

## Feeling Good about the Way You Look: A Program for Overcoming Body Image Problems

By Sabine Wilhelm PhD

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In a society where a blemish or “bad hair” can ruin an otherwise perfect day and airbrushed abs dominate the magazine rack, many of us feel ashamed of our bodies. If dissatisfaction with your looks is a distressing preoccupation, this compassionate book offers a way to break free from the mirror. Harvard psychologist Sabine Wilhelm leads you through a step-by-step program that helps you fight the urge to spend hours “fixing” your skin and hair, working out, or shopping for flattering clothes. Reality-check exercises based on cognitive-behavioral therapy demonstrate how to identify unfounded beliefs about your appearance. Once you understand the negative thoughts and feelings that distort your self-image, you’ll be able to shed lengthy grooming rituals and overcome the embarrassment that keeps you from enjoying life. With Dr. Wilhelm’s expert guidance, you’ll learn to replace self-doubt and insecurity with confidence and a positive outlook. Whether you’ve spent thousands on plastic surgery or avoid trips to the beach, dating, or socializing, you owe yourself this opportunity to make peace with your looks. If you or someone you care about is struggling with a body image problem, effective care is finally at hand.

Health care professionals, see also the related treatment manual: *Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Body Dysmorphic Disorder*.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Millions of people suffer from body image concerns. Some are paralyzed by them. Here, Dr. Sabine Wilhelm offers a systematic, scientifically based program of self-treatment. For many, this will be a welcome alternative to expensive professional therapy."--Harrison G. Pope Jr., MD, Harvard Medical School; coauthor of *The Adonis Complex*

"Dr. Wilhelm, one of the few experts on the treatment of body dysmorphic disorder (BDD), has written a landmark book for the millions who suffer from this under-recognized and often disabling illness. For those struggling to overcome the torment of BDD, this book offers invaluable guidance and hope."--Katharine A. Phillips, MD, author of *Understanding Body Dysmorphic Disorder*

"Dr. Wilhelm is one of the world's experts in body image and a pioneer in the treatment of body image disturbance through cognitive-behavioral therapy. This is an authoritative, lucid, wise, and engaging book. More than that, it is an important book--it will change lives. If you are constrained by anxiety and shame about your appearance, Dr. Wilhelm maps out the road to freedom--to feeling truly and authentically good about the way you look."--Nancy Etcoff, PhD, Harvard Medical School; author of *Survival of the Prettiest*

"As someone who experienced body dysmorphic disorder (BDD), when you're at your lowest, you really believe you will never have a normal life...This book can and will help many people. I wish there had been a book like this when I was at my lowest points!"--LG, Massachusetts

"Until now, very little self-help material was available on body dysmorphic disorder, a distressing condition that can lead sufferers to depression, unnecessary cosmetic surgery, and even suicide. If you are struggling with body image problems or care for someone who is, this excellent book offers very helpful guidance."--David Veale, MD, London, UK

"Wilhelm offers step-by-step guidelines to the BDD reader for a self-administered cognitive-behavioral treatment program....Wilhelm also provides a motivational chapter designed to move the client from the preparation stage to the action stage....A useful self-help guide for the highly motivated individual with BDD. This book can also be used as a resource for clinicians who want to learn more about BDD or for clinicians and graduate students who are looking for a BDD manual for individual or group therapy."  
(*PsycCRITIQUES* 2006-06-17)

"Step-by-step guidelines can help you transform both your thinking and your behaviors concerning your appearance."  
(*Today's Diet and Nutrition* 2006-06-17)

"Wilhelm explains the nature of [BDD] and provides strategies and encouragement for overcoming distress. She offers techniques for controlling excessive appearance rituals and for dealing with social situations head-on. Most books on this subject have been geared toward women, but Wilhelm focuses on both genders. Useful for those who want to help themselves or their loved ones."  
(*Library Journal* 2006-06-17)

## About the Author

Sabine Wilhelm, PhD, is Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Chief of Psychology and Director of the Obsessive–Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Related Disorders Program at Massachusetts General Hospital. She is Vice Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board of the International OCD Foundation, serves on the Scientific Council of the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, and is on the editorial boards of eight journals. Dr. Wilhelm's clinical work and research focus on body dysmorphic disorder, OCD, and tic disorders. She is the author of more than 200 articles and book chapters and several books, including the self-help guide *Feeling Good about the Way You Look: A Program for Overcoming Body Image Problems*, which was cited as a Self-Help Book of Merit by the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT). She is a Fellow of ABCT and the Association for Psychological Science.

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