

Real Beauty

By Kristin Rehan

I've read many books and magazines about beauty. Some discuss how to achieve outer beauty – including cosmetics, exercise, and diet. And some discuss the importance of inner beauty – letting your inner light shine. I think they all help a little. But, what if you are like me, and lack the confidence in believing in your own unique beauty? I used to feel I had to have every quality in spades to be beautiful – inside and out. That's too much pressure. No one can achieve that and still have time to enjoy themselves. But I can admire all these qualities and want to have a little of every one of them in me.

And that's when I discovered living models of all the beautiful qualities I wanted and admired. I'm so lucky to know many beautiful women. And instead of being jealous and competing with them, I started to embrace them and love them for what made them so lovely. I realized that just because they had wonderful qualities, didn't mean I didn't, or couldn't. It made it more possible for me to appreciate them and learn about them.

I spent my life afraid that people wouldn't like me if I wasn't perfect – if I didn't possess every great quality. I learned, with the help of some great people, that being genuine is the most beautiful gift I can give myself and others. Is being beautiful the most important goal to have? No, but feeling beautiful means a lot to me. And maybe it means something to other women.

So why am I writing this? Because there are so many books that separate women, that claim we aren't good enough, smart enough, efficient enough, and powerful enough without professional help. There are so many articles out there that claim we NEED these tips, these connections, these buzzwords, these accessories, the pills, these surgeries and we need to spend all this money to be important. But we just need to be ourselves and let our light shine naturally. We don't need coaching, or therapy, or drugs to bring out our BEST SELF. And I know women to prove it. Are some of these enjoyable? Do they help? Sure they do – but they aren't imperative to our thriving and surviving.

I've been afraid to age. I've been thinking about this for a long time. What will happen when I lose my youth? What will I have to offer? Who will love me? Who will admire me? Who will think I'm beautiful? It's silly but I'm sure there are other people out there like me, otherwise there would be no cosmetics, plastic surgery, diet pills, or miracle drugs. But I know plenty of gorgeous ladies who don't go to extremes. What is it about them? It's their natural beauty. They embrace their individuality and uniqueness. That's what makes them beautiful.

So I decided, as a thank you to them, I'd share my appreciation and stories. I'm sure many of them will be surprised or embarrassed. I would be. I'm a little surprised and embarrassed writing this. But I don't feel our world values and honors women and their qualities enough. But I do. And I'm doing something about it. I want to encourage all women to find their unique qualities and let them shine. Our society and our young women need them. I need them.