

Discussion Questions for *This is Big* by Marisa Meltzer

1. In THIS IS BIG, Marisa writes, “My unruly body was a family concern, about which anyone was invited to discuss.” Why do our families and more broadly as a society do we feel entitled to pass judgment on the bodies of people who are overweight more so than others?
2. Marisa observes, “Weight Watchers is a weight loss company. It’s not their job to make living in a fat body easier. In fact, it’s good for business if we remain frustrated.” Do you think self-acceptance is the only antidote to dieting culture?
3. Do you feel welcome and included by the body positivity movement or do you share similar apprehensions as Marisa?
4. Jean defined success as losing weight and keeping it off while Marisa is looking to learn to live in her body and be seen for more than her weight. Which outlook feels most like your own?
5. Marisa can’t help but to look at the size of Emily Blunt’s jean when interviewing her. Do you find the need to compare yourself to those around and how does it impact the way you see your own body?
6. What aspects of Jean’s career surprised you? Did you find her success inspiring?
7. In what ways do you think gender shaped the trajectory of Jean’s career?
8. Jean’s notoriety and following would have challenged that Martha Stewart or Gwyneth Paltrow today. Why, and how, do you think such a successful, trailblazing entrepreneur has been forgotten?

Bonus quarantine question: The success of Weight Watchers is largely due to the community and support system fostered by the program’s weekly meetings. In this current moment of self-isolation, how do you think people’s relationships with food, weight, and dieting have changed?