



Hey all! This is a guest post from Rockyath Adechoubou, a student of women's studies at American University in Washington, DC. Thanks to a wildly busy few months involving final thesis revisions and graduating from college (in just over two weeks!), I've been on a brief hiatus myself, but hope to return soon. In the meantime, here's Rockyath.

## The Body Pacifist April 15, 2014



The Body Pacifist blog discusses how the negative body-image norms that we have in our society could affect the visions that women have of themselves. If you are a woman reading this post, you may have experienced days where you were not satisfied with your body. Although there are many obstacles women experience in the workplace, the focus of this blog is how the body image expectations that we are confronted with in our daily life can also have an impact in the professional world of many women.

Indeed, in today's society, women are confronted with a specific standard of "beauty." A woman's body, character, and qualifications are torn apart and broken down on TV, in magazines, and online on a daily basis. I am fairly certain that many of us have found ourselves reading magazines such as *Elle* or *Health* where we are shown articles like "[7 Secrets to Being Naturally Thin](#)" which causes women to feel as if they must adhere to the "set" standard of beauty.

Lisa Quast, a career coach and a business consultant, discussed this issue at length in an article on *Forbes* titled: "[Why Being Thin Actually Translate Into A Bigger Paycheck For Women](#)." I must admit that the title immediately spurred my interest since it is an issue that women, especially in the professional arena, struggle with, and which ultimately affects their job prospects. It's therefore important to address the problem and talk about it.

Who wouldn't want to look like those Victoria's Secret models, or like the beautiful size-zero actresses that we see on TV? I, myself, have struggled with body image. Sometimes, I am looking at myself in the mirror and feel as if "I am too fat" when in fact I am quite in shape! I know that I am not skinny but I feel overweight sometimes, and why should I? Why should I be skinnier than what I am already? The [opposite sex feels the oppression of body image](#) in the media as much as women. We should begin teaching girls and boys to love themselves the way they are no matter how they look like or the size they wear.

So, seeing that in the workplace women are discriminated against because their bodies don't conform to the society's norm makes me kind of scared, but even angrier. Quast brings up in her article a study that shows that "Between 45 percent and 61 percent of top male CEOs are overweight (BMI between 25 and 29)" but "only 5 percent – 22 percent of top female CEOs were overweight." According to the researchers of the study, "This reflects a greater tolerance and possibly even a preference for a larger size among men but a smaller size among women." (It's worth mentioning that it has been proven that BMI is not at all an accurate indicator of a person's health and wellbeing. As I stated before, we are all unique in body type.)

Unfortunately, weight discrimination is one of many obstacles that women face in the workplace. In this day and age, where we think we have made so much progress, it is inconceivable that women have to face so much opposition! The fact that a woman's body is considered as an "extended" part of the resume is simply wrong. I believe that body image issues are a big problem that needs to be addressed more thoroughly. As I said before, every person should be able to feel comfortable and confident in his or her own skin. When I see young girls around me struggling with their bodies because they feel like they do not fit "the norm," it makes me concerned about where we are heading. As a society, we need to teach future generations that they don't have to conform to those current figures of "beauty." We have to begin teaching young girls that "beauty" is represented in every kind of shape.

