

EMBRACING YOUR BEAUTY

A Journey from Self-Critique to Self-Confidence



I remember the day my grandmother took me shopping for my first “grown-up” dress.

I was just 14, awkward and unsure of myself, my body, and my place in the world. I remember standing in front of the mirror, tugging at the fabric, trying to hide the parts of myself I didn't like. My grandmother, a woman of quiet strength and timeless beauty, saw the struggle in my eyes. She gently turned me towards the mirror and said, “Look at yourself, truly look. You are more beautiful than you know. Your beauty isn't just in your face or your figure; it's in the way you carry yourself, in the kindness in your eyes, in the strength of your heart. You must see it, because one day the world will, too.”

As the years went by, I kept her words with me, but like so many women, I struggled to believe them. Every time I looked in the mirror, I saw the flaws, the imperfections, the things that weren't quite “right.” I never felt beautiful, no matter what anyone said. It wasn't until much later, long after she had passed, that her words truly sunk in. I stumbled upon an old photograph of us from that day—me in that dress, and her, standing beside me with the proudest smile. It hit me all at once: she had seen my beauty long before I did, and she had been trying to teach me to see it, too.

That realization was like a floodgate opening. All the moments I had spent criticizing myself, all the times I had dismissed compliments or tried to shrink away from attention, they suddenly felt so small, so insignificant. In that moment, I finally understood what she had been trying to tell me all those years ago: true beauty comes from within, and it's our own belief in it that makes it shine.

It was a lesson learned too late, perhaps, but one that I carry with me now every day. And now, as I look in the mirror, I try to see myself as she did—with love, with acceptance, and with the knowledge that beauty isn't about perfection, but about embracing who you are, flaws and all.

EMBRACING YOUR BEAUTY

A Journey from Self-Critique to Self-Confidence

The Perception of Beauty: A Powerful Experiment

I watched a video from Dove, that dives into the stark contrast between how women perceive themselves and how others see them. An FBI sketch artist asked women to describe themselves while he drew their portraits, sight unseen. Later, he asked strangers to describe the same women, creating a second set of sketches. The results were nothing short of astonishing. The self-described sketches were often distorted, revealing insecurities and flaws that didn't exist. In contrast, the sketches based on descriptions from strangers were not only more accurate but also undeniably more beautiful.

And that's the crux of the matter, isn't it? We all long to be lovely, yet when we look in the mirror, all we see are our "flaws." We compare ourselves to others, assuming they set the standard for perfection. So when someone compliments us, we blush, mumble a quick "thanks," and immediately downplay it, thinking they're just being polite. We convince ourselves that the compliment is a fluke and not a reflection of our true selves.

But why? Why do we struggle to see our own beauty? And why are we sometimes afraid to shine, even when we know we look good?

The Wisdom of Marianne Williamson: A Call to Shine

I'll leave you with these powerful words from Marianne Williamson, which perfectly encapsulate this message:

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves: Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that others won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine, as children do.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."



EMBRACING YOUR BEAUTY

A Journey from Self-Critique to Self-Confidence

Owning Your Beauty: Shine Without Apology

As I've grown older, I've made it a priority to shine in a natural and authentic way every day. I choose colors that flatter my skin tone, wear styles that enhance my figure, and embrace a wardrobe that reflects my personality and lifestyle. The result? I'm often told I look great—even by strangers who go out of their way to let me know. And let's be honest, that kind of attention feels amazing. I always respond with a gracious thank you, and we part ways with lighter spirits, knowing we've made each other's day just a little bit brighter.

It saddens me when I see women shy away from compliments as if being noticed is something to be ashamed of or as if they're unworthy of looking good. Some women even fear that dressing up might make others feel inferior. But here's the thing: you are not responsible for how others feel about your appearance.

If someone feels uncomfortable because they didn't put in the same effort, that's on them—not you. Instead of downplaying your potential, I hope your confidence encourages them to step up their game. After all, when we shine together, we create a world filled with more beauty.

So, ladies, it's time to shine unapologetically. The world needs more beauty to admire and inspire. Your radiance might just be the pick-me-up someone needs in a world that often feels heavy with negativity.

Tips for Embracing Your True Beauty:

Know Your Fit: For those with a fuller bust, look for tops and dresses with darts that provide a flattering fit. Darts should run from the side seam to each nipple or from each nipple down the front.

We Are Our Own Worst Critics: Research shows that when people are asked to rate their appearance on a scale of 1 to 10, others consistently score them at least 2 points higher.

Find Your 'Sweet Spot' Neckline: Measure the length of your face from hairline to chin. Then measure the same distance from the tip of your chin down your chest—that's your ideal neckline depth.

Prioritize Yourself: It's easy to have high expectations of others, but the real work begins with improving ourselves.

Remember: Appropriateness and respect are the cornerstones of effective appearance management. Embrace your beauty, shine confidently, and let the world see you as the radiant being you are.

