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MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

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Dressing our four young sons alike seemed sensible at the time. It made clothes shopping easier, for one, and because they were brothers with similar builds and complexions, they looked good in the same clothes. At home, it gave a sense of order, however superficial, to a household with four little boys in perpetual motion, and in public it highlighted what we were sure was the most adorable set of kids ever.

On a deeper level, it appealed to our sense of equity. We didn't love one above the others, and had determined to never say or do anything that might cause them to think otherwise; we would treat them impartially in all things, big and small.

But as soon as they got old enough to make more of their own choices, coordinated clothes were out. As their individual needs changed and became more diverse, we found we continually needed to adapt and change how we gave each one our love and support. We still didn't love one more or less than the others, but we couldn't always treat them the same.

Now that those boys are grown men, in many respects they could hardly be more different from one another. Our early attempts to establish uniformity now seem pure folly, and I thank God for giving each of them the sense to pursue his own interests, develop his own skills, and become his own person.

Each probably has some things that he would like to change about himself—there's always room for improvement—but I love them dearly just as they are.

We often compare ourselves unfavorably with others, or we fuss over something about ourselves that we don't like, but all the while we are loved just the way we are. If something needs to change, of course, it's good to try and fix that, but otherwise, we should just be our special self.

If we could all accept that, how happy we would be!

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

"Who Still Wants It?"

—Author Unknown



A motivational speaker started his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill. In the room of 200, he asked, "Who would like this \$20 bill?" Hands started going up.

He said, "I am going to give this \$20 to one of you, but first, let me do this." He proceeded to crumple the bill.

He then asked, "Who still wants it?" Still the hands were up in the air.

"Well," he replied, "what if I do this?" He dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now crumpled and dirty. "Now who still wants it?" Still the hands

went into the air.

"My friends, you have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth the same.

"Many times in our lives, we are crumpled, dropped, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, we will never lose our value. Dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, we are still priceless." ●

Down on yourself?

Raise your self-esteem with these tried and proven tips

- Be positive!
Focus on the attributes you have, rather than on those you lack.
- Be willing to venture out and make changes.
- Look outward. Don't make yourself the focus of your life.
- Learn from past mistakes, but move forward.
- Don't live your life according to the expectations of others.
- Don't measure yourself by other people.
- Relax, realizing that you are a unique creation and that you are loved just the way you are! ●

A New Lease on Life

Self-image issues resolved

By Jessie Richard, adapted

“That’s not fair” must have been my three most-used words when growing up. It seemed that someone—or everyone—always had it better than me.

By my early teens, I had a well-developed measure-and-analyze mindset, and I was particularly obsessed with comparing my looks, personality, and abilities with those of other girls my age.

When I came into young adulthood and joined an office team, it was all about measuring up at work. I was convinced that the only way I would ever be accepted or appreciated was if I made up for my relative lack of skill and experience by working harder than everyone else. I was always trying to gain points (whatever those were and whoever was giving them out), and I was always frustrated with my self-assessed score. I didn’t like myself in general, and even the things that I liked somewhat I wouldn’t give myself a passing grade for until I improved them a bit. I could always find something wrong.

Then another big source of discontentment kicked in—feeling cheated and like a loser because nearly all of my friends, who were also in their early and mid-twenties, were married and had children, while I still didn’t have so much as a prospect. I was upset about that.

I could hardly stand to be around other people, because almost everyone made me feel inadequate in some way, but paradoxically I also found a lot to disapprove of in everybody else. You would think that I would have focused on their strong points, since I was always wishing I were more like them, but that wasn’t the case. Not surprisingly, my negative attitude toward others caused them to keep their distance, which made me feel more unlikable and hopeless. It was a vicious cycle.

At a particularly low point, I read some articles about recognizing and overcoming negative thought patterns. These made a definite impression on me, as I started to realize why I was so discontent, and I began to want to do something about it. Understanding the concept that I could change was the seed of freedom.

I started to reflect on my life from a very different angle—one of

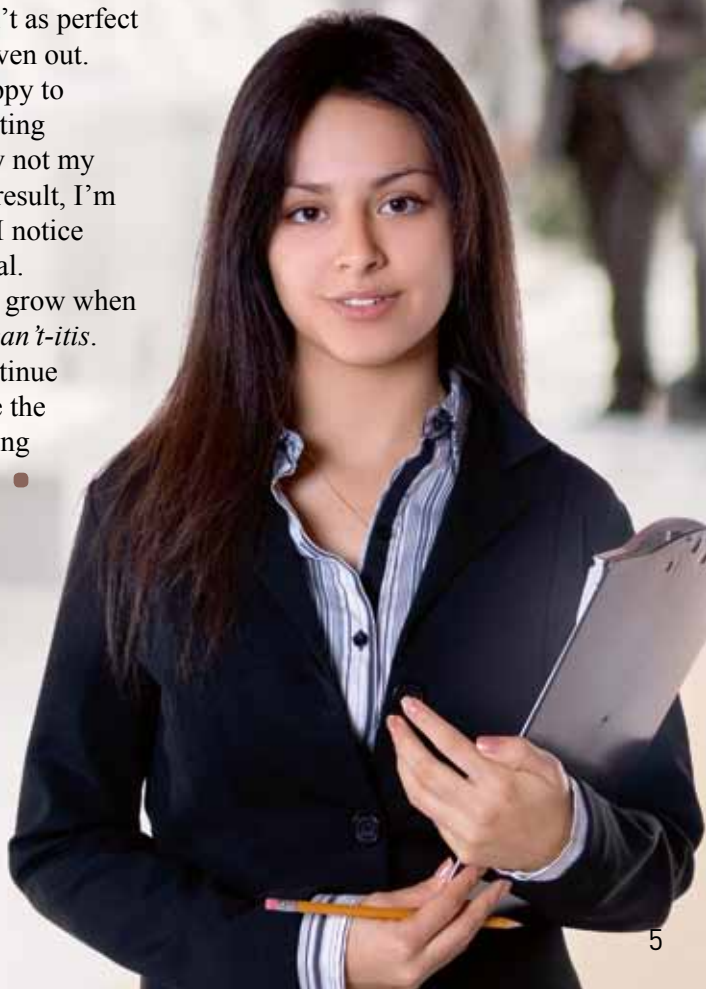
thankfulness for all I have been given, rather than complaint over what hasn't been given to me; one of gratitude, rather than resentment.

Gradually I started to change—first my mind, and then my life. I came to understand that if I accept the way I am I can appreciate others' good qualities, be grateful for the way they are, and enjoy our differences, realizing that they're just that—differences. One wasn't necessarily better than the other.

Something else that helped me gain both confidence and compassion was getting to better know some of the people whom I once envied, because I found that their lives weren't as perfect as I had imagined. Things really do even out.

Now, nearly 10 years later, I'm happy to say that my inner makeover was a lasting one. I know that some things are truly not my strong points, and I accept that. As a result, I'm not constantly getting derailed when I notice something about myself that isn't ideal.

It's amazing how we can learn and grow when we aren't hampered by paralyzing *I-can't-it-is*. Life continues to get better, and I continue to get happier. I also know that I have the power, with God's help, to keep making progress in areas that actually matter. ●



Stunted Growth

By Peter Story

When I was a kid, I saw plenty of goldfish in the houses of my friends, and I remember wondering why so many people would want to keep such small, unexciting creatures as pets.

Then one day, when I was about ten years old, I went on a school field trip to a botanical garden that had a pond stocked with fish. One especially large, brilliantly colored fish stood out to me.

“What kind of fish is that one?” I asked our guide.

“That’s a goldfish,” she replied.

I was confused. “Aren’t goldfish supposed to be small?” I asked with a note of 9-year-old sarcasm.

“Not at all,” she replied. “Goldfish will grow even larger than these. It really just depends on the size of their environment.”

I took in the information and determined never again to show myself so ignorant about goldfish, but it was years before I understood the broader lesson.

How often have I been like a goldfish in a fishbowl? How often have I limited myself by my perception of my world? Worse still, how many times have I put others in a small bowl in my mind? How many times have I written off someone as insignificant or unexciting? How many times have I failed to see others’ potential to grow?

How much more could I achieve if I forgot my perceived limitations and dared to swim beyond the boundaries I’ve set for myself? And what would happen if I moved others from their small bowls into the ocean of limitless possibilities?

Just imagine a world full of people with that perspective, who truly believe that anything is possible and reach out to claim it. Together we could do astounding things. Together we could work miracles. ●

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Beautiful You

By David Fontaine, adapted

If all the flowers in the world were one color, or if there was only one type of tree, it would get boring after a while. Beauty is found in variety—the varying types and textures, hues and shades of nature.

When we try to change the way we are in order to meet someone else's definition of beauty, we're giving someone else control over us, over how we think, over our happiness. Who, after all, decides that one thing is better than another—hair that's dark or light, curly or straight; bodies that are lean, muscular, or round; noses that are large or small; lips that are thin or full?

When we try so hard to fit a certain mold of beauty, whether it suits us or not or is realistic or not, we're giving up our uniqueness.

One of the many problems associated with comparing ourselves with others or trying to fit into the fashionable standard of beauty is that we're never going to be truly happy. We might feel a sense of satisfaction that we changed something we didn't like, or kept up with the latest trend, but even if we do manage to achieve the level of beauty that we're hoping for, even if we finally become the most popular person in our circle of acquaintances, it is not going to last. We'll eventually run into somebody who's higher up on the physical beauty ladder.

If it's happiness we're looking for, we're not going to find it like that. The constant need to meet the world's standard of beauty leads to obsession—first the physical makeover, then the molding of our personality to fit our new image, then the struggle to keep the look or to keep up with the changing looks as each trend gives way to a new one.

Is it even possible to ever fit the world's idea of perfect beauty? Not even celebrities can reach it, and they have plenty of money to change anything they want. And change they do, because the trends in what's beautiful keep changing. Even the rich can barely keep up.

It's human nature to want to be thought attractive, but true beauty is not only about physical appearance. It's also about inner beauty, that spark that sets a person apart from the millions of others who are dressing the same way, getting the same haircut, and trying to achieve the same body.

We can save ourselves a lot of time, trouble, and grief if we clear our mind of everyone else's perception of what is beautiful. It's much better to focus on the specific qualities or features we've been given that make us unique.

When we enhance those, it will bring out our best—and we'll be the most beautiful. ●

Always be a first-rate version of yourself instead of a second-rate version of someone else. —Judy Garland



The Beauty Survey

By Andrew Mateyak, adapted

They say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so with this thought in mind, I interviewed some people—male and female, younger and older, and from different backgrounds—to find out what they felt made a person attractive.

Here are some of their answers:

What I find most attractive in a person is when they are not overly concerned about what others think of them, when they just act naturally.

One way I judge whether someone is beautiful or not is if they are smiling and their eyes are happy. If so, then they're beautiful to me, even if they aren't what most people would call glamorous or especially good looking.

My personal definition of a beautiful person has changed over the years. It has gone from good looks, to a mature, personable being who is a good conversationalist and has a good sense of humor.

If someone is charming, funny, and easy to relate to, then they're beautiful. Or if they're humorous, ready to do things unexpectedly, adventurous, passionate, and caring, then to me they're attractive.



A person's voice is often the first indication of whether or not I will find them attractive.

Kindness, gentleness, a positive attitude, determination, and a sense of humor are some of the qualities that make a person beautiful.

What makes a person beautiful to me is their spirit—the way they react to people and the situations around them.

If somebody has a kind and concerned spirit, they're beautiful no matter what their physical features may be.

My survey was simple as surveys go, but the consensus was clear: Those polled said that real beauty runs deeper than physical attributes; it comes from the inside out.—And I agree. ●

Beauty Tips for Women

By Audrey Hepburn

For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.



For lovely eyes, seek out the good in people.



For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry.



For beautiful hair, let a child run his or her fingers through it once a day.



For poise, walk with the knowledge you'll never walk alone.



People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anybody.



Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you'll find one at the end of your arm.



The beauty of a woman is not in the clothes she wears, the figure that she carries, or the way she combs her hair. The beauty of a woman must be seen in her eyes, because that is the doorway to her heart, the place where love resides.



The beauty of a woman is not in a facial mole, but true beauty in a woman is reflected in her soul. It is the caring that she lovingly gives, the passion that she knows.



And the beauty of a woman, with passing years, only grows! ●





Appreciating our children

Linda and Richard Eyre, *Teaching Children Joy*

Adults often bristle when someone remarks that they are “just like so-and-so.” We like to think of ourselves as unique, different, and one-of-a-kind, which is how it is meant to be. It is good to remember that there is much more to what makes a person a unique individual than, for example, the obvious characteristics of a person’s astrological sign, their interests, the number of children they have, or the type of clothes that they wear.

In a similar fashion, parents should learn to appreciate the uniqueness that each child brings to their lives. Each child needs to feel special and important in his or her own right. Seeing each child as an individual with varying likes and dislikes, will help to make the child feel loved for who he is and is meant to be.



Here are some tips on how we can encourage our children's unique qualities and characteristics:

▶ **Know each child well as an individual.** We can't help a child build confidence around his inherent gifts and talents unless we come to know what those gifts and talents are. Two ways to learn: (1) In private chats with the child, time spent together watching and appreciating; and (2) in organized time, as parents [or in parent-teacher meetings], discussing each child, sharing perceptions, taking notes, discovering together more about the personality and individual character of each child.

▶ **Genuinely respect each child and his own gifts.** Our children are human beings, deserving not only our love but also our respect. With this thought in mind, it becomes easier to: (1) show an added measure of faith in them after any kind of failure; (2) discuss our own failures with them and tell them what we learned; (3) praise their accomplishments lavishly and honestly; and (4) never criticize or belittle our children personally. We should make sure they are always secure in our love for them. We should never criticize in public.—Praise in public, correct in private.

▶ **[Teach] independence, self-reliance, and responsibility at an early age.** Confidence and its joy tie directly into being able to do useful things. Each child should have a job in the family to contribute—particularly daily or weekly jobs—for which he is praised and made to feel capable and important. ●

PONDER: Take time to reflect on each of your children's qualities and strengths. Make a list of these qualities and focus on encouraging and praising your children for them.



That person in the mirror

NOTABLE
QUOTES



You are unique. There has never been a person like you, nor will there ever be another just like you.—Author Unknown

Friendship with oneself is all important, because without it one cannot be friends with anyone else in the world.—Eleanor Roosevelt

Do not wish to be anything but what you are, and try to be that perfectly.—Saint Francis DeSales

When people compliment you, pay attention. Repeat the compliment to yourself. Don't downplay or dismiss it. Why should your own negative voice be louder than the positive voice of a friend?
—Carole M. Wallace

It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.
—Author Unknown

How many cares one loses when one decides not to be *something*, but to be *someone*.
—Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel

You were born an original. Don't die a copy.—John Mason

Learn to... be what you are, and learn to resign with a good grace all that you are not.
—Henri Frederic Amiel

Wherever you go, go with all your heart.—Confucius

Originality is... a by-product of sincerity.—Marianne Moore

All the knowledge I possess everyone else can acquire, but my heart is all my own.—Johann von Goethe

Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind.—Dr. Seuss

Be what you are. This is the first step toward becoming better than you are.—Julius Charles Hare

Why try to be someone you're not? Life is hard enough without adding impersonation to the skills required.—Robert Brault

It is the chiefest point of happiness that a man is willing to be what he is.—Desiderius Erasmus