



THE MIND MENTOR

Hypnotherapist Victoria Willis offers her life-enhancing advice

My son says I'm skinny but until I've lost weight I won't wear a bikini

Q I've been on a strict diet and exercise programme to try and lose weight for our beach holiday at the end of June, but even though I've lost a stone I still look awful in a bikini.

My husband says I look great, and my son, who is 6, keeps saying I look 'skinny' but I'm still a size 12 and still have flabby bits. Before I had my son I was a size 8, but I've never managed to shift the weight and now, approaching 40, I feel I should just learn to live with my body as it is. Day to day I can dress to flatter my figure, and

often get compliments. But a bikini hides no sins and I feel sick when I see myself in the mirror. I should be so excited about fun in the sun with my family, but I'm dreading it. What's the best way to build my confidence so I can feel fab on the beach this summer?

A The best way to build your confidence is to focus on all the things that you like about yourself – make a list of them and keep adding to it. You can carry it around with you, or even stick it on the fridge. Every time you feel a bit low, check the list for reminders of what you love about yourself.

Remember, there are plenty of things that are great about you. Your husband and son see you looking great and yet you have been focusing on the negative. It's not uncommon for women to do this, but if you're always thinking about yourself in negative terms, it begins to knock your confidence and affect your life.

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I recommend you do a visualisation exercise every morning – whether your body is exactly as you'd like it or you feel it still has a way to go before you are 100 per cent happy, it doesn't matter. It's all positive thinking.

Whenever you look at yourself or think of your body from now on do it in a positive manner. Visualise yourself looking exactly as you want to be... see yourself wearing a gorgeous bikini on the beach and looking fabulous, really make the picture real... think of the sound of the waves on the shore, the smell of the salty air, the feel of the sand between your toes, maybe even the taste of an ice cream... What are you doing on the beach? How do you look? Think of the details, then notice how you are feeling and realise that this person is you and you are this person. Do this every morning and by the end of June you'll be feeling wonderful and ready to hit the beach with your head held high. ■

Victoria Willis is director of hypnotherapy at nubeginnings.co.uk and is registered with both the British General Hypnotherapy

CONTROL YOUR CONFIDENCE

- In front of the mirror, assess your appearance.
- When you hear that negative voice, notice how it makes you feel.
- Gain back control by changing the sound of your negative voice – make it sound silly like Donald Duck or Homer Simpson!
- The sillier the voice gets, the funnier you should find it. Keep manipulating the voice until it makes you chuckle.
- Now introduce your positive voice. Make it strong and in control.
- Tell yourself, in your new positive voice, that you've got nothing to worry about.

