# York University Staff Association Health and Wellness News and Views

The power to be and feel beautiful lies not within the eyes of others; it comes from within YOU.  I believe that to be beautiful means to be yourself. You don't need to be accepted by others. You need to accept you.  Many of us look in the mirror and are dissatisfied with our bodies.  My behind is too big, chest too small, teeth not quite white enough… Hollywood and the fashion, cosmetics and diet industries work hard to make us believe that our bodies are unacceptable and need constant improvement. There is SO MUCH out there about how to "look better" by losing weight, exercising more and eating better, but what about articles that focus on accepting ourselves as WE ARE?

So, starting today!  We are going to realize that we, including our bodies are pretty darn awesome!!!

## Get to Know Yourself

Just be yourself. That sentence is possibly the most commonly used phrase in the history of advice. Oscar Wilde once said: "*Be yourself; everyone else is already taken".*  But you can't possibly be yourself if you don't know who you are first. The first step in learning how to be you is to get in touch with yourself; with your passions, your opinions, and values.  Ask questions designed to reveal to you your real self. What movies do I really like? What are my favourite kinds of books? What are my opinions on certain current events? What do I like to talk about? What values are most important to me?  How do I enjoy spending my free time? Spend some real time thinking about your answers, and be truthful. Hopefully you will really get to know and love yourself. Ultimately, you are hanging out with you all day long. So, be your best, most interesting and fun self.

## Take Responsibility

Own it!  We are so conditioned to blame other people, the system or the world for our unwanted circumstances. Taking responsibility for the life that you are living, the one that you've created is very empowering. When you don't take responsibility for your life you give away your personal power. Responsibility is one of those words you have probably heard so many times from your parents, teachers and coaches that you may have  developed an immunity to it. Still, it's one of the most important things and individual can do to grow and to feel good about themselves. We are responsible for our lives and everything in them. If we can accept that idea, refusing to  blame anyone or anything else for our misfortune we'll find ourselves in the best possible position  And even if we don't, even if we still do go down… at least we'll be able to do so with a full sense of ownership .

## Love Yourself

Let's face it: No matter how close-to-perfection your body is, chances are, there is something you would change about it if you could. Even celebrities and models, who have been stamped with the media's "perfect body" rating have parts they dislike – their feet, their hands, their ears – and they don't necessarily have high self-esteem either! Rather than pick your body apart, look at your body as a whole.  Our bodies really just play the host to all that defines who we truly are. We are so much more than our exterior container.  Are you witty? Are you thoughtful? Are you generous? Are you honest? Can you keep a secret?  Are you a great friend? Do you play a mean game of soccer?  Are you a loving parent? Are you forgiving?  The list goes on…  What are your signature traits??? It is important to recognize the wonderful traits that we have to offer and then celebrate them!

In the grand scheme of things it doesn't matter what we look like, just who we are.  We are not going to be remembered for the colour of our hair, how white our teeth were, or whether we were a size 5 or 25.  So we might as well go ahead and make the most of life without letting insecurities weigh us down.

**Life is too short.  Work as if it was your first day.  <span style="color:red">Forgive as soon as possible</span>.  Love without boundaries.  Laugh without control and never stop smiling**

Kerrianne Brown                    November 2014