

Cultivating Confidence in Your Unique Body

By: Amanda Winder

During the Christmas holidays, I received an unwanted present: an extra five pounds. Though I would like to re-gift this present, weight is not one that I can wrap up and give away. Although I run everyday, I knew the extra holiday cheer would catch up with me soon. I have to admit I was a little disappointed in myself at first, but only because I was going to have lose what I gained. The great part is I am confident in my body now. Before I used to be ashamed of the way I looked, or fear others were making snide comments about me. I didn't own my body. My lack of confidence continuously showed when I entered a room or posed for a picture.

Cultivating confidence in my body wasn't easy. After losing weight, it took me about a solid year to look at myself in the mirror and be satisfied with the person that was staring back. I lacked self-assurance because I constantly compared myself to other girl's beauty, telling myself, "If I only looked more like her." Last year, I made a decision to tell myself, "I am beautiful and I am unique." The more I told myself that, the more I believed what I was saying.

As young women, it is very important that we own our bodies. Owning our bodies means not caring what others might think or say about us. We must be confident in what we see in the mirror, and not envy someone else's good fortune. I still have days when I feel insecure with myself, but then I am reminded to fight back. I tell myself, "Amanda, you must own your body. No one else has a body just like yours. It is unique to you." I have to remind myself how hard I worked in cultivating what I have now.

Reminding myself of my personal beauty helps me see the truth. Comparing myself to another girl will do me no good. I will never be her and she will never be me. Sure we can improve our beauty. We can lose and gain weight, but, for the most part, I will always look like Amanda. It is important for me to be comfortable in my own skin. The more comfortable I become, the more my confidence grows.

Now, when I enter a room or pose for a picture, I think, "Amanda, you are beautiful. There will never be anyone like you. Hold your head high and be the best you, you can be." When I tell myself this, I gain a sense of confidence. It's almost like a bolt of energy surges through my veins. In those moments, I become content with who I am and my body.

Personally, I believe every girl is beautiful. When I pass someone I've never seen before, I see beauty in him or her. I don't exactly know why I see people this way, but I love it. Sometimes I'll say, "Wow, that girl is gorgeous!" Most of the time, friends disagree with my comments because they do not see what I do. In a culture consumed with body image, I think it is important to see beauty in others. It reminds me that everyone is unique and valuable.

As young women, we must have an attitude of confidence that reminds us we are rare. One quote I keep close to my heart says, "Always act like you are wearing an invisible crown." After gaining five pounds, I definitely had to do this. It was my decision to disregard what others might think and say. Most importantly, I had to remain confident by not allowing my weight to affect how I view myself. Today, I want to encourage you to do the same. When you feel insecure, inadequate, or unattractive, imagine yourself as the most beautiful young woman in the room. Enter a room with the assurance that you are wearing an invisible crown of confidence. Remind yourself that your best qualities are unique to you, and being you is what you do well.