

## I Choose to Like the Skin I'm In

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Don't you get sick and tired of being bombarded by consumer-driven advertisements and airbrushed people telling you the many ways in which your body is flawed? Media does an excellent job keeping you focused on exactly what is wrong with your body. According to them, ultimate beauty and happiness is achieved when you buy, apply, and then deny who you really are.

But you don't have to be a sell-out and fold to the advertisements and consumerism. You can choose to accept your body. You don't have to let your self-esteem or your happiness depend upon your weight, shape, bust size, or abs. You can stop chastising yourself for not looking like the images we see.

How? First, remind yourself – over and over again, if you have to – that these images are not real. Tyra Banks does not look like that in real life. Her skin has been airbrushed, her breasts have been enhanced, and her body has been shaped by computer retouching. So much for the au naturel look!

Is it worth it? Is it worth spending hundreds of dollars and thousands of hours chasing a artificial ideal? It won't make you any happier. Despite all of media's messages to the contrary, physical attractive people aren't any happier. Their relationships aren't better, longer-lasting or more loving. Want proof? Ask Halle Berry or read a Marilyn Monroe biography.

A better idea would be to stop obsessing about your looks – to accept your less-than-perfect body. True love has never required physical attraction. Work to stop criticizing your body. Limit time with friends who obsess about weight. Don't look at fashion magazines that leave you feeling unattractive or insecure. Turn off television programs that degrade men and women as sex objects. Real beauty comes from the inside and it is found in the acts of kindness to yourself and others. Real beauty is accepting and liking who you are now, at this very moment not only after your teeth whitening strips have taken effect.

**“Once I accept myself and learn to like my looks, my life will be much happier. That's up to me, not my body.”**

-Thomas Cash (1997)