

# WHOLE GIRL

Live vibrantly,  
love your entire self,  
and make friends with food

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## CHAPTER ONE

# Be Loving

**W**e express love in so many different ways. A lot of the time, we put our energy into loving other people, which is awesome. But right now we're going to focus on loving ourselves. This can be really tricky! It's hard to appreciate all the different aspects of who we are—our essence—when society is obsessed with one thing: our appearance. Our culture puts so much stock in the way females look that it's hard for even us to see past it.

It's time we ditch this insanity and love the parts of us that truly matter.

## The Everything Bagel

**“God, you're so tall!”**

—Random stranger when I was four years old. And five.  
And six. And twelve. And seventeen.

It's true that I've towered over most other kids since kindergarten. But based on the way most adults talk to me, you'd think that height was the only part of me that matters.

Nearly every interaction people have with a girl is focused on one subject: her appearance. *You're so cute! Your dress is so pretty! What a nice smile!*

We don't get as many questions about our favorite books, or what we want to invent, or what our favorite song is. By a

very young age, we already have the impression that our appearance is the most important aspect of who we are.

To make matters worse, we are pummeled with TV shows, ads, billboards, and an entire culture focused intensely on the way females look. It's no wonder we become hyperconscious of our appearance and spend a lot of time picking it apart.

But we are *not* the way we look. We have a million parts that make up our whole selves—the dreams we have, the people we love, the things that light us up, the way we go about the world. To love all parts of ourselves, we need to break free from our culture's crazy rules.

Jameela Jamil has a great way to do that. She is an actress, writer, DJ, radio presenter, and activist who founded the “I Weigh” movement. I Weigh invites people to post photos of themselves on social media and describe all the aspects of themselves that they're proud of—everything that *truly* defines who they are and has nothing to do with the way they look.

Thousands of people have posted using #IWeigh. Here are some of the things they “weigh”:

Empathetic	Silliness	Fighter
Nerd	Dog lover	Spiritual
Curious	Extrovert	Bookworm
Evolving	Insecure	Quiet

Now it's your turn. To retrain the way you value yourself, do the I Weigh exercise. Make a list of things you appreciate about yourself that have nothing to do with your appearance. Here are some questions to get you started:

- ◆ What's been your passion, ever since you were little?
- ◆ What relationships are meaningful to you?
- ◆ How do you treat others?
- ◆ What is your hidden talent?
- ◆ What are you most proud of?

Now type out what you “weigh,” and place the words over a photo of yourself. You can share this I Weigh post with others or keep it to yourself. Either way, continue adding to your list whenever you think of something else you love about yourself. If you're ever feeling insignificant or in need of a little loving, read over the list to remember how incredible you are.

**#iweigh @i\_weigh:**

**my competitiveness in card games**

**willingness to try new things**

**hair-washing boycotts**

**work ethic**

**laughs with my brother**

**love of mac n cheese**

**incredible ability to spill literally everything**



# Exercising Love

What is your biggest motivation for exercising?

I talked with Maris Degener, a yoga teacher, anorexia survivor, and the subject of the documentary *I Am Maris*. She believes a lot of us go into a workout with the goal of diminishing ourselves. We think, *I can burn calories, I can lose weight, I can make myself physically smaller*. When we approach exercise in this way, it feels like punishment.

But there is a different way to exercise, which is a form of self-love. Maris calls it the “abundance mindset.” This means that we work out in order to feel good, both physically and mentally. Maris suggests that we go into a workout thinking, *What can this movement bring to me? What can it add to my experience and my well-being?* Maybe exercise clears our mind, makes us feel calm, or challenges us to listen to our body.

You might be thinking, *Don't we need to push ourselves hard to get better at anything?* Sure. There's nothing wrong with challenging ourselves, as long as our main goal in exercising is a loving one.

The next time you are exercising, take a moment to check in with your motives. Why are you doing this? Is it punishment for being “lazy” over the weekend? Try shifting that to a positive: relieving your stress, or strengthening your muscles.

# Q&A

**Q:** I get the concept of being kind to ourselves when we exercise. But what do I do if I'm in a fitness class and the instructor is being . . . uh . . . less than loving?

**A:** If we're in a group setting, like gym class or yoga, it can be extra hard to keep in the abundance mindset, because we feel pressure to do everything our instructor tells us. However, we can still exercise with self-love. Sometimes that means leaving the class.

I was in a yoga class with a new teacher who was really negative and pushy. He started chastising me and repositioning my body into uncomfortable positions. I told him "That hurts" and "Please stop," yet he continued repositioning my body. Finally I just got up and walked out of the studio. It was extremely awkward in front of the whole class, but it didn't feel right to continue. I knew I had to leave.

Some situations might not be physically dangerous but still make you feel bad about yourself or push you to override your body's instincts. If that's the case, it's always okay to talk with the instructor and explain how you feel. You might decide to modify some of the exercises to help you feel better. Maris also points out that if we're struggling to exercise in the abundance mindset, a group setting might not be the best option. Maybe we can better practice self-love by exercising with a video at home.

# MINDFUL MOVEMENT

## HEART OPENER

This simple yoga pose opens up the area surrounding the heart. When we stretch, it helps release any tension or stress we've been holding. That way we can be available to give love to ourselves and others.

1. Sit cross-legged on a comfortable surface. Breathe in, then out.
2. On an inhale, arch your back beginning at your tailbone, all the way up to your chest. Open your shoulders to shine your heart forward. Lift your gaze slightly upward. Press the tip of your tongue to the roof of your mouth, to protect your neck.
3. As you exhale, curl your spine back in, beginning at your tailbone and ending at your head. Separate your shoulder blades as your chest curves inward. Let your chin drop toward your chest.
4. Repeat this cycle in line with your breath for as long as you'd like. Then switch the crossing of your legs and repeat on the other side.







# Lavender Rose Chocolate Truffles

These truffles taste like pure love in food form. Their delicate flavors of lavender and rose are bound to make you feel special. They're silky, smooth, and rich—a chocolate lover's dream.

YIELD: 16 TRUFFLES

EF NF SF *option*

## Ingredients

½ cup coconut cream, from the top of a chilled 13½-ounce can of full-fat coconut milk

1½ cups dark chocolate chips or chopped dark chocolate\*

2 drops food-grade pure lavender oil

¼ cup cacao powder

2 Tbsp dried rose petals, crushed



*\*To make this recipe sugar-free, use stevia-sweetened dark chocolate.*

## Instructions

1. Scoop the coconut cream into a double boiler (instructions on page 11). Heat the coconut cream until it's hot to the touch, then pour in the chocolate. Turn the heat down to medium-low. Stir the chocolate and coconut cream together until the chocolate is fully melted and the mixture forms a shiny ganache.
2. Remove the ganache from heat and stir in the lavender oil. Place the bowl of ganache in the refrigerator to chill for 2 hours, or until completely solid.
3. Line a plate with parchment paper. Scoop the chocolate mixture into 16 pieces using a tablespoon, and place on the plate. Don't worry about forming the pieces into spheres yet. Place the plate back in the refrigerator for 10 minutes to firm up.
4. Pour the cacao powder and crushed rose petals into 2 small separate bowls. Roll the refrigerated chocolate blobs into balls, then roll them in either cacao powder, rose petals, or leave them plain. Serve.
5. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for about 1 week, or freeze for up to 1 month. Defrost before serving.

# Mexican Wedding Cookies

These cookies are buttery, crispy, and full of pecans. They have been a part of Mexican wedding festivities for a long time, so they're a perfect symbol of love. I like to make them for family and friends around the holiday season, but they're yummy any time of year.

YIELD: 12 COOKIES

EF V SF *option*

## Ingredients

1¼ cups blanched almond flour

¼ cup arrowroot flour

¼ tsp sea salt

6 Tbsp sustainable palm shortening

3 Tbsp pure maple syrup\*

½ cup toasted pecans, chopped into small pieces

½ cup organic powdered sugar\*\*

## Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F and line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the almond flour, arrowroot flour, and sea salt. Add the palm shortening, maple syrup, and toasted pecans. Stir using a rubber spatula until the mixture forms a dough.
3. Scoop the dough into 12 balls using a ½-tablespoon cookie scoop, and place them at least 1 inch apart on the prepared cookie sheet. Bake the cookies for 12 to 14 minutes, or until they are golden brown on top. Let the cookies cool for 10 minutes on the cookie sheet.
4. Sift the powdered sugar into a small bowl to remove any lumps. Roll the cookies in the sugar one by one, coating all sides. When ready to serve, sift a bit more powdered sugar onto the cookies. These cookies are best eaten the day they're made. Leftovers can be stored at room temperature on a plate lightly covered with tin foil for a up to 4 days, but they will lose their crunch over time.



\*To make this recipe sugar-free, replace the pure maple syrup with monk fruit maple-flavored syrup and use powdered monk fruit sweetener (see below).

\*\*Powdered cane sugar (made with tapioca starch) is the whitest in color, but it's not Paleo. For a Paleo option, use powdered maple sugar, which you can make by blending 1 cup maple sugar in your blender until powdery. For a sugar-free option, blend classic monk fruit sweetener into powder using your blender.