

## Our beloved bodies: seeing yourself as a sex symbol

BY TANISHKA

**A**fter two thousand years of cultural conditioning that has demonised pleasures of the flesh as the polar opposite of holiness, is it any wonder that so many modern women still refer to their vulvas as 'down there' and just as many men curse drivers on the road with putdowns that unconsciously deride their own sexual anatomy such as 'You d\*\*khead!'

Regardless of which faith (if any) we were brought up in, as a society we are all still collectively confined by a philosophical legacy of shame and guilt concerning our physical bodies, our natural functions and our right to experience pleasure as a sacred and worthwhile act. This is due largely to religious doctrines which have traditionally viewed sexuality as profane unless it was for the purpose of procreation, which is akin to saying that pleasure for pleasure's sake is unproductive and therefore useless. What we are now discovering is that without pleasure for pleasure's sake we become so results-driven and stressed that we compromise our immune system, our mental health and are less effective both personally and professionally.

Today, this perceived separation between the spiritual and material realms continues among as many new age spiritualists as it does religious zealots who both hold goals of spiritual ambition based on their rational vision of purity and ascension, rather than viewing themselves as both (ritual) and spiritual multi-dimensional beings who are sacred within every part of the hologram.

While pop culture icons such as Shrek and Homer have played a part in helping us to embrace our own base desires and animalistic tendencies by exposing our collective shadow traits for the world to see and laugh at, many of us still struggle personally to truly embrace our lower selves in a spirit of self-acceptance and loving appreciation. Instead we try to hide, ignore or minimise our natural selves and their embarrassing little quirks, tendencies,

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personality! Yes, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

For if we are to each play our part in anchoring heaven on earth, we must first experience every part of nature's creation as sacred, including our bodies regardless of whether the ad campaigns tell us our body hair is unsightly or a voluptuous woman is too fat to be considered sexy.

So what can you do to see yourself as the divine sex symbol you are, rather than unconsciously (or obsessively) comparing yourself to the external icons of supposed perfection we are repeatedly bombarded with?

Make love to yourself...

- ▶ with the words you use to describe yourself to others
- ▶ with the thoughts you choose to dwell upon when you look upon your reflection
- ▶ with the clothes and accessories you choose to drape and adorn your divinely unique form in
- ▶ and by stopping to appreciate and delight in your natural beauty on a regular basis.

Equally important is making it a conscious priority to experience sensual pleasure on a regular basis. As pre-teens and teens growing up, most of us weren't encouraged to explore our erogenous zones in the privacy of our own bedroom and yet if we don't dare to explore every part of ourselves in private how can we truly share ourselves intimately with another?

Consequently we interpret the act of self-pleasuring which is often unmentionable within the family unit, (unless used as a derogatory put-down) as unacceptable and therefore shameful which leads to rushing moments of stolen pleasure (just as someone with an eating disorder might gulp down a forbidden cheeseburger then repent their weakness rather than savouring each juicy morsel of their oral communion). Unfortunately this habitual sexual behaviour often leads to premature ejaculation for men and clitoral orgasms for

women, rather than longer, more fulfilling lovemaking sessions and vaginal or cervical orgasms which take time to open more deeply to.

Ultimately, when we suppress or forbid ourselves to receive pleasure we can't help but obsess about our desire. Just as our societal pressure to look buff, tan and fit sells just as many junk food products as it does diet fads because those trying to achieve and maintain an ideal rather than a balance must eventually swing to the other polarity and blow out binging on the forbidden fruit, whether it be food, sex, alcohol or drugs, which a consumer-based society will continually dangle as a carrot at both ends!

I believe the answer lies in the ancient Greek maxim, 'The Golden Mean', where we not only seek out the path of moderation which sounds fairly uneventful but restore our hedonistic desires to their Dionysian roots and view them as the nectar of the gods and ritualise their consumption. For example, if you have a penchant for chocolate, don't settle for something mass-produced in the supermarket. Make a point of purchasing a hand-made Belgian truffle from a chocolatier and nibble and explore its textures and tastes on the palette as an all-over inner body sensation with your eyes closed while listening to sultry songstress, Diana Krall, in your finest underwear. Embrace each inspired desire as an opportunity to touch and experience a transcendent communion with the Divine, just as you would in a more widely accepted form of spiritual union such as your early morning yoga practice. When we take the time to utilise our own creativity in conjunction with our desires we will be increasingly less drawn to gorging on quantity to fill the void of unhappiness within our souls at the cost of our bodies.

Now, if there were ever any doubt that our bodies are divine by nature regardless of our spiritual outlook, one needs only to remember that even atheists yell, 'Oh, God!' as they climax.



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