



Fading Away:
Weight Loss & Shifts in Identity

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What do we mean by identity?



- **Personality:**
 - The complex of all the attributes--behavioral, temperamental, emotional and mental--that characterize a unique individual
- **Identity: How I think about and define myself**
 - Descriptive (internal, physical attributes)
 - Social roles
 - Complex schemas
- **What are some different types of identities we might hold?**

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Effects from Reactions of Others



- **Physical characteristics influence the way others treat us and thereby mold our views of the world—our “personalities” and “identities”**
- **We hold stereotypes about personalities associated with physical characteristics**

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Do Looks Reveal Personality?



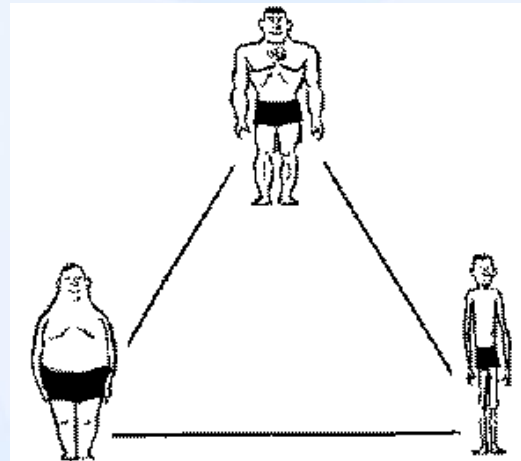
Looks Revealing Personality is Not Supported by Most Research

i.e.: Three body types:

Mesomorphs muscular, large-boned athletes

■ **Endomorphs**

rouly-poly,
good-natured,
types



■ **Ectomorphs**

slender,
bookworm types

Research on weight loss & identity



- **Majority of research has focused on physical health outcomes**
- **Mental health issues have been mostly ignored**
- **Attention to identity**
 - **Clinically based (e.g., case studies)**
 - **Dissertation research**

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“I don’t feel like myself anymore!”



- **Erosion of identity**
 - **Relational disturbance**
 - **Unfamiliar territory**
 - **Incongruity**

“Sometimes I felt like I was going through a period of mourning. There was this feeling that I had lost something, but I couldn’t put my finger on what it was that I had lost.”



Obstacles to integrating new identities



- **Social pressure**
- **Lack of belongingness**
- **Need for stability**
- **Coat rack effect**
- **Unrealized expectations**

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Final thoughts.....



QUESTIONS?

COMMENTS?

DISCUSSION?

Reference: Marta Meana Obesity Surgery: Stories of Altered (2008) Lives

- **Bariatric Surgery Evaluations or Psychological**
- **Support for Post-surgical Adjustment Issues**
 - **Eating Disorders or Body Image Issues**

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