

Louis CK Stated The Obvious About The Fat Lady – And It Was Awesome

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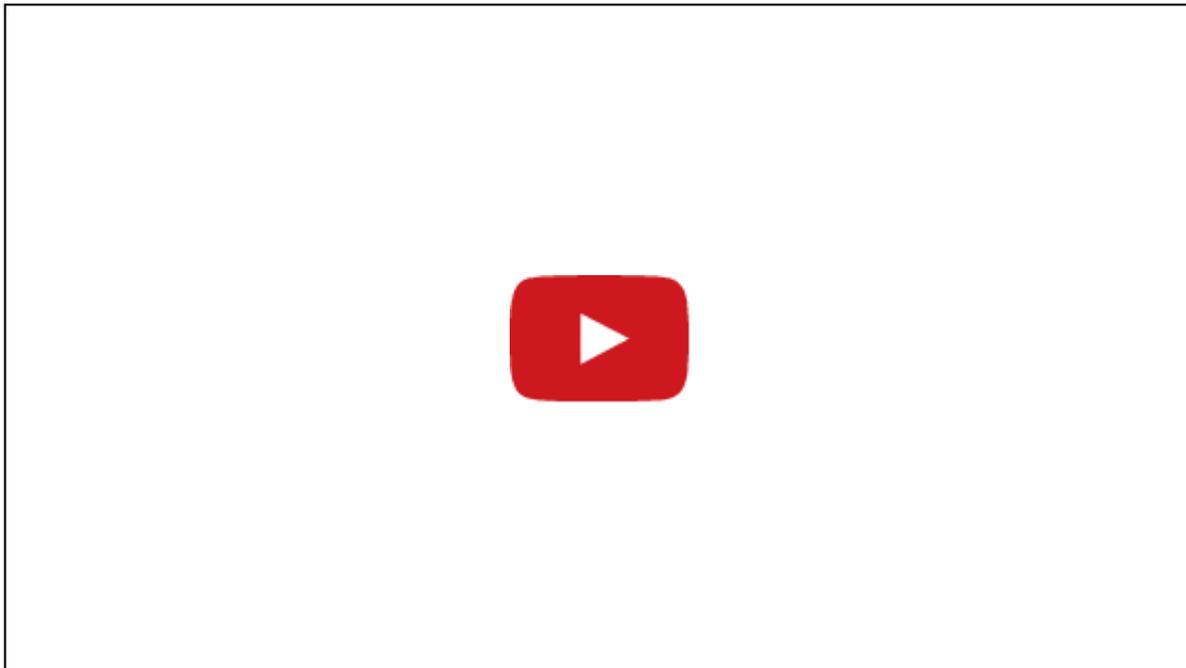
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“So Did The Fat Lady”

By now you’ve probably seen the clip, or at least heard about it. You know, THE CLIP. The [glorious \(http://jezebel.com/louis-c-k-s-rant-on-fat-girls-is-absolutely-magnificent-1575653738\)](http://jezebel.com/louis-c-k-s-rant-on-fat-girls-is-absolutely-magnificent-1575653738) rant that Louis CK wrote for Sarah Baker’s character Vanessa was searing, acute, brilliant. Vanessa is a cute, fun, self-proclaimed fat girl as depicted in a LOUIE episode titled, “So Did The Fat Lady”. It’s a 7-minute segment, mostly in monologue with just



occasional interjections from Louie, all about how much it just plain sucks to weigh more than society deems acceptable. One thing that was so great about it was that nothing here was new information to those of us who live in bodies larger than the “standard”- yet it’s never, ever, ever said so publicly. Here it is in case you haven’t seen it, or want to see it again (the swearing makes it NSFW):



This speech has really struck a nerve (<http://www.cnn.com/2014/05/14/showbiz/tv/louis-ck-fat-girl/>) with people. Because it shows a fat woman saying what all fat women already know, but aren’t supposed to talk about in front of anyone besides other fat women. It acknowledges that we’re considered somehow less than other people (ironic!), simply because our bodies are bigger than other people’s bodies. Society views us as less deserving of love, affection, and respect than thinner people. We get ignored when trying to start conversations with members of the opposite sex. We get overlooked for jobs, raises and promotions. It’s so pervasive that we start to think that we deserve this

treatment. Of course it's our fault – “everyone” says so. And so we put up with lousy jobs and friends and significant others who don't treat us as well as they should. Because we don't deserve any better.

Except that we do deserve better.

My favorite line in the whole speech comes at the two minute mark: “I'm going to go ahead and say it – it's your fault.” There are so many great lines before and after it, that it's easy to miss this one. I had to watch the clip several times before it registered. But it's magnificent. The crappy way that we're treated IS NOT our fault – the blame lays at the feet of other people. It's all on them. How they seem to be afraid that we'll get our fat cooties on them, or that it's contagious, or that we're only good for making them look thin in comparison. We're treated badly because we're fat, and Louie, through the character of Vanessa, rejects the commonly accepted belief that it's our own fault. How often do we think that certain people would treat us better if only we were thinner? But the truth is that they won't because those people are jerks who will always find some reason to judge us and find us lacking. It's not us – it's them. But it's not just about the size of our body. You could find 100 women who all weigh the same, and the only thing they'll have in common is their weight. They come in all shapes, colors, backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, education levels, regions...Yet in modern American society, there's a heap of assumptions that come with weighing too much: we're allegedly unhealthy, stupid, probably poor, and definitely lazy. The tech industry publication Venture Beat just today used a picture of a fat guy slumped on the couch like Jabba the Hutt to illustrate an [article about how lazy people are great customers](http://venturebeat.com/2014/05/18/uber-has-taught-us-that-lazy-people-are-the-best-customers/) (<http://venturebeat.com/2014/05/18/uber-has-taught-us-that-lazy-people-are-the-best-customers/>) – and of course if you want an picture of a lazy person, you go with the fattie. Even though there are skinny couch potatoes, and fat athletes (<http://fiercefatties.com/2012/08/03/olympians-they-come-in-all-shapes-and-sizes/>). The whole Louie rant starts because he tries to tell her

that she's not fat. She's super disappointed that he would insult her intelligence that way. She has a mirror. She's not blind or stupid. She knows she's fat. More than that, there's so much packed into those three little words, "You're not fat." It also means, "Being fat is the worst thing you could possibly be and how could I say something so mean to you?" It also means, "I see you as a complete human being, so I can't lump you in with all the other fat people I think bad things about." It means, "You're not stupid and lazy – and I haven't thought this through well enough to realize that that's not what 'fat' means." The episode ends with Louis acknowledging that Vanessa is, in fact, attractive. That he may actually belong with her. He holds her hand, they walk down the boardwalk together, and he tells her a joke, the punchline of which is, "So did the fat lady". And it's beautiful, and empowering, and funny, and poignant. Do I think this episode is a game changer, and that Louie will start dating Vanessa? Of course not. This show is so unconcerned with continuity that F. Murray Abraham has played three different characters, and Louie has a black ex-wife and children who are clearly not mixed race. We may see Vanessa again, or we may not. This episode isn't even going to change how we're treated. But it has brought the issue to the attention of people who need to think about it before they can start treating all us fat ladies better. But first, we need to stop drinking the fat-hating Kool Aid, demand better treatment from those around us, and maybe most importantly: treat ourselves better too.

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