

audio_only

Craig: [00:00:00] Hello and welcome to the interview this week. So yes, we thought it'd be quite topical to talk about hashtag Fatboy Summer, because it's summer and thanks to the unique circumstances of everyone being trapped in their homes for the last year or so. Lots of people are finding that they're now going back out and socializing after putting on a lot more weight.

With me we have returning guests Master David. You may remember him back from the hypno episode. Welcome Master.

We are going to try and talk through body positivity, how to be comfortable with your body and just general on that theme, because it seems like a lot of people need it right now.

David: [00:00:41] Absolutely.

Craig: [00:00:43] So for context, I think I've spoken before in the podcast. I'm a fat guy, you know, I'm a bear.

David: [00:00:50] , I am as well.

I mean, I have pictures of me on a couple of different websites, including on the wings interview that happened a couple of months ago. And you can clearly see that I have a belly and I, I have mixed feelings about that, but they're mostly positive.

Craig: [00:01:06] And I think that's something we're going to get into, which is body positivity. Isn't something that just happens. It's not a light switch. You can turn off and on. And we're going to talk about how you can do it, how you can get a better body, self image and how to manage these feelings because let's face it. I don't think I've ever met a gay man who doesn't have a certain degree of body image issues.

David: [00:01:32] I don't think I've met a single person who doesn't.

, **Craig:** [00:01:36] it's so baked into our society that has almost a very strict set of body images that it allows out into mainstream media. That is very slowly changing, but , at a snail's pace.

David: [00:01:50] I think that one of the things that contributes to that is the fact that sex sells and marketing and advertising have determined that putting an attractive person in a very visible spot is a great way to attract attention and the standards of beauty and society change over time.

Of course, but over the past, I don't know how many years those standards have generally consisted of. Athletic slim people.

Craig: [00:02:24] It's quite interesting because when you actually get on the ground and talk to people, I've met very few individuals with a really strict body type they're attractive to most people, even if it's not their most primary body type they're attracted to, they're generally attracted to a wide range of body types.

David: [00:02:43] I think there's also a difference in mindset as well. Some people have a very exclusionary in mindset to say, like, there are whole categories of people that I'm not interested in, such as the whole stereotypical, no fats, no femmes that you sometimes find on some of these dating apps, but then there's also the people who are willing to say, okay, well, I know that I have my preferences, but I'm not willing to exclude people categorically.

I'm more interested in meeting people and evaluating them on a one by one basis, which I think is probably the healthier way to live. Because if you exclude people categorically, then you are by definition, missing out on many different ways that you could experience life and experience other people.

Craig: [00:03:37] Totally. And I think there's a big problem with the way dating apps or let's face it, hookup apps work because they work on being able to filter people. So, if you have this exclusionary mindset, you're never forced to interact or adjust to people with a different body type, you can filter them out.

David: [00:03:59] Well, I think that's not specific to dating apps. I think that is just the way that the internet has started moving in general to this idea of a filter bubble where like with internet advertising and the rise of Data as a way of profiling people, online services have learned that people will respond better if you present them with viewpoints that are similar to their own.

So as a result, They start algorithmically surfacing those similar viewpoints in the hiding, the differencing viewpoints, which has led in part at least to a more polarized society. But I mean, this has sort of gotten away from the topic of fat and fat shaming and so on.

Craig: [00:04:47] I mean, it's interesting, you noted that. Cause my thoughts going into this is on the terms of being able to see different body types. The Internet's been a really big boon for that. I'm an older millennial and I came in at the cusp, like the internet started to become a big thing when I was in my mid teens. So I had this position where I was in the quote unquote before times when everything was print media and television, and I've seen the change.

And one of the things that stuck with me is growing up gay. My main access to community at the start was magazines. It was gay times, attitude, magazine, all of these sorts of things. And at that point, if they're your only access to gay culture, the only thing they ever the road was white, six packed, often blonde, heavily muscled men.

That was it. And you've got nothing else to those magazines. So, if you're growing up in that period, that's your only access to gay culture. And you think that's all that there is, and it really gets into your subconscious that if you don't look like that, you're not going to be accepted as part of the community.

Whereas now I see people interacting a lot more even though there has been a problem with filter bubbles and, algorithms really screwing with people, it has in many ways, democratized things and you are able to. Essentially control your own narrative in a way you wasn't before.

And you can see people of different body shapes speaking out and different body types and races all speaking out and making themselves well.

David: [00:06:43] I would say that it's, it's flipped the problem on its head. So before the internet, or at least before it became such a driving force of culture the problem was.

A lack of diversity, a lack of different viewpoints, that there was one narrative or perhaps two narratives that seem to compete with each other, but actually we're very closely intertwined with each other. And that was it. There was nothing else to be found as you just described with the sort of white blonde, muscular stereotype of an attractive gay man.

Oh. But now with the internet being a driving force of culture, anyone can publish, anyone can put their ideas forward into the world and talk about what they think is interesting or attractive. What they think is sexy, what they think is an important part of culture. And that creates entirely new problems because whereas previously you had not enough choices.

Now there's too many. You can't possibly see and read everything that there is to see and read. And so you depend on the ability to search and filter through the, the cacophony of so many different voices and, it's the fact that these tools to do so are not perfect. The fact that they can't say it show you exactly what you're looking for, and also give you all the context of what you might not have been expecting to find.

And I think that's causing people to become, you know, focused on these filter bubbles and find it harder to disconnect from their preconceived notions and try something new.

Craig: [00:08:33] It's interesting because on the one hand, people are being really filtered on the other one that the internet can seem to be a very aggressive and combative place because the filter bubbles or should I say the algorithms often also prioritize conflict?

So you're either with people that agree with you exactly. Or the Xact. Polar opposite view.

David: [00:08:56] Yes.

Craig: [00:08:57] Internet arguments, I find do become very reductive. You are sucked into binary positions

David: [00:09:05] it's yes or no, true or false with no shades of gray in between.

Craig: [00:09:10] . You can't say, well, I largely agree, but I think there are these things that we need to watch out for, because if you do that, you get your head bitten off and saying, well, clearly you're just agreeing with the other side.

David: [00:09:20] .

That's true. And it's unfortunate.

Craig: [00:09:24] I think getting away from the wider image, we should maybe talk about our personal experiences with weight.

David: [00:09:30] Sure.

Craig: [00:09:32] So I tend to be these days, quite body positive. If I have my down moments along the way, I really did have a lot of issues with my body.

In my early twenties, I used to really struggle. I used to go to the gym a lot, but I could never really lose weight and then got even worse when I for a period, went on to antidepressant medication. And as most people know, one of the main side effects of that is weight gain. And I started putting on a lot more weight which again, I couldn't shift.

And I go into this really bad cycle where I'd push myself and push myself on diets and workout routines, and it wouldn't get the results I wanted and that would then feed into itself. And what really broke that cycle for me was powerlifting.

David: [00:10:22] Really?

Craig: [00:10:23] . I met some nice guys really good guys through the leather community who are also really into power lifting.

And they showed me the ropes. Like I went to a class with them cause they ran like a little get together for LGBT powerlifters and I found I really enjoyed it. And the thing was because it detached the results from my appearance and it was what my body could do in terms of power. In terms of like seeing the amount of weights I could lift go up week after week after week.

That really helped me become more at peace with my body because I wasn't trying to push it to this goal. I couldn't achieve. It was about working in tandem with my body. Yes. And the most powerful thing for me is it helped me relate back to my body. A lot of body issues stem from seeing your body as something you can't control and something forced upon you.

And I think this is what a lot of people don't get about it. It's not that you feel unattractive because I knew people find me attractive. I find bears attractive. If I could step out myself, I probably would find someone who looked like me attractive, but the trouble was, it was because I felt like my belly was this thing forced upon me that I had no control over that.

I couldn't identify with it. . So even when people went, I find your belly attractive. I'm like, well, that's good for you, but you findings a part of me that I don't relate to, that I struggle with that. I was resent doesn't make me feel any better.

Someone recently introduced me to the term embodiment. In terms of body positivity. And it is the idea of letting took set yourself as a whole. So you can love yourself as a whole. And it's not looking in the mirror and go, well, if I just got rid of this, if I just got rid of my love handles, if I just perked up, you know, my pictorials,

David: [00:12:21] " If I were just a little better, maybe I would be happy".

Craig: [00:12:24] . . And it's just saying, these aren't parts of me that I can chop off like a butcher's block. This is all me. It is all me and I have to exist all as it. And again, powerlifting helped me do that because. I was working in tandem with my body and I felt in sync with my body in a way that I find very hard to articulate.

David: [00:12:47] That makes a lot of sense to me though. I mean, I have struggled with weight issues as well for many years, but honestly, the first really big issue that I had with my body was my body hair. Because it started coming in when I was going through puberty and I noticed that I was significantly hairier than just about all of my peers.

And, you know, at that point in your life, the goal is not to stand out. The goal is to fit in as much as possible. High school is the time when you want to be cool by being like all of the other. Cool. . So I remember. Like during the summertime, there was a public pool, not too far from where I lived and I wanted to go swimming, but I was always extremely self-conscious about doing so, because I knew that in order to go swimming, I would have to take off my shirt and just be in my swimsuit.

And everyone would be able to see not just my belly, but also all of my body hair, which was a little scary for me because. I also didn't really think of myself as attractive. And I just thought of myself as different and a little weird, but I sort of made up my mind that. If other people could have their shirts off and go swimming, then I could too.

And there were attractive people at the pool, but there were also unattractive people and that didn't seem to matter. It was about swimming. It wasn't about showing off your body. So I was able to sort of convince myself that it was okay.

Craig: [00:14:31] , I think that that's a really good attitude to have about it.

One of the things I think people get mistaken with is that even in the body positivity movement or mindset, a lot of people get caught up in terms of attractiveness. Cause it is true. Like everyone has a different type and there is someone in the world who will find your type of body attractive.

Absolutely. There's like what 9 billion people in the world, or with varying interests, the thing is you shouldn't root your own sense of self-worth in how another will see you.

David: [00:15:08] It helps, but it's not the most important thing. Oh

. Like I think the bedrock and foundation just needs to be, this is what I am, and it doesn't matter if I think I'm unattractive.

I still have a right to take up the space. I take up to show my body as it is.

And you know, there's actually two other stories that I want to share that, that, that comment reminded me of. And I want to preface this by saying that both of these stories are related to other people telling me about their reaction to my body and.

I really do agree with what you just mentioned about how other people's responses to your body are not the most important thing. Most important thing is how you view your own body, but at the same time, nobody exists all alone. And being able to get feedback from other people, hearing their responses and hearing how they live their lives is a valuable way of understanding yourself better.

I mean, that's what we're doing in this podcast episode right now, sharing information about ourselves and the hopes that maybe our listeners will be able to, you know, have a better experience themselves as a result.

Craig: [00:16:21] Sure. , I'd love to hear them.

David: [00:16:24] So the first story is what happened at the very first pride event that I ever went to.

And I think this was when I was like 18 or 19 years old, something like that. I was living in the Washington DC area in the United States and I went to DC pride and I was very excited and also very nervous. Because, as I said, this was my first time going to this event and I was still figuring out who I was and what my sexuality was and all of that.

But I made up my mind that I wanted to go and it happened during the summertime and it was a really warm day. And me being a big, hairy guy. I was sweating. I was sweating a fair amount, but as I mentioned earlier, I was very self-conscious about the idea of taking off my shirt because I was a big guy.

I had a lot of body hair and I didn't really think that that made me attractive or appealing. And I was very self-conscious about inflicting that on the other people around me. Interestingly, of course I, I had started browsing the internet and experiencing porn as well. And I knew that there was a category of porn called bear porn.

And I knew that my body type sort of fit in with that category, but it wasn't something that I saw as. Like, I, I didn't know anybody who found bears attractive. I didn't really know if I was a bear. All I knew was that in theory, there was this idea that people with my body type could be attractive, even though I had never actually experienced that.

So there I was at DC pride on a very warm day. And I decided, you know what? This event is all about, feeling proud of yourself and who you are. And I want to take off my shirt and that means exposing a little bit more of who I am and exposing my body, but I'm going to give it a shot. We'll see how it goes.

So I took off my shirt and I was even more nervous. And I saw people looking at me as I was walking through the people in the, at the events. And I'll never forget. The first comment that I got was from another guy who, I didn't know him. He didn't know me if we were just walking past each other and he looked at me up and down and he said, Wolf, I don't know what you're doing, but keep on doing it.

That was the first time that I really felt. Sexy that I felt proud of. My body type felt proud of who I was and what I was and felt like, , maybe this abstract idea of bears and of people finding bears attractive. Maybe that's not so abstract. Maybe that actually really happens in real life.

Craig: [00:19:29] That's awesome.

David: [00:19:30] , so that made me feel a lot better and started helped. It started helping me realize that even if I didn't have a body that was skinny and muscular, I could still be attractive to other people. And I could also find myself attractive.

Craig: [00:19:47] , it's a powerful thing to have that sort of affirmation for yourself.

And, it really does help surrounding yourself with people that will appreciate you. One of the things I've noticed with myself is obviously I'm on lots of social media, like Instagram, Twitter, that sort of thing. And what I find is if I let my feed become too filled with nothing but a single body type.

That's when I have flare up of body issues. And again, it's surrounding myself with a varied body type, like just in my day-to-day consumption of the images of bodies around me changes my own self perception and, you know, hanging on bears and being part of the bear community as I sort of. Came out as gay really helped with my body.

David: [00:20:41] Absolutely. And that actually feeds in pretty well to the second story that I wanted to tell as well. So this was probably six or seven years ago or so not too long before when I left the United States and moved to Amsterdam, which is where I live now. And there was this, this. Retreats that was happening in the summertime in upstate New York.

And the name of the retreat was bear camp. And as the name implies, it was like two weeks of men who identified as bears getting together and connecting both for a good time socially, but also sort of spiritually. And. Feeling better about yourself and connecting with other people who also wanted to open up and grow spiritually, not in a religious sense, but in a sense of just finding out more of what's important to you on a deeper level, if that makes

any sense.

, totally.

And the two facilitators of this event. I must admit I've forgotten their name, but their body types were very striking. They were, I don't remember if they were married or if they were dating for a very long time, but it was two guys who were in a significant relationship with each other.

One of them was skinny as a rail and the other one was probably 300, 350 pounds. Something like that. A very, very large man. And they were both lovely people. And I enjoyed the event immensely. I connected with many people. I learned a lot, but one of the things that happens about midway through is when the skinny guy and the fat guy who were facilitating were talking about their experiences.

And the fat guy was saying that he often had. Issues with his body. And he often felt unattractive. And that was one of the reasons why he wanted to organize this event. It was for others, but it was also for him. It was also about him feeling better about himself and connecting with others and continuing to learn and grow on his journey of self-acceptance.

And his boyfriend or partner, the skinny one also mentioned that. Sometimes the two of them will be having sex together. And his partner, the Batman will we'll start apologizing for how big he is. And the skinny guy says, wait, stop. What are you doing here? I find you attractive. I think that you are a wonderful person.

I think you're a sexy person. I am choosing to be with you. I want to be with you and in a way. Him apologizing for his weight and apologizing for his size was actually denying this idea that his partner could find him attractive, which was something I had never considered. The idea that by trying to deflect a compliment, you are actually implicitly calling the person, complimenting you a bit of a liar.

Craig: [00:24:05] . That's something. I don't think people put a lot of thought into when they do it, but it is it's. So it is kind of calling people a liar and it's, it comes from the, is the place of they come believe that they can be attractive.

David: [00:24:20] Exactly.

Craig: [00:24:21] There was this person I knew who, who was deeply insecure about his body and the way he went about it, about like, trying to compensate for that. is constantly making some very vicious jokes about himself and it's that very clear sort of coping mechanism of I'm going to get the jabs in first. So no one else can, . And was hanging out and talking and it was all, oh, well, you know, if I took my shirt off your door probably vomit and like, I'm not kidding here.

It was that sort of caliber of joke. . The thing is there was someone right next to him trying to flirt with him. And people who have defense mechanisms like that , I think it comes from their teenage years of they get bullied again, not everyone, but most people get bullied.

And so they, learn if they be the clown and if they get the jabs in on themselves first, it sort of mitigates that.

David: [00:25:17] But it doesn't change the fact that if you're, whether it's someone else jabbing you or whether it's you jabbing you, it hurts. It hurts. It's not fun. And I mean, as someone who knows a great deal about hypnosis, I feel very qualified to say that by doing these things, by putting yourself in this position constantly, you are reinforcing these negative feelings about yourself and you're making it harder to change.

Craig: [00:25:44] Every time you do that, you are resubmitting that reality see for yourself. And so something I found is having a good body image takes effort. It does almost as much effort as it does to go to the gym and do it physically to have, you need to get a certain level of mental discipline where you catch yourself every time, time, that sort of thought pattern emerges.

You go, oh God, I'm so ugly. You have to catch yourself and go, no. That is a subjective thought. It is not reality, and I'm not going to indulge it so hard to do that constantly all the time. And it takes real effort to maintain.

David: [00:26:26] That's true.

Another way you can do it. If it's harder to just stop the thoughts.

I mean, a lot of people can't do that. Don't have that sort of level of control. It's a lot easier to alter it in step. So for example, if you find yourself thinking, God, I'm so ugly and you can't stop thinking that one of the things you can do is you can alter that to say, God, I'm so ugly right now. But I'm capable of change and I'm capable of changing my own thought patterns as well.

And in the future, I don't have to feel this way. I can feel better.

Craig: [00:27:06] And I think that ties back into what was talking about earlier about that sense of powerlessness. Having a bad body image can give you, cause that gives you back a sense of power and control to a degree. .

So this actually quite neatly ties into one of the listener questions we've gotten around this. It's from Mastodon on user. Gazoo sorry about the pronunciation. It, I know I'm not doing that quite right.

Do you have any practical advice for a better opinion of your own body mindset of taking nude selfies for bears and BDSM community?

David: [00:27:38] Piece of advice that I have is to try to take the attitude towards others, that you would hope that they take towards you, which is to say. If you want to be the sort of person who feels comfortable posting nudes, posting selfies, having that sort of self-confidence to post something online and see other people enjoying it, then try to find other people who already have that attitude, compliment them on their pictures and emulate them.

I mean, Being able to post a picture. Even if you take a picture of yourself, you can say, oh, I don't know if I like how that looks, push yourself a little bit and think of yourself in the persona of whatever person you're following, who does this really well. Someone who enjoys posting photos who enjoys seeing themselves out there and getting the attention online.

It does take some time to build an audience. So it's very easy to post one picture and then to get frustrated when you get no response. But one of the ways that you can build that audience, if that's what you're looking for is. To find other people who are doing the same thing and compliment them and talk about their posts and be a good fan.

And most likely they will turn around and want to be a good fan to you. So if that's what you're seeking, if you like the idea of posting pictures online and getting the attention of that, Then there's nothing wrong with that. And it doesn't matter what body type you have. You can do that and it can be very freeing and very empowering.

Craig: [00:29:29] One thing I will say about this is for people who are worried about their body posting, like are revealing selfie or them in the nude or just them in the jock strap. There's this huge worry because you feel like you're going to be judged. And it's putting something out into the world.

You lose control of it and you are vulnerable. And often people will what's the word catastrophize. They'll think of the worst thing where they will be attacked for their body, where they'll be dragged down for it. And it can be such a big moment if you put something out in the world and none of the bad stuff happens and you realize, oh, The worst case scenario isn't going to happen.

I'm not going to be punished for showing my body out in the world.

David: [00:30:19] And frankly, if that does happen, if people start throwing negative comments, your way.

Then you don't need that sort of shit in your life. There are people who want to build others up rather than tearing them down. And you can find that community, if you're looking for it, it's a lot healthier to be in a group of people who wants to give each other compliments rather than giving each other shade and criticism.

Craig: [00:30:47] Some of it is finding your audience , for example, Instagram, now they don't allow nudity, but you can post like topless selfies, making sure you put in like the bad hashtags, like Insta bass, stuff like that. It can help because that means the audience who will appreciate your body will be the first to see it.

And that really helps. And it also helps to. Learn how to take a decent photograph.

That's true. Yes.

Because the thing is, there's nothing worse than a photograph that makes you look worse than you are there are methods of how to photograph the human body.

There are good angles that you can learn. You know, there's a reason why there's such thing. I don't think people call it the MySpace angle anymore. That was like decades ago. But when my space was about people have this thing called the MySpace angle where it's literally, you hold your phone above you.

So you're looking up at the camera because that accentuates the eyes, narrows the face. , it gives it a more like mysterious expression. And people very quickly caught on that's how you take a good facial selfie. There's a lot of little tricks like that. Yes. Yes. I know the, I know the teabags and joysticks podcast who we get on well with, they actually have a photographer friend of ours Joshie coming on onto their episode soon.

Oh, . I recommend people check out when it's up, but he does do a lot of photography of bigger guys and he knows the angles to get, like, to make them look their best. I've seen his photos. They're amazing.

. They're brilliant. So, . . So if any of you aren't yet subscribed go to the teabags and joysticks podcast and wait for that episode because.

I think that's going to be a good one for this, like linking into this topic. .

David: [00:32:43] Although there's one other thing I want to mention as well, which is if you want to take pictures of yourself and post them online, if you want to post selfies and nudes and so on by all means, go for it a hundred percent, but it is not required.

And you should also not tie your body image to this need to post pictures online. It should be something that you do for fun because you get enjoyment out of it because you enjoy the reactions. But if you start feeling like it's something that you need to do, otherwise your self-esteem suffers. And then that indicates that you're probably putting too much of your self-esteem into how other people respond.

Craig: [00:33:27] . As I say it, I think it's important to understand where the bedrock of your self-esteem comes from, and that has to come from your own, own view of your own body. Yes. You rely on positive reinforcement from others. That can be nice, but it's also fragile.

David: [00:33:43] And as I mentioned earlier, with, with those two stories, I shared getting positive feedback from other people can be very helpful in shaping your own perspectives on yourself. But ultimately your self-esteem and your sense of who you are, needs to be your own decision. It can be shaped and influenced by others, but ultimately it's yours to decide who you are and who you want to be.

Craig: [00:34:11] Very wise words. So I hope that helps. We have our next question from banjo on Twitter: "what can we do to hold events, venues, brands, more accountable in more representative advertising and promotions, less posters with cookie cutter imagery or quote unquote, real body campaigns to tick a quota and just imagery that reflects people of all backgrounds, shapes, sizes, and colors."

That's a difficult one. Because as I mentioned earlier, I think the reason why there at least many years ago, there was such a single version of beauty is ultimately because sex sells and the people who come up with the advertising and promotional materials for events, which are ultimately money-making enterprises.

They are considering who they can market to the best and who is going to respond to their marketing most effectively. And so I think that's one reason why a lot of companies are scared to include more diverse body types in their visual media and visual marketing. Because if there's only one definition of beauty, Then more diversity means less beauty.

At least that's the calculus in the marketing mind.

This is the thing, but it's also important to realize that's also probably not true in the real world. It's only a truism in marketing because marketing automatically likes to separate people into demographics to target them. And the biggest demographic or widest net is often the one that gets promoted, but you can actually make.

Good on promoting diversity genuinely. There's a great brand called fetish study and they have been fantastic from the moment of their inception. They've included all body shapes or body sizes, all races. They even make a specific Line of chest harnesses, like leather chest harnesses, specifically for trans men, because it helps those that are, have issues with that top scars.

Like, and this is, I think Andrew talked about it being a tick box exercise, like, oh, we're having this limited one month promotional campaign where we show other bodies and then go back to normal. That kind of change has to come almost within companies. . It has to be an ethos they subscribed to, and that change has to come from within them.

But the other thing is just making it known that you want to see other bodies. Like we live in day and age where mass peer pressure can be used negatively.

David: [00:37:07] Absolutely.

Craig: [00:37:08] But it can also be a positive force for change. If when a brand comes out with like their new line and start showing the pictures of, I don't know, their new underwear just tweeting at them.

Okay. Where are the bigger guys? Where are the black guys? Where are the Asian guys? Where the trans guys. , but I'm, I'm imagining this is like a gay focused brand. . But , like just making it known socially and adding your voice to that, that there needs to be a bigger diversity does help.

David: [00:37:40] I mean, I have a fairly cynical outcome or a fairly cynical outlook on all of this.

Because as I said, I believe that a lot of these things are companies doing what they do purely for the motivation of making more money, which that motivation is not bad enough in and of itself. But if you're expecting their motivation to be truly representing and supporting diversity, that sometimes isn't always the case.

So. One thing you can do to try to encourage these companies, to share the values that you want them to have is to appeal to what they care about, which is in this case money put your money where your mouth is in terms of supporting the companies that advertise the way that you want them to. And don't spend money on the companies that don't I mean, people like to believe that.

The free market means you can just buy whatever you want. And the more successful companies will outcome people, less successful companies, but that doesn't take into account. The fact that consumers do have influence in terms of deciding which products they choose to buy price. Doesn't always have to be the number one differentiator.

You can also choose to spend your money on companies that you want to support and withhold money from companies that you don't believe support you.

Craig: [00:39:02] I think there has to be a diversity of tactic, like very much supporting brands who make the effort to include regularly. And like, as an embedded culture, just different body types is important.

And it's also important to, I hate to use the word call out, but kind of call out and pressure brands that don't subscribe to that. , absolutely. I mean, it's very interesting because I think if you can make it known that losing out on a demographic by doing this, I think that is a

powerful thing. Like for the longest time before I talk about this, you face it by saying recon has been amazing at promoting different body types and different ethnicities.

And the range of people in their marketing Sandy and Anton, who I think run that recon have done an amazing job of pushing and making sure they are really diverse, but that didn't use to be the case when I was first coming up in like the fetish world and a lot of, especially their event photos, not their marketing, their event photos.

They only took pictures of people with six packs. And I remember that because I was like going in, I felt like I put off going to their events because I thought, well, I'm not going to fit in. I don't have a six pack. Of course, when I got there, I found their whole range of body types. They just weren't getting shown in the event, photos.

And as I said, this isn't a call-out because Sandy and Anton and the whole recon team have put a lot of work in since then. Like they have had that culture shift. So actually congratulations.

Yup. It can be powerful just to show you're missing out on the market.

David: [00:40:49] That's true. . And where you mentioned as well about making your thoughts and opinions known. I mean, there are real people behind these companies and if you reach out to them and say, Hey, this is what I care about, then that can make a difference.

Although, as I said, I believe that ultimately money is the most important factor to them.

Craig: [00:41:08] . . It's as I say, I think you have to use a diversity of tactics and just help, you know, we are shifting a culture is hard. Yes. Like we're all just, . At a certain level, just individuals, but so we do the best we can and try and move it collectively.

Yep.

David: [00:41:27] But at this point, I think we're rehashing the same arguments over and over again.

Craig: [00:41:31] Yes. So let's move on to the next question. Ryan also on Twitter, I don't like my nipples. And I feel weird if people comment on them, even if it's positive, how you learn to celebrate the parts of your body you have, or have had issues with.

Now, this is a very interesting question because it touches on what we've talked about before, which is sort of. I touch on nipples a lot,

but we have about how, if you're, if you don't like a part of your body, other people complimenting you on it, doesn't always help. And you can just draw attention to parts you don't like

on the one hand, sort of the cultural thing of gay men often like go to complimenting on nipples. For one of the things, most people in the gay community quite like,

David: [00:42:19] and they are one of the sexualized parts of your body, that it is socially acceptable to show off in public.

Craig: [00:42:27] . So it's sort of having to move through a culture where there a natural focus can be quite difficult. I would hope people would also ,do you check ins with people like a big thing for me is a lots of gay men. When voting won't check with you before tweaking your nipples, I've had that a lot and I've had to be very forceful and saying, don't do that. Just ask fast.

David: [00:42:54] . my body my choice. .

Craig: [00:42:55] And asking can be sexy. It's like you can ask. So do you like it? If it was tweaked. Like I'll play drift and if they go, no, just drop it. . . So I think that's something like other people around, or I need to start doing.

Absolutely. . I mean, part of having a positive self image is also having an understanding that your body is yours.

David: [00:43:21] And if other people touch it or play with it in a way that you're not comfortable with. You can and should make a fuss about that because they're playing with something that doesn't belong to them. They're playing with something that belongs to you.

Craig: [00:43:35] . And I don't think you need to be shy about saying, sorry. I don't like my nipples being talked about. Just say it doesn't have to be a big thing. It can just be a casual. Okay, cool. You're talking about me. If it was Monday, if we talk about something else. Sure. Again, it can take hard work to really feel like you're comfortable and re integrating parts of your body you've had issues with.

And unfortunately there's no quick fix for that. It's a sort of, you kind of have to do the work and find your path to becoming more comfortable with. . I,

David: [00:44:09] I think that there is, there's a distinction to be made here between the perspective of. I don't like this part of my body and I don't want to talk about it.

So let's move on as compared to I don't like this part of my body, but I wish that I did and I feel uncomfortable, but I want to get past that. And it really depends on how you want to, how you want that part of your understanding of yourself to evolve. If you're satisfied with just saying no, this isn't my thing.

Let's move on. Then everything that you talked about about saying, no, this is my body, you know, don't touch it. Don't comment on it. It's just my thing to deal with. That's all perfectly true and perfectly valid. If your goal is to start feeling better about yourself to say, well, I don't like my nipples right now, but I would like to enjoy them more in the future.

Then I think that comes down to changing your mindset. And part of that is what I mentioned earlier about really believing people when they compliment you and not deflecting comments, dumped deflecting compliments, and implicitly calling them a liar in the process, but saying like, oh, I'm glad you like my nipples.

I don't really see what you like about them, but I appreciate it. And maybe someday I would like them to.

Craig: [00:45:39] It's just unpicking the issues that are connected with the nipples, not the nipples themselves. Really? Yes. . So we've been talking about this for about an hour, so shall we sort of do final thoughts?

David: [00:45:54] Sure.

I mean, my final thoughts on all of this is that bodies are sexy. Mm, and you don't have to be a certain type of body to be sexy. Confidence is sexy as well, and feeling comfortable in your body, feeling like you feel good about yourself, projects, a real confidence that other people respond to. And even if you don't feel that way about yourself yet you can learn to love your body.

If you want to. It's not an easy process and it's not a quick process. But it's well worth the time and effort.

Craig: [00:46:33] , I think I'm gonna close out with something. Bob, the drag queen said: start off by finding one part of yourself you like, and it can be just like a tooth. One tooth. And just saying to yourself, I have a good tooth and that can be a seed weigh yourself.

Body confidence grows. So. Like seeing the good in yourself and focusing on the good in yourself. And again, find what helps you reconnect with your body. Like I talked about power lifting, but for you, it could be anything it's about learning to become one with your body and stop dividing yourself up mentally.

It's not easy to do. It is a journey you have to go on, but it can be done.

David: [00:47:20] Absolutely. And surrounding yourself with people who lift you up instead of tearing you down helps tremendously.

Craig: [00:47:28] Oh yes. Very much so. So yes. Thank you for coming on again. I hope to have you on again, seeing it's always a pleasure.

, you're

welcome. This was a lot of fun,

brilliant. And to all our listeners, I hope this has helped and hope you go out and enjoy your fat boy summer. And. As always, play safe.