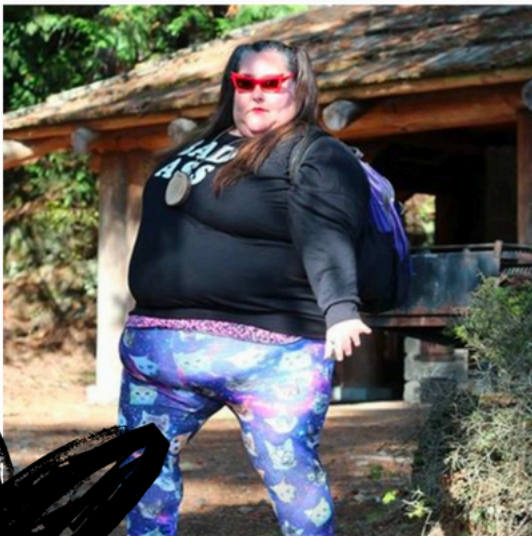
Anti-Colonial  
Transgressive



Authentic

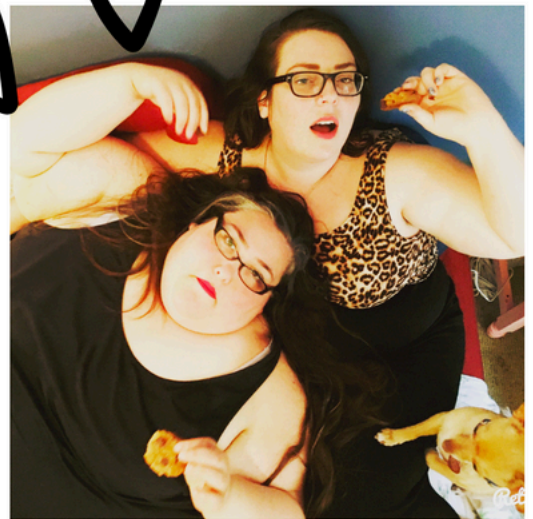
Vocal

Proud



Embodied

Secure  
Queerdo  
Audacity



Loved & Lovable



Accepting myself is a life-long process that comes easier on some days and almost impossible on others.

### **I don't blame myself.**

I used to be so angry with my body. I used to pray and imagine myself smaller, prettier, healthier, acceptable and even desirable. If only my body would comply, my mouth would be satisfied with less food and my mind would have more will power. If only I could win and be successful in that rat-trap of hell scape called dieting. If only I could be a winner and cross that finish line where everything was perfect, I was completely loved, everyone cheered for me and we all celebrated my victory over my unruly body.

***But that's the dream of colonization.  
That's the force of capitalism.***

My body yelled "I LOVE YOU!" the other day. It rang through my mind as if a child had run into my mind, yelled and then skipped back out of the room. Full of innocent adoration, giggles and contagious sincerity.

**I'll never forget it**

XOXO



“Nothing much, just  
glorifying obesity...  
you?”



*Handwritten signature*

# NON-STIGMATIZING THERAPY FOR FAT FOLKS

## TEND AND CULTIVATE COUNSELLING

We can help you navigate the complexities of life with our gentle, trauma-informed approach to mental health – without ever making your body the problem.

- 
- Fat-Positive therapists with lived experience being fat
  - Virtual & In-Person Counselling
  - FREE 20-minute consultation
  - Specialties: Trauma, relationships/couple counselling, body liberation, pleasure, confidence, boundaries, anxiety, perimenopause, binge eating disorder, and therapy for therapists

**YOUR BODY IS WORTHY OF RESPECT & CARE AT EVERY SIZE, SHAPE, OR ABILITY.**

[www.tendandcultivate.com](http://www.tendandcultivate.com)

Instagram: @tendandcultivate



# FAT WORDSEARCH

Find and circle the words.

U	B	N	O	U	R	I	S	H	S	A	M	S
N	Y	U	E	R	U	R	S	U	L	A	R	I
A	I	T	R	K	J	L	A	C	S	Y	R	Z
P	S	E	W	L	N	S	D	H	W	E	N	E
O	K	R	S	P	E	E	A	U	S	R	I	E
L	E	U	U	L	L	S	U	B	Q	U	C	Q
O	C	S	Z	U	B	H	Q	R	R	E	O	U
G	O	A	R	S	E	R	H	U	I	R	U	A
E	Y	E	Y	S	J	I	T	B	E	E	S	L
T	U	L	S	I	K	L	E	B	L	O	I	I
I	U	P	L	Z	E	L	D	I	R	R	O	T
C	L	I	B	E	R	A	T	I	O	N	T	Y

- plus size
- chub rub
- unapologetic
- ursula
- shrill
- liberation
- burlesque
- pleasure
- size equality
- nourish
- torrid



# FAT JOY WITH HELEN CAMISA

I recently had a conversation with my students about our relationship to movement and how we feel when our bodies are in motion. There was so much vulnerability and openness, and in short we discovered that this shit is complicated! In a world that puts a premium on thinness, the desire to move in certain ways usually has more to do with what we've been conditioned to want, as opposed to what we actually want.

I used to move solely for the purpose of shrinking my body. No matter how strong or flexible I got, no matter the mental and physical benefits, if the number on the scale wasn't moving, it all meant nothing. And after years of approaching myself and my body in that way, I was ready for a change. What I didn't expect was how hard it would be to walk away. Turns out that hating our bodies is a great bonding exercise for women and it was a favourite pastime of mine, so leaving it felt incredibly strange. It was lonely, if I'm honest. It also felt like giving up.

If my life was an ocean, I had just jumped off of the lifeboat that I had been clinging to for decades. And desperate to find something else to hold onto, I found myself swimming like crazy, looking for the next right choice, the next community, the next lifeboat. But all I could see was a vast expanse of nothing. In my most uncomfortable moments, I tried to go back to the familiar, but it no longer felt comfortable or safe. I knew too much. So with nothing left to do, I reluctantly let myself float. And you know what? After years of swimming, kicking, hanging on, trying and failing, hating myself and trying again, the gift of letting it all go and simply drifting out to sea was at once the most terrifying and best thing I could have done. Before I could move in a new direction, I needed the space to release the old one.

I'm not someone that does terribly well with the unknown, but I have come to appreciate the spaces in between and the moments of silence that come with them. And drifting in that space brought so much quiet. I wasn't loving myself, but I wasn't hating myself either.

GIVING YOURSELF THE SPACE TO FLOAT

Finding joy and pleasure in movement where there hasn't been any for a long time, means letting go of your lifeboat and floating for a while. If you've only known what it is to push and punish, try complete rest or slow gentle movement. If you don't enjoy the activities you're doing, leave them behind and try something new. If the number on the scale means everything, throw the scale out. You are so much more than a meaningless number.

Give yourself the space to float, to release and to enjoy the silence in between. And only when you're ready, meet yourself again and ask yourself and your body what feels right for you. Trust your gut and see where it takes you.

You can be fat and happy. You can find joy, pleasure, play, confidence and peace in movement. I wish you all the joy and freedom that I have found by simply giving myself permission to let go of the things that would not allow me to embrace and celebrate myself every day.

*Lots of fat+happy love,*

*Helen*



a.



b.



c.



d.



e.



*Fat Joy*


- a. Carmen la Coquette
- b. Makdaddy
- c. Sally Limon
- d. Charlotte Strudel
- e. Faetality

PEOPLE LOOK AT FAT AS IF OUR BODIES ARE THE SHELLS OF SOMEONE WITH STORED POTENTIAL. STORED ENERGY. WASTED ENERGY. DON'T TAKE THAT MUCH SPACE, ESPECIALLY OVER HERE. THAT'S MY SPACE. CURIOUS EYES ARE ALWAYS HUNGRY, SO WHY NOT LET THEM FEAST? SINCE I WAS A KID, I HAVE DREAMED OF FLYING. I ALWAYS LOOK AT BIRDS AND WONDER IF THEY KNEW HOW LUCKY THEY ARE. ALL OF A SUDDEN, BEING ABLE TO JUMP AND BOUNCE ON INVISIBLE MOON BOOTS UNTIL MY STEPS BECAME FURTHER APART. MY FAVOURITE THING IS HIDING IN THE CEILING, WATCHING FROM ABOVE. WHEN I WAKE UP, I AM ALWAYS SUCKED INTO MY BED. WHEN I STOOD UP, MY LEGS ROOTED INTO THE GROUND KEEPING ME SOLID- BUT KEPT IN PLACE. LAUGHTER SO THICK THAT IT EXPANDS OUR RIBCAGES EVEN FURTHER THAN OUR CHEST WALLS. THROWING OUR HEADS BACK, SO ALL OF THAT HUNGER, PAIN, GRIEF, JOY AND DELICIOUSNESS CAN ESCAPE. IT CAN FINALLY ESCAPE.

# DEATH TO PLUS SIZE

## fashion

Dear plus-size fashion industry,

You tell us that: 'If we can't be skinny, we have to be feminine'. Compulsory femininity dictates that we have to be covered in big  flower print dresses like 'retro housewives'

Although beauty is subjective, it's not so when it comes to fat women. Fatphobia is ingrained in societal beauty standards so we are forced to cover up & follow ridiculous FASHION RULES of 'no tank tops', 'no tight fitting clothes' and only wear tunics. Who even wears a tunic now?



So, instead of burning bras, let's burn tunics. Let's radically re-think 'fatshion'. Plus-size fashion should not be constructing more boxes as frankly, fat women are too big for those boxes.



Gender inclusivity in clothing should be the norm as not all fat women who walk into a store are cis, feminine or like dresses.

Rethinking fashion in a radical way means providing options for fat folks to discover their gender identities and how they intersect with their fatness.

Queering the plus-size fashion industry allows fat folks to not have boundaries and be as fat as they want to be without constricting expectations and clothing.

If you are wondering what brands to support for ethical plus-size fashion, you can try:  
Nettle's Tale, WRAY NYC,  
Fat Sister's Vintage,  
Universal Standard &  
House of Flint.

- Sincerely  
Valerica Pelevina



I DESPERATELY NEED TO GET SOMETHING OFF MY CHEST!!

First of all, who's got big boobies? SEND NUDES!!

I'm kidding ;)

If you do have large breasts, this is for you, and if you don't, read on ally. Those who are well-endowed can understand my frustration at just how BORING fat bras are! Yes I know there might be one or maybe two brands out there with fantastic bras but sorry, I don't have offshore bank accounts big enough to afford them.

I am stuck with the poor ugly bras.

Fatphobic...

They are often nude, (read: for white people), grey and black. Whereas the little bras are so FUN. They have colours, textures, lacey, not lacey, lacey with colour, lacey with texture AND colour, lacey with no colour... you understand.



**FAT BRAS FOR  
FAT PEOPLE  
BY JOANNE TSUNG**


They're the definition of here for a good time not a long time' because they are brittle as fuck! Everyone says that having the strap snapped hurts but have you ever hugged a thin person and their bra disintegrates from your embrace? That shit hurts emotionally.

BIG BOOBY BRAS come with a lifetime manufacturer's warranty and a hotline for spare parts. Put it like this: if the bras were human then the big bras work as a stonemason and provide for his family. Yes, his pronouns are HE/HIM.

He comes home face dirty from the sweat and..stones. He is masoning all day long and where is the little bra? The little bra drinks oat milk lattes, is allergic to MSG and is the unpaid intern that gets sent to New York Fashion Week even though it was promised to the more tenured fat intern (me) weeks ago.

That is the unjust vibe I feel any time I look at a flimsy, tiny 32B bra that again, if they were human, they FOR SURE commit tax fraud.

IF ANY BRA DESIGNERS ARE READING THIS, PLEASE CALL ME!



I have some more shit to get off my 44H's. You know how all fat people are extremely good at math? Since we constantly have to be doing math? You know the bullshit I speak of? Portion size for who? A toddler? You gotta do multiplication! You have to learn division!

This is especially frustrating for a stupid and fat woman like me where I am a size 16 at the Gap, a size 10 at Old Navy, an extra small at Costco and I am banned from going into Aritzia and if I even try to go to Lululemon, they call the coast guard to come "remove the whale from our store". What were they thinking?! The retail gods really thought they were the ones to fill in the education gap? They thought, "we also have to help the fats be good at math by NOT communicating or following any rules when it comes to sizing".

Shopping as a fat woman is absolutely maniacal. Straight up bonkers. Whomst ever it was, it was definitely someone with an unsound mind who never got hugged long enough for oxytocin to kick in. The majority of stores don't carry past size 14 or 16 even though the MAJORITY of our population is Between sizes 14-20. If they do, it is often, if not always sold ONLY online which 1. Deprives us fat people with an in store shopping experience and more importantly, 2. The opportunity to steal. Even if they carry it in store, it's often ugly fucking tents! I will never understand why it's not the exact same as the skinny clothes but just bigger. Give me fast fat fashion! Fat people have money! I'll pay!... probably.

***All I am saying is, make cute clothes for fat people and don't put security tags on them!***

# FATNESS & ACCESSIBILITY


Accessibility is complex! When working to create accessible spaces, Fat Bodies are often left out of the conversation. Here are some actionable steps & things to consider when making space to support ALL bodies. Use this knowledge for creating community spaces & events or for advocating for fat bodies in existing spaces!

## FAT FRIENDLY SEATING

- ◆ Consider seat width & depth & height [minimum 20 inches width is ideal]
- ◆ Does the seating have armrests and/or backrest?
- ◆ Is seating free-standing or in a bank?
- ◆ What is the seating weight limit? [minimum 400lbs is ideal!]
- ◆ How would someone request a more accessible seating option?

## EASY INFORMATION

- ▶ Give the info before anyone asks!
- ▶ List it on your website, make social media posts & include accessibility info in tandem with general event or program info
- ▶ Be sure to include:
  - 🍌 Seating info
  - 🍌 Wayfinding & venue layout
  - 🍌 distance from parking lot or transit
  - 🍌 proximity to accessible washrooms
  - 🍌 stairs or elevator access?



# FATNESS & ACCESSIBILITY



## PRIORITIZE NON-STIGMATIZED FAT REPRESENTATION

Show fat bodies enjoying your venue/event/programming!  
Ensure your social media has body diversity - this signals that Fat Folx are welcome & will be accommodated



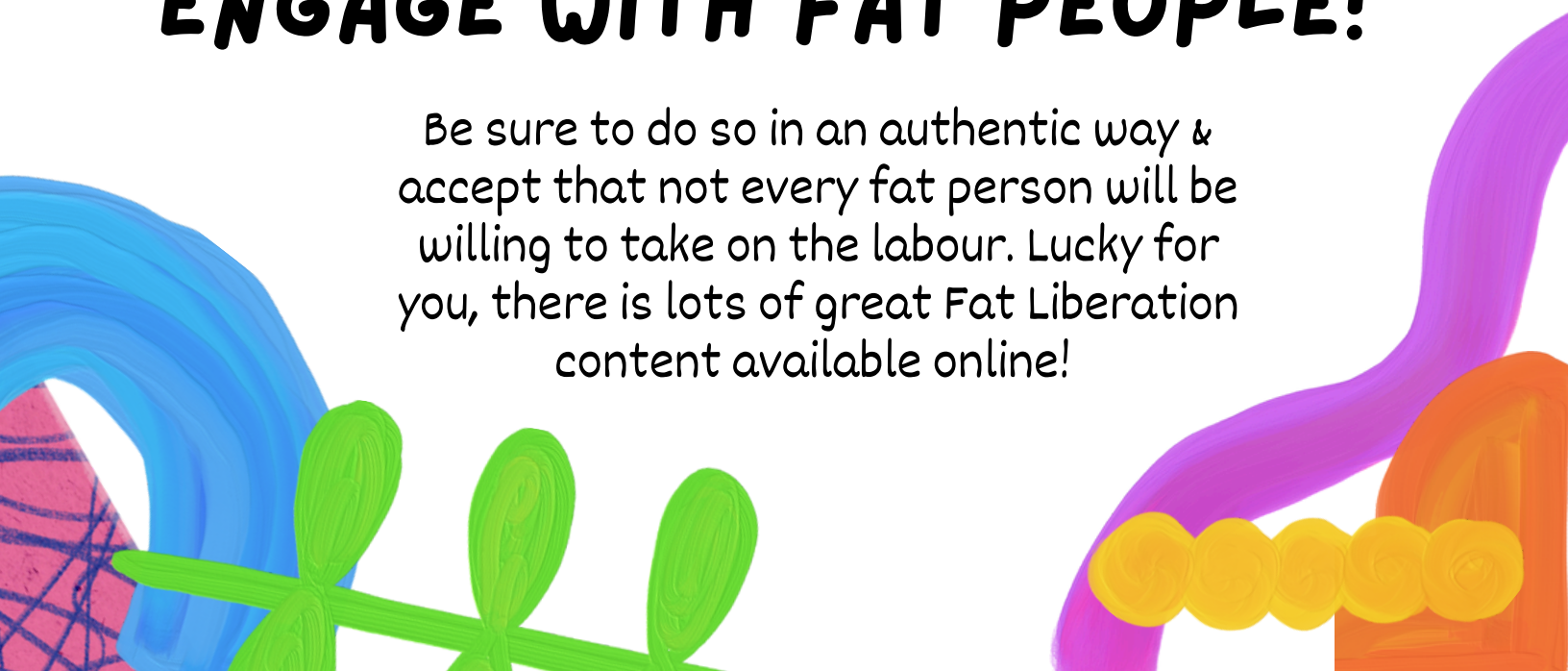
## NO DIET TALK OR FATPHOBIA!

This kind of discourse is often unescapable to Fat Folx - consider creating spaces free of this conversation and handle instances of fatphobia seriously when they come to your attention.

## STILL UNSURE HOW TO ACCOMMODATE?

## ENGAGE WITH FAT PEOPLE!

Be sure to do so in an authentic way & accept that not every fat person will be willing to take on the labour. Lucky for you, there is lots of great Fat Liberation content available online!



My fat body took me here  
I was always told it wouldn't take me  
anywhere  
But it took me here  
And there  
And over that mountain  
And across this river  
And above those trees  
And to all the places  
that call to my heart.



# resources

## TO READ:

Fearing the Black body:  
The racial origins of fatphobia  
by Sabrina Strings

Belly of the Beast  
by Da'Shaun L. Harrison

Fat Studies in Canada:  
(Re)Mapping the Field  
by Eds. Allison Taylor et. al

You Just Need to Lose weight  
& 19 other myths about fat  
people by Aubrey Gordon

Fat Studies Reader  
by Eds. Esther Rothblum &  
Sondra Solovay

Obesity in Canada:  
Critical Perspectives  
by Jenny Ellison et. al.

Revolting Bodies  
by Kathleen LeBesco

BIG: Thoughts on a Plus-  
Sized Life by Ed. Christina  
Meyer

Weight & Healthcare (substack)  
by Ragen chastain

## To listen (podcasts):

Maintenance  
Phase

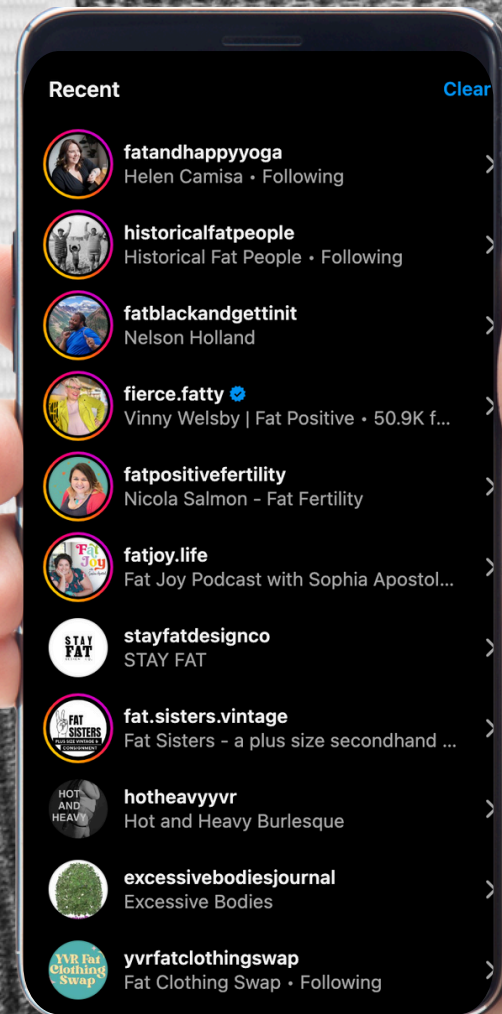


fat·ten podcast

/ˈfɑtən/

to make more substantial

## To Connect (on instagram):





**NEWORLD  
THEATRE**

**Zine Contributors**

***Kait Blake***

***Layla Cameron***

***Helen Camisa***

***Calla Evans***

***Alexa Fraser***

***Shilo George***

***Valeriia Pelevina***

***Dawn Serra***

***Hannah Smith***

***Joanne Tsung***

**Zine Creative Team**

***Curation by Layla Cameron***

***Design & Editing by Angelica Schwartz***



