



You're a beautiful mess

By Cindy Trevitt, Registered Professional Counsellor

“Those who insist they’ve got their ‘shit together’ are usually standing in it at the time.”

— Stephen Levine, *A Year to Live: How to Live This Year as If It Were Your Last*

Many of us hold the idea that somehow we are broken and perhaps ashamed and alone in our broken-ness. We see everyone else doing well, functioning and having everything we don’t. As John Bradshaw says, we all fall somewhere on the spectrum of “perfectly imperfect”. We’re all a little messed up. We may have it together financially but we struggle with intimacy. We may have great relationships but can’t keep a job to save our lives. We may be eye-catching but find ourselves drowning in solitude. Sometimes we simply have unreasonable expectations of ourselves and erroneously assume that we are failing or inadequate because we don’t measure up to what others have or are doing and it’s more probable that we are in the vast majority and perfectly normal. Everybody struggles, gets hurt, gets left behind, loses at one point or another. Rest assured that we all fall into the complex, astonishing and unlimited combination of possible human qualities which make us delightfully, uniquely remarkable and superbly messed up.

The Japanese have a term, ‘wabi sabi’ that entails accepting the imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. It embraces that life is never flawless, is always changing and ending and beginning and never finished - just like us.

The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. It is a fantasy to believe that somehow others are exempt from being on the spectrum of human foibles and only you are the misfit. By the same token others might feel secretly envious (it happens) of some

quality you possess such as how relaxed or motivated or creative or self-aware or gentle or brave or playful you are. While you may have automatically dismissed it (or not even been aware of it), there’s a good chance that someone remarked or, at least, admired your enviable quality. The point is to see that your skewed self-view is incorrect - perhaps you are a captivating, wonderful mess.

“Don’t cling to your self-righteous suffering, let it go. . . . Nothing is too good to be true, let yourself be forgiven. To the degree you insist that you must suffer, you insist on the suffering of others as well.”

— Stephen Levine, *A Year to Live: How to Live This Year as If It Were Your Last*

See your self through those admiring eyes like you would an old friend, a familiar face, or even a favourite old pair of comfortable shoes. You don’t have to be self-critical to be a good person just humble and accepting. You don’t have to believe you’re worthless and only deserving of a miserable life. Worthlessness is a kind of rage directed at the self, believing you are unlovable. Maintaining such a belief leaves no space for love and trust and ironically will only help to create more circumstances where you aren’t loved or trusted. You don’t have to believe that you’ll only be good once you get fit, make more money, clean up your house, change your organizational habits or spend more quality time with your cat. Don’t uphold the belief that “you’ll be good when....” This type of thinking only perpetuates the idea that you’re not good enough and so even when you achieve those goals it won’t be long before your ‘not good enough’ mentality comes up with yet another list of things

you need to do, think, feel or have in order to be good enough. If you hinge your worth on external things, your worth will be in a constant state of flux.

“Perfection itself is imperfection.”

— Vladimir Horowitz

We all have a root system of families who have experienced traumas, abuses, neglects, mistakes, and misled good intentions. As children, our minds absorb that which isn’t grieved, processed or healed within our family systems. Consequently we feel that unexpressed emotional strain and unfortunately attribute that strain to our own selves - hence personal blame and fault finding. We come to embody the unprocessed emotions in the form of archetypal personification of the roles: black-sheep; good one; invisible one; hero; scapegoat; lost one; responsible; saviour; clown; etc. all to either represent or compensate for the areas left in the shadows by our families. We come to feel that the problems are because of us or something about us and we carry that sensed belief into adulthood unless we find a way to raise it to our consciousness and reconfigure it.





“Society bids many of us to forget about inherent worth and, instead, to supplement the deficiency with external props such as wealth, beauty, status. The greater the scarcity in true self-esteem, the greater the need for supplementation.”

- Terrence Real, “I don’t want to talk about it”



Personally, I love and prefer the eclectic, eccentric, and colourful personality. It frees me up to be the same and I especially love that! It’s far more intriguing and interesting and engaging. There is no need to hide your bumpy parts in a box of shame. Rid yourself of your shame by speaking the unspeakable (to those who are receptive). Dump out your box of shame. Silence is toxic and leads to a life of self-denial - disengaged from who you truly are and preventing you from being able to receive and appreciate many wonderful life offerings. Embrace and accept who you are, how you behave and how you feel and if there is something you want to change, merely set a goal.

You have the right and the power to choose to accept yourself as is. So, go ahead, celebrate the wonderful mess that you are!



“The fact of storytelling hints at a fundamental human unease, hints at human imperfection. Where there is perfection there is no story to tell.”

— Ben Okri

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