

Life develops what it demands.

*In the midst of winter I found within me an invincible summer – Camus*

I spent a large portion of my 'younger' years hating my body. Waring with myself, denying my body's natural forms, wishing it was other than it was, being offended by my big legs and broad shoulders, wishing my bum was flatter, desperate for thin-ness instead of strong-ness, feminity instead of a tomboy-ity. At school my friends told me I was 'big-boned' – I hated them for this. I remember always standing along the outside edges of my feet, trying to achieve that gap between the tops of the legs that so many slim girls had...all I managed to do was wear-out the sides of my shoes and look self-conscious; I'm pretty sure no one else noticed any 'slimmer-ness' in me...at least no one mentioned that artificially accomplished gap at the tops of my legs that I worked so hard to achieve...but I stuck with it - for decades; in fact, every so often now, I catch myself unconsciously tipping the outside edges of my feet...I do this when I'm body conscious and feeling that 'less-than-ness' that still overwhelms me from time to time.

Some days I want to look like just like Pink, other days I would give up everything to look like Elle McPherson, on other days still I wish I was any girl with a gap at the top of her legs (often when I'm pre-menstrual), and on yet other days I am simply grateful to be who I am (usually just after my period)...I know all this might sound terribly shallow, and in many ways it is, but it's my story, it's my experience, it's my 'dirty-laundry' and unfortunately I am not alone in this dysfunctional relationship with my physical-body...

In addition to my body phobias and discomforts, I have spent enormous amounts of energy and focus trying to be 'THE BEST'. The best athlete, the best daughter, the best partner, the best friend, the best student, the best manager, the best fire fighter, the best trainer, the best, the best, the best...it has been an exhausting journey!

This is destination living to the extreme...it's a recipe for disappointment, disillusionment, despair and in my case depression...

During many, many years of my depression, disappointment and despair I over-ate, over-drunk, over-spent, over-analysed, over-committed, over-delivered, over-trained, over-did so many things. The truth was that I simply couldn't live up to my own expectations, so I embarked on path of self-destruction and self-abuse...slow, insidious, and thorough. My destructive behaviour numbed me to the unacceptable reality of my life – it bridged the gap (another kind of gap) between who I was and who I demanded myself to be.

Over the last 4 decades I have brought many deep, dark ills upon myself and others...thankfully, and only in the fullness of time, these ills have turned out to be the adversities that have become my blessings, the adversities that have grown my inner strength and character...sometimes you just have to play a tough hand – there are always tougher hands than our own being dealt...

Today I know that the thing that makes the difference in the end is doing the best that you can, with the hand you are dealt, in the place that you are, with the tools that you have... and then doing better. I just didn't know that before.

I have always done the best that I could, which has often been less than my best intentions would have me do, however today, I am at peace in that knowledge, and I accept myself.

*Through adversity we find strength; through sickness we recognise the value of health; through evil the value of good; through hunger the value of food; through exertion the value of rest - Greek saying*

It's taken me 39.5 years to realise, and then to accept, that there will always be someone better, faster, prettier, smarter, older, younger, slimmer, stronger than me...I am not in competition with my fellow human beings anymore...I am in compassion with them.