

Webpage post- *How yoga has taught me to love my body*

Having been in the beauty industry for over 25 years, I'm not sure anyone is completely immune from body issues.

Over the years however my practice of yoga has taught me and continues to teach me to love and appreciate my body.

When I was younger I practiced gymnastics and high jump, I felt strong and limber. I loved to run, but when I no longer had the hours to spend on my fitness due to long working hours on my feet, I started to suffer with poor body image due to the changes in my body, and a self loathe that still surprises me today.

I went from gorging myself to fasting. I took diuretics and laxatives all to lose and maintain my weight, or so I thought. When this wasn't working for me, I hit the gym and became a gym junkie,(not in a healthy way) I ran for miles, my shin splints were excruciating and the mental torture at the thought of missing a day of a punishing workout was at times too much to bare.

It took getting sick, Ross River Virus twice and ending up with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, that my yoga practice paved the way in seeing myself in a new light, My perspective started to change in the way I saw things outwardly and inwardly.

The love for self is REAL beauty, it's how we feel!

I have been blessed and truly honoured, to have shared moments with terminally ill clients, particularly the ladies in where they call me to their homes or in hospital to do their hair for the last time, sometimes hours or a day or two before they pass away. When I have finished, you can see even in their discomfort they *feel* beautiful. Beauty is a feeling, it's on the inside.

I have worked with people with long thick hair, no hair, large bodies, thin bodies, bodies that are fluid in movement and bodies with hardly any movement at all. I find myself in awe of these people. For they love their bodies and are grateful for how they move, no matter how small the movements are. It shows too! They have an energy about them. They are beautiful and I admire them, they have been great teachers and have taught me gratitude for not only my own body but for life itself.

I may not look like the airbrushed model in the magazines that I aspired dangerously to be like when I was younger and was damaging my body along the way trying. I am now however more than comfortable in my own body and the magazine models and yes even the yoga magazines no longer trigger the dismay and insecurity in my mind that they used to.

I feel comfortable and confident in dressing the way that expresses who I am, I eat for joy, I no longer feel guilt over the food I eat. While yes, I am strict in my food choices, as this discipline enables me to have freedom, if I feel like having a second serve I will, or a treat I will. I celebrate and enjoy the flavours and am more than happy to linger over a beautiful meal with family and friends.

Yoga has taught me to fall in love with life and by falling in love with life my body and mind are more than happy to fall into that alignment also.

When I fell in love with life my body responded, the way I ate, moved, what I read, the way I looked. Gratitude!

The practice of gratitude taught me to appreciate the strength of my body. After a few years of illness and my body not responding to build strength and get well, it was gratitude through yoga practice that opened the flood gates to heal, get strong and fall in love with my body.

And yes, absolutely NO sign of illness or fatigue AT ALL!! You can move on!

Enjoy your body! Celebrate it! It's yours for the entirety of this life!

Gratitude and courage!

Anna xx