

# Recovery!

## The Media Is There a Method to the Madness?

The average person sees 3000 advertisements in a day. On average, we spend three years of our lives watching commercials. Yet, most people believe that the media does not have an influence on them. It is difficult to believe that the media has no effect on people, when a substantial number of advertisements are seen each and every day. The key is that the influence of the media is often an unconscious influence.

The media sells images of normalcy. It makes us think that in order to be a part of the crowd and to fit in with others we need to buy these different products. In other words, the media presents us with the ideal of female beauty and then encourages us to spend time and money to attain this image. However, as most of us have learned, this image is an impossibility for most women. Therefore, for the majority of women, failure is inevitable and this leads to shame and guilt. As a result, advertising can lead to a climate where disconnection from our bodies is normal and food is offered to us as a way to connect. The media has a strong influence on males as well, but I will focus on the influence for females since the majority of eating disorders occur in the female population.

We rarely see an image that is not retouched, so the images that we see in the media are “inhumanly perfect”. Furthermore, we are often seeing many women put together to create the image of perfection that we see. For example, in the movie “Pretty Woman”, a body double is used for Julia Roberts in particular scenes. These images of perfection also influence how men feel about the real women they are with. Men see these images of perfection in the media and many begin to think that this is the way that women should look. Furthermore, some men could begin to think that these images of women are easily attainable, rather than realizing that most women cannot achieve this image.

Often, particular body areas or body parts are focused on in the media. For example, instead of seeing a whole female body we only see her legs, or her stomach, or any other body area. We often see articles discussing ways to tone or firm certain areas of the body in a certain limited amount of time. This promotes the perspective that is frequently seen in eating disorders where particular body parts are focused on. Instead of looking at one’s body as a whole, these women focus on particular areas of dissatisfaction. So, we see the women that is entirely focused on her “fat thighs”

## Greetings!

This year is off to a big start for Westwind! Eating disorder awareness week saw the widest range of educational activities for the promoting the prevalence and issues of eating disorders to the public ever held in Brandon. It is great to see more people within our community interested in supporting our efforts.

The media has an incredibly strong impact on our attitudes, thoughts and behaviours. What is the media trying to accomplish with the images they are exposing us to? Our article on the methods of the media will help you to challenge the pressures you may be feeling from television and magazines.

The Westwind philosophy is very different from those at other centres, it is just one of the many components of our program that makes us unique. One of our clients, Michelle, has chosen to share with us how the Westwind philosophy has impacted her life.

Are you sabotaging your success? Maybe things aren't going that bad in your life, but your thoughts and behaviours are what is dragging you down. It's up to you to find the motivation to put your sabotaging thoughts into perspective to convince yourself that you can achieve your goals. If you set your heart to it, you can do anything. We have faith in you!

*Lynne Robertson*

### ***In This Issue***

### ***Page***

The Media	1
Rolling Down the River	4
A Client's Perspective	5
Are You Sabotaging Your Success	6

A small trouble is like a pebble. Hold it too close to your eye and it fills the whole world and puts everything out of focus. Hold it at a proper distance and it can be examined and properly classified. Throw it at your feet and it can be seen in it's true setting, just one more tiny bump on the pathway to life.

Alia Luce

This newsletter is a publication of the Westwind eating disorder recovery centre, and is intended for general information only. It is not intended to provide personal medical or psychological advice, which should be obtained from a qualified health professional.

Subscriptions are \$13/yr US mailed to the USA, or \$15/yr CAN in Canada. Other countries are \$18/yr US. The newsletter is published six times per year. Subscriptions for past clients of Westwind eating disorder recovery centre are \$8/yr US mailed to the USA, or \$10/yr CAN in Canada.

More information about Westwind can be obtained by calling 204-728-2499, or call toll free in North America at 1-888-353-3372. Check our web site at : [www.westwind.mb.ca](http://www.westwind.mb.ca), or e-mail us at [westwindedrc@mb.sympatico.ca](mailto:westwindedrc@mb.sympatico.ca). We are located at 458-14th St, Brandon, MB, R7A 4T3, Canada.

while ignoring the fact that her thighs are in proportion with the rest of her body.

The overall result of this constant presentation of an unrealistic, unreachable female ideal, is that most women feel discontent with their bodies. Then, we are offered food as a solution. Food is offered as a drug - “unwrap”, “unwind”. Food is also offered as a way to deal with stress - “The week melts away with it”. Then, the media creates a climate of denial for eating disorders - “What you do in the dark is nobody else’s business”, “She measured her workout in sprinkles”. Advertisements such as these normalize bingeing and purging.

Advertisements also offer food as a substitute for relationships - “Does quality time always have to be spent with a person?”. The underlying message of this ad is that you will not find what you are looking for in relationships, so look to food. Then, after we are told to use food to deal with stress and in place of relationships with people, we are offered dieting as the solution.

There is a general rule in advertising - 20% of people consume 80% of the product that is sold. For example, the junk food’s best consumer is the person that binges (20% of junk food eaters consume 80% of the product). Manufacturers carefully plan their advertisements and aim them at these consumers, then they promote denial of the problem. The same rules apply when one considers selling alcohol to the person with an alcohol problem or selling cigarettes to a person that smokes. Advertisers understand addiction better than anyone else.

We Are The Product, What Is Being Sold Is Us. Magazines promise large companies that their magazine readers will be women that are obsessed with dieting. The

purpose of magazines is to round up an audience for advertisers to sell their products to. The purpose of the media is advertising. Without advertisements, the media would not exist because there would be no financial benefit to the media. Every magazine has a target audience and they analyze the characteristics of this audience to learn what to advertise and how. Magazines and advertising agencies even use psychologists to understand the best way to sell their products. In addition, 20% of people are leaders and the other 80% are followers, so advertisers only need to target the leaders in order to capture the majority of the population.

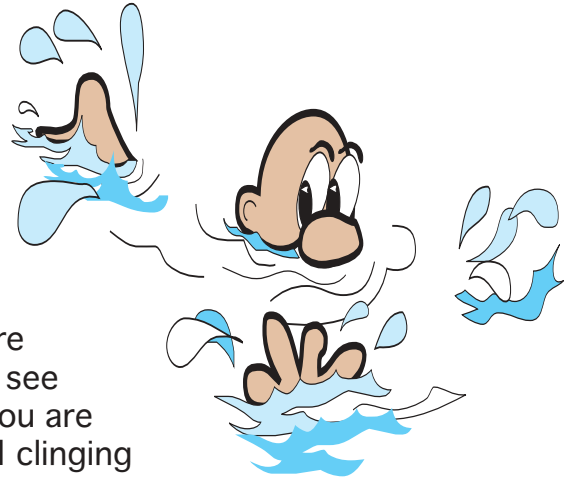
Magazines want their sponsors to be satisfied, so the articles in the magazine are selected based on this. In other words, the information provided in the magazine is censored and is based on what the sponsors want, not on what people need. This explains why we rarely hear all of the negative results of dieting - the major corporations have a lock on the information that is provided to the public in the media. If the dangers of dieting were exposed, the multi-million dollar diet industry would begin to suffer major repercussions. So instead, the dieting industry ensures that these dangers are covered up, and dieting is encouraged. The public suffers as a result of this lock on information.

Media literacy is the first step in fighting back against the influence of the media. When we educate ourselves about the media and its true purpose, we can then begin to argue against the need to meet the images seen in the media.

Kilbourne, J. (2002, November). *Media, Body Image and Cultural Trauma*. Paper presented at the Annual Renfrew Center Foundation Conference for Professionals, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

# Rolling Down the River

“Imagine yourself standing in the rain on the bank of a raging river. Suddenly, the water-swollen bank gives way. You fall in and find yourself being tossed around in the rapids. Your efforts to keep afloat are futile and you are drowning. By chance, along comes a huge log and you grab it and hold on tight. The log keeps your head above water and saves your life. Clinging to the log you are swept downstream and eventually come to a place where the water is calm. There, in the distance, you see the river bank and attempt to swim to shore. You are unable to do so, however, because you are still clinging to the huge log with one arm as you stroke with the other.



How ironic. The very thing that saved your life is not getting in the way of your getting where you want to go. There are people on shore who see you struggle and yell, “Let go of the log!”. But, you are unable to do so because you have no confidence in your ability to make it to shore. And so, very slowly and carefully, you let go of the log and practice floating. When you start to sink, you grab back on. Then you let go of the log and practice treading water, and when you get tired, hold on once again. After awhile, you practice swimming around the log once, twice, ten times, a hundred times until you gain the strength and confidence you need to swim to shore. Only then do you completely let go of the log.” (p. 19 - 21)

Having an eating disorder does not mean you are defective, damaged goods, or a faulty human being in need of repair. An eating disorder is a much needed protective mechanism picked up along the journey through life, used to help deal with feelings of being different, misunderstood, rejected, or overwhelmed. Recovery from disordered eating requires the development of whatever skills are necessary to replace the function of the log. Maybe disordered eating helped you deal with the tension of conflict, and you need to develop some conflict resolution skills. Once new skills are developed you will discover that they are more effective and efficient than the disordered eating. Holding the log met your need for survival. New skills enable you to not only survive, but live a life that is rich and fulfilling.

From: “Eating in the Light of the Moon” by Anita Johnston

# The Westwind Philosophy

## Trust and Respect A Client's Perspective

“Hello, this is Michelle and I am interested in entering your treatment centre. Can you tell me a little about your program.” “So, you don't lock the bathrooms?” “I'm not forced to eat?” “I can set my own goals?” I hung up the phone and pondered what I just heard for several hours. I was excited by what I heard, but I was also unsure how a program like this could work. I have never heard of such a philosophy. Every other centre I had been in or called, locked bathrooms, forced eating and set goals for me. They all took the philosophy that I could not be responsible for myself or my actions and taught me to view myself the same. So I was confused by a program who trusted me before they knew me and gave me the message from day one that I COULD trust myself. Although this program perplexed me, it seemed worth a shot. I put my name on the waiting list and entered the program 2 months later in June 2002.

It took a month for me to adjust to such a different treatment view, but it didn't take long after that to realize what a gift Westwind had given me - the gift of trust. And how that gift changed my life. I'm not going to lie to you - the recovery road was not easy, seemed never-ending at times, and extremely rough and painful to travel. Every day was a struggle and

progress seemed slow. But the gift I was given was priceless and in my mind the key to my recovery.

Each morning began with each client listing their accomplishments. When I began my list was short and simple, but each week it began to grow as I began to grow. About two months into my stay I reflected on my accomplishments and it was then I first realized the preciousness of Westwind's gift. As I looked at this list, I realized that each accomplishment came from me - and not from force. If I didn't purge, it was because I used my coping skills, not because the bathroom was locked. If I ate three meals, it was because I made the effort, not because I was coerced or forced. It was then I first realized, “I can do this!”. Don't get me wrong - I had tremendous support from the staff, but the control was mine, not theirs. The accomplishments were mine. I believe the gift of trust made it easier to give up the control of my eating disorder because I found control in a new way - health!

Four months after I entered the doors of Westwind, I left. The day before I left, I reviewed what I had accomplished during my stay. I ate foods I never dreamed I would eat. I ate pizza at my goodbye party. I ate in a healthy manner, was free of all purging behaviours, challenged myself daily, smiled more, and had a new brighter outlook. I was apprehensive to return home, but not fearful. After all Westwind and home weren't that much different - both had no locked bathrooms, both had freedom, both didn't force eating, and both gave trust.

Thank you Westwind for not only giving me a supportive place to get my life back, but for trusting me. It is a priceless gift I will always cherish.

## Are You SABOTAGING Your SUCCESS?

Our thoughts and attitudes day by day have an immense power to shape our world. Have you ever felt like you were having a bad hair day and suddenly it seemed like everyone was staring at your locks with disdain? Maybe they were admiring the new barret you were wearing. Unfortunately, your own attitude created a different reality and made it difficult to accept the positive looks. By our attitudes, we hold great power over how we act.

### What is Success?

In our society, the label of success is usually saved for those who appear confident and unwavering no matter what their circumstances.

People who endure grave experiences are often portrayed as doubtless and solid in their convictions. But few people are free from doubts. Being successful does not

require complete freedom from all self defeating thoughts. It does not mean we will never wonder if our efforts are good enough, or that we will never misunderstand someone's intentions. Being successful means putting self defeating thoughts into perspective and making a choice not to act on them. This could mean something like proposing an idea to your boss despite feeling like your idea is unimpressive.

### Self Defeating Attitudes

Self defeating attitudes can lead to behaviors that will hinder success and

leave us filled with doubt. One of these is an attitude of perfectionism. This can mean placing unrealistic expectations on yourself, a need to know all the answers, not wanting anyone to know you have a problem, putting on an act or being critical of yourself or others. Fear can also be a self sabotaging attitude. Fear of commitment, rejection, failure, success or expressing feelings will all hold people back from achieving their goals. Focusing on the negatives in life can be sabotaging. This attitude will leave you with a lack of motivation, excessive worry and suspicion. Other people struggle with feelings of unworthiness. They feel uncomfortable with success, feel afraid to bother anyone with their problems, give up quickly, and often end up making excuses for why they can not change. This attitude of unworthiness will only leave you feeling insecure, jealous and

defensive. Another self defeating attitude is impatience with yourself. This can cause people to feel rushed, act impulsively or even end a project

before it has begun for fear it will take too long. A need for validation is also a self defeating attitude that will leave you afraid of looking foolish, of stating your opinion and of hurting others. This need makes it hard to say no and will cause you to feel the need for approval before making a move.

### Choose Your Attitude

Every person has the ability to decide how they will react to the situations life gives them. The way in which we choose to see our circumstances can make the difference between falling into some of the self defeating thoughts described

Being successful means putting self defeating thoughts into perspective and making a choice not to act on them.

above, or having a more positive outlook on life that can give you the ability to succeed. A study was conducted where some elementary school teachers were told at the beginning of the term that certain students had great potential. In truth, all the students were equal in academic capabilities. When the researchers returned months later to study the classroom, they found that the students who had been labelled as potentials were actually achieving better than the others. The teachers and students had a belief that was strong enough to create a reality. (Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968) The attitude we choose every day has that same power.

There are many things that can be done to help produce a positive attitude. Surround yourself with positive people or put up pictures and quotes that can remind you to see things differently. You can mold your environment into a place that will either give you the motivation to pursue goals or convince you that you can not. The choice is yours.



From Sabotage to Success: How to Overcome Self-Defeating Behaviour and Reach Your True Potential. Sheri O. Zampelli. New Harbinger Publications Inc. 2000. Oakland, CA.

## ***What's New at Westwind?***

### ***Support Groups***

Support groups are offered free of charge to individuals suffering from forms of disordered eating, their family members and friends, every Monday evening at Westwind at 7pm. Join our on-line support group at <http://groups.msn.com/westwindeatingdisordersupportgroup>.

### ***Maury Povich***

Bryan and one of our clients recently made an appearance on the Maury Povich show discussing the issue of eating disorders. The show aired on February 12th. Watch for more updates in the near future.

### ***Golf Tournament***

We will again this year be holding a fundraising golf tournament for the Westwind Foundation for Eating Disorders. We would like to invite all of you to become supporters and participants in the tournament. The date, place and details of the tournament are yet to be announced.

### ***Eating Disorder Awareness Week***

A big thank you to all of those who helped out with the organization and implementation of eating disorder awareness week activities throughout Brandon. This was the most active awareness week we've had in our community and it couldn't have been done without your help. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done!

### ***International No Diet Day***

May 6, 2003 marks International No Diet day, a day where we celebrate the diversity of all body shapes and sizes. You can help stop weight discrimination and eating disorders by promoting awareness of acceptance of our natural sizes.

# FEEL GOOD EATING

## CHICKEN & MUSHROOM BURGERS

- 1 lb lean ground chicken
- 1 cup finely chopped mushrooms
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup fine dried breadcrumbs
- 1 tsp dried tarragon
- 1/4 tsp dried thyme
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 6 whole wheat buns

In bowl, combine chicken, mushrooms, onion, garlic, breadcrumbs and seasonings. Shape into 6 patties, about 1/2 inch (1cm) thick.

Broil or barbecue for 5 to 6 minutes per side or until brown and chicken is cooked through. Serve on whole wheat buns with garnishes. Suggested garnishes are: light mayonnaise, tomato slices, alfalfa sprouts or lettuce, mustard.

Makes 6 burgers

