



Allure Article – for Sunday, May 2009

Appreciate Your “Skin Suit”

I just took a brisk walk in my neighborhood. I am fascinated by how cooperative my body always is with me. When I say, “It’s time for a walk,” my body gets up and starts moving! When I decide that I want to sit with some friends and relax, my body is willing to do that too.

So often we take our bodies for granted. All too often we disrespect our bodies with our inattention or self-critical comments: “You are too fat. You are too skinny. You aren’t pretty enough. You aren’t fast enough. You aren’t athletic enough. Your chin is too pointy. Your hips are too wide. You are too hairy.” The body hears all these remarks and yet continues to function faithfully. What patient bodies we have tolerating so much neglect and negativity!

A good friend of mine often refers to her body as a “skin suit.” I like her terminology. She recently told me she can picture an invisible zipper in her skin suit. One day, when her time here is done, she will unzip the suit and her light-hearted, eternal spirit will move on.

I believe that each of us, before we arrived on planet Earth, chose our body with careful consideration. You wanted this particular skin suit to help you fulfill your purpose on this journey. But, when we get here to Earth, we forget. As we hear others criticizing their bodies and ours, we become judgmental too.

Consider how much of your thinking time you give to self-criticism. Let’s be real here. Have you found yourself changing your shirt or pants because you don’t like the way you look in your clothes? Do you feel bad for enjoying food because you think your body is too big? As you interact with someone of the opposite sex, are you self-conscious, wondering if they will be attracted to a body that you find “just not good enough”?

I had a childhood friend who thought she felt she looked like a monster. She believed her nose was too big because her father had often teased her about it. As I looked at her, I saw a woman with a beautiful face. I would never have noticed her nose had she not pointed it out. It wasn’t a tiny nose but it certainly wasn’t too big.

Many of my friends, family members and clients feel self-conscious about one body feature or another. It is a source of great misery. I have come to see that the statement, “There is nothing new under the sun” is absolutely true. I have to laugh at myself and to myself – “what is going on here? Isn’t it crazy that all of us loathe our appearance and think we don’t measure up?”

Recently, I thought to myself, “Wait a minute! This seems like a cosmic joke!” Each of us is trying to strut our stuff and glam ourselves up so we look good but underneath the fashionable clothes and makeup we ALL feel “less than” the others. Even the models in the magazines think their bodies aren’t good enough. If pretty people don’t find themselves pretty, than how can anyone? I think that the

Eternal Source must look down on us with compassion seeing the unnecessary suffering that comes with our discontent.

It's time for each of us to wake up and see that we have wonderful bodies!

What do we use our bodies for? They enable us to navigate and enjoy the world around us. Through our body we experience delightful fragrances and pungent odors. We experience the softness of a child's hand and the needles of a cactus. We see the myriad blues of the sky and the greens and browns of the landscape. We enjoy sweet plantains and savory fish stew. We rejoice at the sight of our loved ones and greet them with hugs and kind words.

What remarkable things our bodies are enabling us to experience with very little awareness on our part!

Take a new look at your body. First, look into your own eyes and sense your eternal spirit. This is the True You. Your spirit is using this body to experience life on Earth. For a moment put aside your complaints about your appearance. Instead, look at the incredible features your body is equipped with. Every part is purposeful and all are perfectly integrated with one another.

Here are a few things that I appreciate about my body. My head pivots flexibly allowing my eyes to take in millions of images each day. My ears allow me to hear and my lips, mouth and tongue all work together so that I can speak utterances that other people can understand. My heart beats without me telling it to. My lungs take in air all day long and I never give breathing a thought! When I want to pick something up, my brain coordinates with my arms and hands and it happens effortlessly. Isn't this awesome?

This week I invite you to write your body a letter of appreciation. Start your letter with, "Dear Body, I thank you for...." Then, begin to list as many positive and supportive ways your body faithfully serves your spirit day-by-day. Try to gain a new appreciation of this magnificent mechanism you've been given.

I have grown to adore my body. I am learning to accept my appearance and to look in the mirror with kindness. Yes, I'm 35 now and I understand that with time wrinkles will come, bags will appear under my eyes, and parts will begin to sag and slow down. What does that matter anyway? My body will continue to help me complete my purpose!

When I am put in a casket someday my skin suit will be left here as I go onto my galactic journey to eternity. It won't have mattered that I was 10 or 15 pounds heavier than I wanted to be. It will really not be important that I didn't look like the models in the magazines.

Consider the viewpoint of Queen Latifah, "For me, it might sound cliché, but beauty for me really does start on the inside. It's like a state of mind, a state of love if you will. Then, whatever you can do on the outside is all like a bonus."

If you would like to hear more ideas on how to see yourself with new eyes, please check out my inspirational video clips shown each Friday morning at 7:35 a.m. on Today on STV (on both Silverbird TV and DSTV.) If you can't catch them on TV, you can see them on www.youtube.com. Just search by my name. You may even want to join me on Facebook!

Food For Thought

"Our self image and our habits tend to go together. Change one and you will automatically change the other."

-- Dr. Maxwell Maltz

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Patricia Omoqui is an internationally recognized inspirational speaker, life coach and writer. Patricia's mission in life is to inspire people to move beyond fear so they can reach their full potential.

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