

CLEVER REPLIES TO DAMAGING REMARKS

Sometimes, comments made about someone's body, physical activity or food choices can create negative feelings and behaviours, even when well intentioned. These comments can be difficult to respond to. The following examples of comments and responses can help guide you:



Comments	Potential Responses <i>(while using a positive tone of voice and body language)</i>
"Looks like we have both put on some COVID weight"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💬 "I don't know; I don't weigh myself, I focus instead on eating well and being active." 💬 "No, I just look and feel great!"
"You are so thin; you don't need to work out!"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💬 "Working out is healthy for everybody, no matter what their shape or size." 💬 "I work out to be healthy and because I enjoy it."
"Wow, you're going to eat all of that food?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💬 "I eat throughout the day to maintain my energy, depending on my activity level I might need more food." 💬 "I might, I listen to my body and will stop eating when I am comfortable."
"Look at what they're wearing. They should not be wearing that with that body type!"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💬 "If that is what they are comfortable wearing it doesn't bother me." 💬 "Whatever makes them feel beautiful. It doesn't really matter to me what other people wear."
"You're eating bread? I don't eat bread because it's so bad for you."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💬 "This bread has the carbohydrates, that my body and brain need to function properly." 💬 "Grains are good for me. They offer a lot of different nutrients that my body needs to be healthy."
"I need to work out after eating that cake; I feel so fat."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💬 "I enjoy working out even when I haven't eaten cake!" 💬 "It's okay to eat "sometimes foods" like cake occasionally without feeling guilty."
"Looks like you're rockin' the dadbod!"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💬 "I rock my body at any size and I feel great!" 💬 "I'm trying to be a positive role model for my kids by focusing on appreciating my body at any size."
"I'm thinking of trying a new weight loss diet."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💬 "You know me, I don't believe in weight loss diets. I prefer to focus on eating well, being active and getting enough sleep to be healthy." 💬 "Some diets can be pretty risky, it might be helpful to talk to your doctor about speaking with a registered dietitian first."
"Wow! You're getting big! How many months left?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💬 "I have __ months left, our bodies are all different; this is what a healthy pregnancy looks like on me."
"Your girls are so pretty, they could be models. Good for you!"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💬 "Thank you, I encourage my kids to develop their character and compliment them on their creativity, personality and talents." 💬 "I try to stay away from gender stereotypes. I want my kids to have every opportunity to develop in whatever way they choose."

In certain situations (e.g., if you are talking to someone you see often) it might be a good opportunity to start a positive conversation. Try reframing the comment as a question. Some examples may include:

- “Do you ever think about how all the fake images, photo-shopping and filters are affecting our perception of beauty? Why take away the natural beauty of laugh lines?”
- “Have you ever thought about why we obsess about body fat?”
- “Why do we spend so much time and effort being critical of our bodies, rather than focusing on just being healthy and loving who we are?”
- “Wouldn’t life be easier if we could accept ourselves just the way we are?”
- “Why is it so normal to find faults in the way people eat, exercise and look?”

When giving a compliment, focusing on the person’s character, talents, personality and actions are more meaningful. It is best to avoid comments related to a person’s body as this could unintentionally cause low self-esteem and negative body image.

Compliment them on something they do well. For example:

- taking excellent notes at a meeting
- planning fun activities for everyone
- being supportive of others
- being a good listener
- dealing well with difficult situations
- decorating abilities
- cooking or baking skills
- accomplishing physical activity goals (e.g., completing a race, trying something new)

Compliment them on their personality. For example:

- positive attitude
- sense of humour
- kindness to others
- thoughtfulness
- confidence
- honesty

Complimenting someone on their looks can be done in a way that respects their body image and self-esteem. Try to avoid commenting on the person’s body or physical features. Instead, focus on an attribute like a haircut, or an item of clothing.

Avoid comments like these:	Try these comments instead:
“Those pants make your legs look so thin!”	“I love your pants, where did you get them?”
“That shirt is very flattering for your body type.”	“That’s a pretty bracelet!”
“Wow, that outfit is very slimming!”	“Wow, cool tattoo, what does it mean?”
“That t-shirt really shows off your muscles!”	“What a nice tie.”
“That haircut looks good with your round face shape.”	“I love the new haircut!”

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