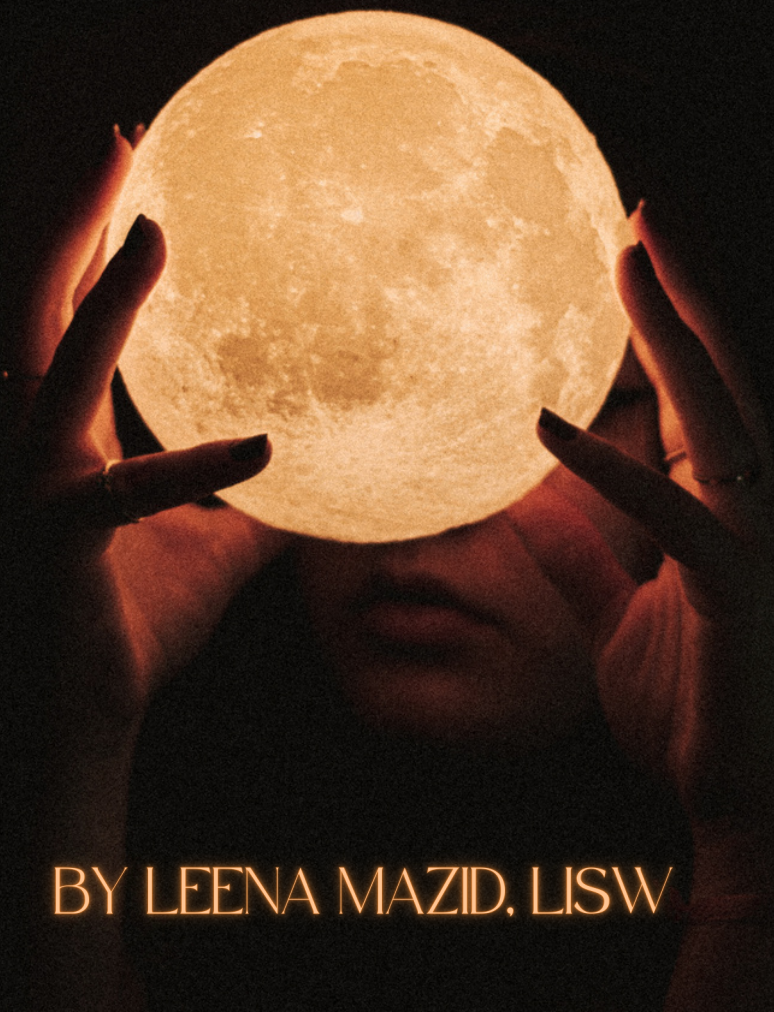


RECLAIMING THE BODY

Dismantling Patriarchy.
Rebuilding Body Trust.



BY LEENA MAZID, LISW

Disclaimer

This e-book is intended for educational and supportive purposes only. It does not replace medical or psychological treatment. Eating disorders are serious conditions; Please seek support from licensed professionals when needed.

Introduction

Eating disorders are often framed as individual problems, but they do not exist in isolation.

They emerge within a culture that:

- Equates thinness with worth
- Moralizes food and bodies
- Profits from self-doubt

Writers like Naomi Wolf and Susie Orbach argue that beauty standards function as systems of control, shaping how women experience their bodies.

This book offers a different path:

- From control → trust
- From shame → compassion
- From body obsession → embodiment
- From isolation → collective liberation

How to Use This Book

This is an 8-part self-guided journey. Each chapter includes:

- Psychoeducation (evidence-based)
- Reflection prompts
- Practical exercises
- Integration practices

Move at your own pace. You do not need to “complete” this perfectly.

Chapter 1

Eating Disorders in a Patriarchal Culture

Core Insight

Your relationship with your body was shaped long before you were aware of it.

Beauty ideals are not neutral—they are influenced by patriarchy, capitalism, and social power.

Key Concepts

- The thin ideal as social currency
- Body control as gender control
- Cultural normalization of disordered eating

Reflection Exercise: Body Message Timeline

Write about:

- Your earliest memory of body awareness
- Messages about “good” vs “bad” bodies
- Who influenced these beliefs

Journal Prompt

When did your
body first feel like a
problem to solve?

Chapter 2

The Science and Myths of Body Weight

Weight is not a reliable indicator of health.

The Health at Every Size (HAES) framework, developed by Linda Bacon, emphasizes:

- Body diversity
- Behavior-based health
- Weight stigma reduction

Evidence-Based Points:

- Weight stigma increases stress and health risk
- BMI is a limited and flawed tool
- Bodies have natural diversity in size and metabolism

Exercise: Belief Audit

Write your beliefs about:

- "Healthy weight"
- BMI
- Dieting

Then challenge them:

Where did these beliefs come from?

Chapter 3

Diet Culture as Social Control

Core Insight

Diet culture thrives on making you feel inadequate.

Researchers like Christy Harrison describe it as a system that:

- Moralizes food
- Equates thinness with virtue
- Generates profit through insecurity

Reflection

How much time, energy, and money have you spent trying to change your body?

Exercise:

Spot the Messaging

Track messages you encounter about:

- Food rules
- Body ideals
- “Wellness”

Chapter 4

Rebuilding Trust with Food

Core Insight

Your body already knows how to regulate itself.

Intuitive Eating, developed by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch, offers a framework for reconnecting with internal cues.

Core Principles

- Reject diet mentality
- Honor hunger
- Make peace with food
- Respect fullness
- Discover satisfaction

Practice: Mindful Eating

Choose one food. Eat
slowly and notice:

- Taste
- Texture
- Hunger before and
after

Journal Prompt

What would change if
no foods were
“forbidden”?

Chapter 5

Healing Body Image

Core Insight

Body image is socially constructed, not innate.

Psychologist Renee Engeln describes self-objectification:

Seeing your body from the outside instead of experiencing it from within.

Shift the Goal

Not “love your body”
→ but relate to your body differently

Practice: Body Neutrality

Instead of
appearance:
Focus on function.

Exercise: Body Gratitude

Write 10 things your body
allows you to do.

Chapter 6

Media Literacy and Resistance

Core Insight

Media shapes perception—often invisibly.

Research shows exposure to idealized images increases body dissatisfaction.

Sociologist Sabrina Strings highlights that fatphobia is rooted in racism and colonial history.

Practice: Media Audit

For one week:

- Notice how content makes you feel
- Unfollow triggering accounts
- Add body-diverse voices

Reflection

What narratives
about bodies
are you
consuming
daily?

Chapter 7

Embodiment and Trauma-Informed Healing

Evidence-Based Approaches

- Somatic awareness
- Gentle movement
- Breath regulation
- Trauma-informed practices

Practice: Body Scan

**Spend 5 minutes noticing
sensations:
No judgment. Just
awareness.**

Grounding Exercise

Name:

- **5 things you see**
- **4 things you feel**
- **3 things you hear**

Chapter 8

Body Liberation and Collective Healing

Core Insight

Your healing is both personal
and political.

Activists like Virgie Tovar and
Sonya Renee Taylor emphasize:
Body liberation requires cultural
change, not just individual
effort.

Key Ideas

- Fat liberation
- Challenging weight stigma
- Community care

Final Exercise: Liberation Manifesto

Write your own declaration:

- What beliefs are you releasing?
- What does freedom in your body mean?
- How will you relate to your body moving forward?

Progress Reflection

Ask yourself:

- What has shifted in how I think about my body?
- What feels harder?
- What feels more freeing?

Closing Reflection

Healing is not linear.

You are not trying to become a “perfect” eater or a “confident” person.

You are learning to:

- Listen
- Question
- Resist
- Reconnect

Your body is
not the
problem.