

What does Instagram mean to me?

How does viewing fat bodies on Instagram impact or influence me?

At the beginning, viewing fat bodies on Instagram was permission, permission to exist as a fat person.

Wait a second. An internet platform... a soul-less, capitalistic, mind-numbing internet platform "gave" me permission? This seems a bit idealistic. Or a bit... fantastical. But it's true.

Seeing pictures like this, and this, and this, and this, allowed me to see that I am a whole person, worthy of wearing shorts in public if I want to.

But... I still don't want to. At least not most of the time. What does that mean? Does that mean that "permission" was never really given? Or never fully received? Permission with caveats?

Does it matter if I only feel comfortable viewing and posting pictures of my fat body on Instagram but not in real life?

That's a bit of a harsh critique. In many ways, Instagram has shown me other pathways of being fat in the world, the "real" world, that don't just involve hating myself or wishing myself smaller or thinner. Through Instagram I've gained fat community I can support (whatever that means) other fat folks.

But I still don't want to wear shorts in public.