

From the Nutritionist

Andrea Hart, RDN, CDN



Each February, SUNY Cortland celebrates Body Appreciation Week. The 2014 theme is, “Appreciate the Pieces of Your Puzzle.” What are the talents, interests, and unique characteristics that make you an individual? No matter what time of year it is, consider taking some time to think about the pieces of your puzzle.

Are you an artist? Writer? Musician? Are you great at math or science? Are you a history buff? Do you speak another language? Are you loyal, compassionate, or generous? Do you feel at home in a big city, or do you prefer the country? Do you love basketball, running, bowling, yoga, or

dancing? Is your hair thick or fine, curly or straight? Are you muscular, slender, or curvaceous? You are unique. There is nobody exactly like you. You have talents, interests, abilities and features that are yours alone. Don’t waste time or energy putting yourself down or comparing yourself to others. If you have a hard time appreciating yourself, try the following suggestions:

- Surround yourself with positive people who like you for who you are and make you feel good about yourself.
- Let go of perfectionism. Nobody is perfect! Learn to accept yourself, flaws and all.
- Respect your body – don’t insult it! Treat yourself as you treat others, and speak kindly to yourself.
- Create a gratitude list or journal. Write down the things you appreciate about your body and mind, and list the people and things you’re thankful for in your life. Add to it often.
- Understand that one’s health status cannot be determined from the outside. Focus on behaviors to improve your health, not to be a certain size or weight.
- Don’t let concerns about your body hold you back from participating in activities you enjoy! Appreciate all the amazing things your body can do instead of focusing on the number on the scale or the size of your clothes.
- Don’t punish yourself for overeating or for weighing more than you want by overdoing strenuous exercise. Instead, exercise for enjoyment and to improve your health.
- Practice mindful eating. Tune in to your body’s hunger and fullness cues, and respect them – eat when you’re hungry, stop when you’re full. Let go of feelings of guilt about food choices you make.
- Strict diets that deprive you of all the foods you enjoy and the energy you need don’t work in the long run. Instead, nourish your body with a balanced eating plan that provides the nutrients and energy your body needs – while also allowing room for some “soul” food.
- Make time for rest and relaxation, and be patient with your body when it needs time to heal.

Andrea Hart, registered dietitian nutritionist and New York State-certified dietitian/nutritionist, is available for free, confidential, one-on-one counseling and as a speaker or facilitator for campus groups, panels or classes.

Contact Andrea: andrea.hart@cortland.edu or call 607-753-5773 with questions or to set up an appointment. Or stop by her office, first floor, Neubig Hall, across from the Neubig Dining cashier.