

H A R R I E T M O R R I S



*the A to Z of  
better*

*Body Image*

**26** *Ways To Look Great and  
Feel More Confident*

**The A to Z of Better Body Image**  
*26 Ways to Look Great and Feel More Confident*

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# Introduction

This is not a book about body image.

It is a book about **body confidence** - and how to get more of it.

What's the difference?

Body image is something you work on intellectually. Think about it - an image is something that is essentially intangible. It's 2D.

And what is more tangible, more 3D, than your own body?

Everyone who thinks they want to have better body image is actually craving better body confidence.

But what exactly *is* body confidence?

In my personal experience (having lived for 3 decades with physical self-loathing), it looks like this:

(1) Being able to look in the mirror at my flawed 43-year-old physique (stretch marks, muffin top, everything going south) and saying "It is what it is. It's not perfect, but it's OK. I don't need to base my sense of self on what I am looking at."

(2) Having the courage to experiment with wearing clothes that actually fit me; that are tailored to my shape. Putting on a pair of shoes that instantly make half a stone disappear... *and* allowing myself to wear them.

(3) Marvelling at how you can go from the resigned acceptance of (1) to "Bloody hell, who'd have thought it. You look good", in a matter of minutes via (2) above.

All this comes down to one skill I have developed through trial and error, which I explain in the next section.

## A is for Airbrushed Perfectionism

We live in an age where you can digitally perfect any image. The media has become so heavily visual, and people are so addicted to their iPads and smartphones, that it has become the accepted norm to compare our bodies to this digital perfection. And to find fault.

This is airbrushed perfectionism.

Airbrushed perfectionism says that if you don't look like a supermodel, you are ugly. Oh yes, and by the way, ugly equals worthless. No six pack = no self-control. Zero self-worth.

Considering that the supermodels themselves get airbrushed - even THEY are not up to this toxic ideal - what hope is there for the rest of us to attain self-worth through our appearance?

This is why the very concept of body image is unhelpful. Images are the bread and butter of airbrushed perfectionism. They are a tool to shove perfectionism down our throats with the silent undertone of *You're worthless if you don't look like this.*

Body confidence, on the other hand, is something that everyone can develop. Just as you don't need to be 100% confident to have a successful job interview (you just

need to be confident enough), neither do you need to love every inch of your body every day of the week to be able to relax into not only your body, but your life.

My weight still fluctuates a bit, I still have times I can't fit into my tightest jeans, and just like you, I can feel sluggish and heavy.

When I notice these things, they are not guilty verdicts decreed by my sense of self, or cast-iron proof of my worthlessness as a human being.

I treat them as signs. To stop skipping my daily walk. To eat more consciously. To cook better. To look after myself.

This is the skill I have taught myself which has allowed me to achieve the life-changing results I mentioned in the introduction. I call it unhooking yourself from airbrushed perfectionism.

In this book I will tell you some of the thought patterns I changed, and practical strategies I and my clients have used to detach from this toxic idealism; realistic ways you can start this process yourself. You'll look better, feel better, and get your life back.

Remember that - your life? The one you are currently giving away to your Sabotage Self (more about her in a bit).

Don't you want it back?

## ***B is for The BEST Homework in the World***

I often give my coaching clients the following exercise to do as homework.

Think back to the last time when you got really dressed up to go out.

If nothing comes to mind, imagine that you are going to a wedding and the dress code is to look fabulous. No need to fit into your Aunty Flo's idea of fabulous - which is probably a crimplene nightmare. It is to look the best you can, with no worries about being over-dressed.

The question is: would you say you looked better than usual on that occasion? Could you look good enough to glance at your reflection and say, "Yes. I like what I see. I scrub up quite well"?

The homework is to get dressed up so you can look at yourself in the mirror and see an improvement from how you normally show up in the world.

Don't have an outfit that is up to the job? Spend an afternoon trying on clothes in shops and stores that have clothes you actually like. Well-tailored dresses and shirts. Take your phone and photograph yourself. Even better, take a friend for some objective feedback, AKA fabulousification.

At this point I fully expect resistance from some of you reading this. This is absolutely fine - any kind of real, deep lasting change involves making friends with your resistance.

We will look in more detail at this underrated force for change later in the book, but at the moment all I want you to do is to acknowledge the resistance, and DO NOT trust it. It is code for 'Don't do this - you won't succeed'. Think of it as your fear of success, the overly-strict parent who refuses their daughter permission to go travelling alone.

The thing is, you're not 15 anymore. You can, in fact, go travelling wherever you want.

You don't need anyone's permission. And certainly not from your resistance, from Sabotage You.

Often we feel uncomfortable in clothes that are perfect for us, purely because they raise our aesthetic standards. This can be as anxiety-inducing as going to work the first day after being promoted. In the same way that you just need to knuckle down and cope with the greater responsibilities of the new job, there is no substitute for weathering the discomfort that looking better can initially create.

So dig that dress out. Spend as long as you want getting ready. Iron your hair. Curl your hair. Dust off your heels. Take a picture of yourself, which you are going to use later. (see V).

## *C is for Critical Bitch FM*

Critical Bitch FM is the radio station playing in your head.

It is a radio station that has more powerful marketing tactics than Facebook, Google and Amazon put together.

With Critical Bitch FM, once you are tuned in, there's no escape. It plays 24/7 in your head. Everyone else you know also has their mindset permanently tuned into Critical's transmission.

What does this radio station sound like?

Well, if it had a show list, this is what it would be:

### **\*Never Enough\***

The flagship show of Critical Bitch FM. *Never Enough* provides you, the lucky listener, with all the inner put downs you'll ever need to stop yourself upping your game in life.

The most popular ones are:

*\* You can't get away with those jeans anymore. Go and change.*

*\* No, your bum doesn't look big in that. More like humungous. Gigantic. You better throw in the towel and just change your name to Enormica right now.*

*\* He will NEVER fancy you until you lose (insert any amount of weight here; the number is irrelevant). Yes, I know millions of men routinely fall in love with women who do not look like supermodels, but that could never happen to you. You're different. Unlike them, you can never be enough to be loved with all your flaws.*

(Logic, like my ability to speak, fails me here. Those millions of women in relationships are also listening to Critical Bitch FM 24/7)

*\* Don't even think about buying that red dress. Anything except black makes you look like a beached whale. OK, the truth is you look like a beached whale anyway, but black hides it best. What gives you the right to think you can stand out from the crowd?*

### **\*Because You're NOT Worth It\***

Fake personal development chat show based on the premise that you need to buy beauty products in order to achieve self-esteem. A thin veneer of fluffy and saccharine-sweet advice is plastered over the underlying message: you are worthless if you don't own the recommended hair, makeup, and skin care products.

### **\*The Easy Excuses Show\***

A bit of light relief, *The Easy Excuses Show* offers mental escape plans for those times when you really, really want that chocolate bar, or the prospect of going to the gym feels like climbing Everest. For example:

- \* *Oh, sod it. The diet starts tomorrow.*
- \* *I've had a tough day and I deserve a treat.*
- \* *Go on, it's only polite.*

This show is sponsored by various manufacturers of high fat/high sugar foods. While the excuses given appear to offer a temporary escape from the torture of shows like *Never Enough*, *The Easy Excuses Show* works hand in hand with the rest of the radio station to fulfil its mission of disempowering women everywhere; keeping their lives small by persuading them they are too big.

What can we do when such toxic nonsense is playing night and day in every woman's head (it's also got a rapidly growing male listenership)?

Turn off that radio station.

You do this by, first of all, acknowledging it's playing, that it's not just The Truth that you must bow down and silently accept.

Interesting fact about Critical Bitch FM: it was founded by Sabotage You, who we shall meet later in this book.

Even more interesting fact: Sabotage You is not actually out to ruin your life. She's trying to help - she's just got it really, really wrong.

## D is for Distance Badge Dysmorphia

If you research the term body dysmorphia, it's really quite enlightening.

But not in the way you might think.

The NHS (our national health service) website here in the UK defines body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) as:

*An anxiety disorder that causes a person to have a distorted view of how they look and to spend a lot of time worrying about their appearance*

It goes on:

*Almost everyone feels unhappy about their appearance at some point in their life, but these thoughts usually come and go, and can be forgotten. However, for someone with BDD, the thoughts are very distressing, do not go away, and have a significant impact on daily life.*

Source: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/body-dysmorphia/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

This is fascinating. The powers that be have created a divide between the well - those people who can forget their body dissatisfaction - and the sick, who are apparently the only ones suffering with ingrained body image distress.

I'd like to know something. Where is this mythical group of people who once upon a time had a bit of fleeting body unhappiness, which they somehow just forgot?

Earlier this year my fit and healthy, super active 8-year-old took his 25 metre swimming badge. He narrowly failed to get it, having just recently moved up a group. I tried to jolly him along, but my encouragement fell on deaf ears. "I know why I didn't get my badge," he said, shame leaking out of every pore. "It was because of my fat tummy."

I eventually managed to talk him round and cheer him up (I couldn't really call myself a body confidence coach otherwise, now could I?) but what struck me was that if even 8-year-old boys are having their minds polluted by airbrushed perfectionism, then we really do have a problem.

All of us.

The truth is that there is no *well vs sick*.

Body dysmorphia exists on a continuum. The false *untroubled masses vs. the suffering minority* divide has been created by well-meaning medical professionals who spend their lives dealing with people who are at one end of the spectrum. It makes the rest of us feel as if we should not be suffering.

But we are.

Seeing ourselves on a body confidence – body hatred spectrum, which has body dysmorphia as one expression, is a far more useful way to view this issue.

For example I have moved along the spectrum, from body hatred to enjoying a great deal more confidence in this area. I never used to label myself as body dysmorphic, because to do so would have been to acknowledge I was worth caring about enough to be worthy of change. I was stuck in the I'm-not-sick-so-I-should-be-able-to-follow-any-slimming-regime mentality. Shut up and keep dieting.

Now I am at the other end of the spectrum (and you can be too). I'll never be in that mythical land of 100% body confidence, but I don't need to be. I'm in the nineties most of the time.

And that's good enough.

## *E is for Experimentation*

Experimenting to find out what works for you has been one of the keys, not only to my own success with improving my body confidence, but for my clients as well.

There are thousands of products and services you can buy to make any change in life. We have all bought packages and pills that really made a difference, and others that weren't even worth the shrink wrap they came in.

However good something is, it will always be less powerful if it sells itself as being THE answer to your excess weight, indigestion, inability to speak French or chaotic finances.

The same goes for this book. It is not the answer to your lack of body confidence - **you are!** My job is to inspire you, and wake up your core self, who holds all the power you need to change your life. To help you take the baby steps that will start to help you up your game in life.

Only you can create the roadmap for personal transformation (and make no mistake, better body confidence WILL change your life), and your tool is experimentation. If this interests you, I go into more depth about it in my free video course, available at <http://www.theshiftinside.com/gift/>

## F is for Food Rebel

If you have low body confidence, then you may well also be a food rebel. This connection is not a coincidence.

A food rebel eats the same portion of dessert as everyone else at the dinner party, then volunteers to wash up so she can stuff down an extra three slices of cake while nobody is looking.

A food rebel does his thrice-weekly grind at the gym, then overindulges at the party later on, with the cover story "Look, I need a reward for all my hard work."

She's the one you see doing the trolley dash around the supermarket in preparation for the binge that is really a reaction to the huge argument she has just had with her boyfriend.

I was a food rebel for years. It got to the point where even moderate stress would trigger a high fat/high sugar binge in my car at the far end of the supermarket car park (*Move away paper recyclers, can't you see I need some peace and quiet for my edible self-sabotage?*)

In this state, you are essentially giving two fingers to the diet industry. To starve-yourself-slimathons. To all the crazy magic pill weight loss products you've ever fallen for.

Now, I'm all for questioning the diet industry.

The problem is that in doing it through food rebellion (rather than with your mind), there is an unintended casualty.

You.

Food rebellion felt amazing. Brilliant. Better than a big glass of wine.

I remember it all too well, and I still have my moments.

It was fantastic...for as long as it took me to inhale the (inevitably junk) food.

But the price is not worth it.

I paid a double price. One was what the junk food did to my brain chemistry (intense anxiety, brain fog, off-the-scale PMT, fatigue).

And the other price I paid was low body confidence.

You see, to eat like Road Runner is to completely ignore your body's limits, its satiety signals.

As you gain weight (or experience the consequences of repeated vomiting and extreme compensatory exercise), your food rebellion demands that you distance

yourself from the consequences of your actions. And what better way to do this than to disown the very thing that you are using in this war against yourself - your body?

This is why a lot of people are so disconnected from their bodies. They grab their spare tyre or a handful of flabby thigh and declare *I HATE this*. They tut tut at their massive dental bills.

Increasing body confidence means sitting down with your inner food rebel for peace talks. We will meet Rebel You later in this book (see S).

F is also for **Future You**, a concept closely tied to **Now You** (see N)

## G is for Girl Power

Girl power was all the rage in the nineties here in the UK. It was sparked by the success of The Spice Girls, a manufactured pop group created in 1994 that presented itself as far more kick-ass than your traditional girl's group. Pre-adolescents could choose from a selection of identities: Sporty Spice, Posh Spice, Baby Spice, Ginger Spice and Scary Spice.

This was a fake kind of girl power (sorry, Mr Record Company, five varieties of saccharine sweet definitely do not fit all) that had as much substance to it as candy floss.

It is my prediction that **we are entering the era of true girl power now**. We at last have some real body confidence wisdom to pass onto our teenage (and pre-teen) girls.

I often tell my clients, "How we do food is how we do life." I believe the same is true of body confidence. Adolescence is - even in the best conditions - a whirlwind for any young person, as they transform from child into adult and grow into their sexuality.

We need to be role models for our girls. We all need to join the revolution (see R).

Not by burning our bras (haven't they passed a law against that yet?), or throwing our heels in the bin. It's not about rejecting our femininity; quite the opposite, actually.

It's about developing **Quiet Power** (see Q).

## H is for Hidden Secrets

This book is all about the secrets of body confidence. When I reveal these to people, they have some really powerful A-Ha moments, and that's great to see.

There are, however, some *hidden* secrets of body confidence I am about to share with you. These are the real gold in terms of reclaiming your life.

What's the difference?

A secret is something that you grasp with your conscious mind.

A hidden secret is something that you need to experience to really get it.

Here are the hidden secrets of body confidence I have experienced:

\* The energy that I stopped wasting on self-loathing has been channelled into writing, coaching, speaking, and being a better parent.

\* No longer having Critical Bitch FM playing constantly in the background of all thoughts about my shape means that I am free to work on those projects I just mentioned without that toxic radio station silently blaring out.

\* There is a great scene in the film *Shirley Valentine* where the main character (who has escaped her life as an obedient little housewife to work in a restaurant on a gorgeous Greek island) tells her shocked and extremely disgruntled husband:

*The only holiday romance I've had is with myself, and I think I've come to like myself really...I think I'm alright.*

That's how I feel about myself now - I'm actually OK. The relief of being able to enjoy my weekends unhindered by self-criticism and petty anxieties is something that is hard to put into words.

The key to unlocking these hidden secrets lies in choosing imperfectionism over perfectionism, as I will explain now.

## I is for Imperfectionism

The core idea at the heart of this book is the dismantling of airbrushed perfectionism, AKA idealism gone toxic.

To develop greater body confidence, you have to embrace imperfectionism.

Perfectionism has its place in the world. I want the company that designs and installs my smoke alarm to be staffed by complete perfectionists. Same goes for my accountant, and my book cover designer.

All these activities are fixed, closed projects. There are a certain number of steps you take to complete your accounts. There's no point making a smoke alarm without testing it.

However, there are many areas of life where *perfectionism ruins what we are trying to achieve*. A perfectionist parent produces kids who will always feel inadequate. Dieting perfectionism leads to multiple eating problems, because there are vital messages we send ourselves when we fall off the wagon (overeat or binge etc.), and if we merely see those signals as failures, we never get to act on them and course-correct our actions.

Imperfectionism focuses on change, not a fixed ideal. For a very concrete example of this, read Lydia's body confidence story in the next section.

**Body confidence is a supremely imperfect state.** It means looking at your muffin top and saying: *OK, it is what it is. I see it neutrally. I don't have to love it, but I do have to own it. Now I'm going to get dressed and marvel at the empire line dress that makes it completely disappear. This muffin top need not rule my day.*

I know you don't believe that this way of thinking is possible for you.

Neither did I.

Are you ready to open your mind to the possibility that *you might just be wrong*?

## J is for Jerker Denrell

In his brilliantly perceptive book about the self-help industry, *The Antidote*, Oliver Burkeman tells a story about a management theorist from Oxford University.

*(Asleep yet? Don't worry. I know as much about management theory as I do astrophysics - and that's not much. Stick with me here, because this story is worth it.)*

Jerker Denrell was sitting through a lecture about the personality traits of highly successful entrepreneurs one day when he noticed a fundamental, and extremely common, trap the speaker had fallen into. An assumption about people who make it in business vs. the failures of the world.

According to the lecturer, all successful business people apparently possess two magical characteristics: perseverance and charisma.

What Denrell realised was that it's not just successful entrepreneurs who are determined and can inspire others to follow them; the failures of the world are also pretty good at this as well. As Burkeman puts it:

*The only indisputable difference between the two is that the very unsuccessful are much, much less frequently interviewed...Success happens in public...but people who fail dwell largely in obscurity.*

The point I want to make is that **we far too easily ascribe success to fixed personality traits.**

When you look at someone with a body you envy, what assumptions are you making about them as a person? Do you think they have a special kind of magic willpower the rest of us will never be able to access?

And are such assumptions actually a secret weapon of Sabotage You (see below); a powerful way to keep you stuck in body hatred?

It's not your bathroom scales or the labels on your clothes that determine your body confidence; it's how you think and what you do.

## K is for The Fisher King

(OK, OK so it's technically F...)

The Robin Williams' film, *The Fisher King* (1991), tells the story of one man's redemption from his past mistakes, selfishness, and his meaningless life. There is a wonderful subplot involving Lydia (played by Amanda Plummer), a shy, lonely and anxious office worker whose life is the same colour as her clothes - entirely beige.

A series of events leads to Lydia having a manicure with Anne (Mercedes Ruehl), an ex-beautician. Anne is the polar opposite of Lydia: she's all big hair, high heels, and has a wise-crack ever at the ready: mostly at the expense of her self-absorbed and thoughtless boyfriend, Jack (Jeff Bridges).

In this scene, Lydia complains bitterly about her boring and romance-free existence.

**Lydia:** *I don't make an impression on people.*

**Anne:** *You gotta be a little easier on yourself... alright, you're not a supermodel. We can't all be Jerry Hall. What a boring world it would be if we were all Jerry Hall. You do the best you can with what you've got.*

Lydia goes through her own transformation in the film, and as she grows in confidence we see her shed the beige for a far more colourful, feminine look. She is still nothing like a supermodel - but that would not be the true Lydia. Her new look is an expression of better body confidence, which has grown as part of her personal evolution. It expresses her decision to at last play her hand in the game of life.

Anyone can have a makeover for a day and become someone else's idea of catwalk worthy...until it's time to get changed.

The real gold lies in becoming the creative director of your own body confidence. Finding out what works on you.

This is what Lydia does in *The Fisher King*. Watch the movie, and ask yourself if chasing after airbrushed perfectionism would have made her look any better, or is she perfect as she is at the end of the film?

Doing the best with what you've got, as Anne puts it, is not a consolation prize in the beauty parade of life. It helps you reclaim your life because it is a movement that taps into your personal power.

## L is for Lamilly

Lamilly is the best news in the world for parents of young girls.

At last, someone has invented a normal-sized Barbie.

:)

Sorry, I think that should be

:-)

The end is in sight for the shameful 1984-style brainwashing that pre-adolescent girls have had to endure for the last 50-odd years. To see this wonderful invention for yourself, go to [www.theshiftinside.com/lamily/](http://www.theshiftinside.com/lamily/) where you can watch a video about the Lamally doll.

## M is for Minus Size

Australian model Robyn Lawley is a spanner in the works of thin fascism. She has been labelled a plus-size model, to which she retorted:

*I'm normal size. Why am I called plus size? The skinny models should be called minus size.*

(from *The Times* magazine, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2014)

The language we use to describe our world actually shapes that world. Do you think that if every supermodel whose body resembled a pre-adolescent boy was called minus size, many of us might have a rather better relationship with our own more womanly bodies?

I am definitely NOT saying that we should start sidelining slim people. I've coached clients with this story to tell, and I know that thin bullying is as harmful as fat bullying.

What I'm saying is that any overly simplistic term like *plus-size* is toxic nonsense because it has the arrogance to proclaim that there is one single shape that is the norm.

Remember when racial segregation was the norm? Sexism? Homophobia?

Just as they are no longer acceptable, so the beginning of the end is at last in sight for size zeroism. My aim in this book is to get your feelings on board with this. It's one thing to intellectually embrace a range of body shapes as the norm, and quite another to start accepting your own body emotionally.

If you think that the degree to which you like your body is out of your control (i.e. a natural outcome of how valid you think it is), I've got some good news for you:

### YOU ARE WRONG!

This book has some real, practical things you can do today to start accepting your body; for example priming, mirror work, and creating a vision board.

These may feel uncomfortable. The part of you that wants things easy and straightforward will scream and shout, and try to drag you back to the false security of body hatred, because it doesn't challenge you.

As someone who has lived through that discomfort - and I still have days where I feel lardy and a big lump - I can tell you that it's like taking out a splinter. That is to say, temporarily uncomfortable.

### *Can I Ask You A Favour?*

*At the end of this book, I'm going to ask a favour of you. The only thing it will cost you is 5 to 10 minutes of your time. I'd like you to give me an honest Amazon review.*

*I hope you will agree that this subject is a very important one, and if everyone who reads this book gets just one idea that builds their body confidence, the world will be a better place – even if only a bit.*

*The more reviews this book has, the more people will be willing to give it a try – and so we all open up more possibilities for people to be happier, and the better I can develop my ideas for future books.*

*I'm looking for warts-and-all reviews. Tell me what I've left out or missed the mark with, as well as what you liked!*

## **N is for Now You**

David McRaney, in his book *You Are Not So Smart*, describes a very interesting way that many people sabotage themselves: Now You.

### **Who is Now You?**

McRaney says that when we plan any change that requires serious effort, we place all our hopes and dreams in the hands of our future selves. This is the perfect version of the messy, flawed creature that is us. We envision a glorious tomorrow; a time when we cut up our credit cards, refuse dessert and attend the gym three times a week... without the slightest resistance.

The problem with these plans is that Future You cannot implement them. The only person who can do that is Now You.

And Now You finds it much, much harder to budget, diet, and gym it regularly.

Changing my life through dismantling my food compulsion and transforming my body hatred has been partly about reframing these behaviours and their root causes. But a huge part of the process has been about changing Now Me.

Instead of fantasising about the amazing feats of transformation Future Me would accomplish just around the corner of my life (while Now Me binged and hid my body away in oversized shapeless wear), I discovered that the way to eat better, budget better (actually you can remove the word 'better' from that sentence...) and get myself to take exercise was to work with Now Me.

Coax her.

Trick her into doing the right thing.

Bribe her.

Distract her.

What's all this got to do with giving yourself more body confidence?

People check out of their body with the help of their future selves. *I'll apply for that promotion when I get a better wardrobe. And I'll buy those clothes when I've lost X pounds. I'll start dating when I'm fitter.*

Now You isn't going to help you if you constantly ignore it in favour of Future You fantasies.

## O is for O-Rings

Is your mind reeling? Did you skip to this section, horrified, but curious to know what disgusting physical deformity o-rings are? Are they some terrible new form of stretch mark? And more importantly, how can you cover them up?

Never fear, dear reader. I'm hoping by now that you know I couldn't give a toss about your stretch marks.

O-rings have nothing to do with body confidence... well, not directly.

They are a metaphor.

In February 1986, NASA saw its worst ever disaster as The Space Shuttle Challenger exploded during its launch at Cape Canaveral. All seven of its crew perished, including Christa McAuliffe, who was to have been the first teacher in space.

The root cause of this catastrophe was the malfunction of rubber O-rings, which were designed to seal in gases in the rocket. The O-rings failed because the low temperatures outside rendered them ineffective. The worst thing was that some of the NASA engineers knew the rings had never been tested in these conditions (there was ice on the launch pad that morning), and tried to raise their concerns with their managers.

Those in authority, however, gave the green light to the mission. Their need to push on was a death sentence for the crew.

The disastrous story of the O-rings is a lesson to us all. It teaches us to prioritise what is important in the moment. That day in February 1986, the pressure was on to

make a management decision. Tragically, the power lay in the hands of those who let that pressure be the number one priority.

Taking no action was unthinkable.

Then the unthinkable happened.

The truth is that had the top-level NASA staff given themselves the space to NOT take action in that moment, they would have averted disaster and saved seven lives. If the top brass had had their engineering hats on, the priorities would have been caution and safety. Instead, they let NASA's need to take action overrule common sense.

The lesson here is that you must decide your own priorities. The reason that 99.9% of people live in the land of body hatred is that they have let 21st century culture dictate their priorities. See T for more on this.

What might some better priorities be? Let me give you a list of what mine were when I started dismantling my body hatred. At the time I didn't consciously identify them as such, but you can.

\* To untether myself from airbrushed perfectionism.

\* To strengthen the connection in my mind between femininity and quiet power (See Q for more on this).

\* To sit with the discomfort created by putting on clothes that made me look better, and know that discomfort was temporary.

\* To experiment (See E for more on this).

## P is for Petra's Story

Imagine the up-and-coming 18-year-old sports star whose hopes for an Olympic gold medal are destroyed by a long-term knee injury. Let's call her Petra. What would you say to this devastated shell of a teenager? You'd say that she has so much to look forward to. You'd say that five years from now, everything will look so different. You'd know that eventually she would reframe this apparent disaster and succeed in creating a successful, happy life some other way.

But what if Petra lived in a world almost entirely populated by similar athletes who had never managed to let go of their dream? The Olympic Village of Failed Ambition. Can you see how five years in the future she could very easily still be singing the bitter and twisted song of *If Only*?

I see the vast majority of people as living parallel lives as Petra - with their real, imperfect bodies replacing the injury and diet clubs replacing the other 'failed' sports stars. Too many people think that just because they have not reached the pinnacle of perfection (looking like a supermodel), then they are worthless.

This is absolutely crazy. In what other area of life does this insane logic apply?

Imagine Petra has a brother called Patrick. After years of studying hard, he lands a well-paid job as a computer programmer. He tells his family and friends. Is everyone going to turn their noses up and say, "Well if the job's not at Microsoft HQ working alongside Bill Gates, then I don't know what you've got to be proud of?"

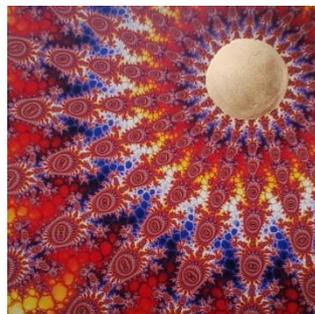
Imagine you go out one night with your friends. You've had a particularly stressful week. You misunderstand an innocent comment and BAM! You blow up at your best friend. The next day, someone informs you of what was really said. When you ring your friend and apologise deeply and sincerely, when you send him flowers and offer to walk his dog for a month to compensate, what is he going to say? "I never want to see you again. How could you have said those things? I'll take those comments to the grave!"

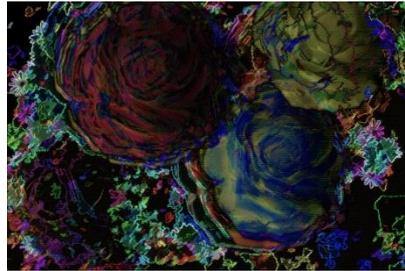
Probably not. He will forgive you, because he knows that people, like careers, like life, are imperfect.

Imagine you want to become an artist at the ripe old age of 43. While having no natural talent for painting.

I have zero natural artistic talent. Don't get me wrong: I love painting. I don't do a bad job splashing some emulsion over my living room walls, but that's where my artistic talents end. When I was a teacher, I once made a class almost cry (with laughter - but it was a close thing), when I drew a cartoon snake on the board.

I'd love to be able to produce canvases like these ones created by my artist friend Sian from Nuk&Kransy:





But it's never going to happen. My skill lies in crafting words, not images.

So what should I do? Spend my whole life bemoaning the fact I'll never produce anything like these gorgeous creations? Going to art clubs and faithfully promising to work hard at my painting, as if it were some hideous maths project I needed top marks for?

Of course not.

Instead, I mess around painting with my kids. Art is something that I enjoy for what it does for me. And actually I'm quite good at collage (see my vision board later in this book).

All of this is boringly obvious, I know.

But here's the thing.

What if it wasn't painting I was talking about, but rather having a body like a supermodel?

99% of women and girls (and an increasing number of males) are behaving as if they are failed artists who never really had the ability to paint in the first place.

What a huge bloody waste.

This is what airbrushed perfectionism does to people. It makes them try to aim for something that is not only impossible, but *isn't right for them*. Very few people are naturally tall and skinny.

We are all walking around talking to ourselves as if we are the insanely perfectionist friend who never forgives. And we're being down on the very thing - our body - that gives us life, sustains us, and allows us to have the greatest experiences on earth.

This book will help you get off the body shame roundabout of misery: that insane perfection-or-nothing logic that is currently brainwashing you, along with 99% of the population. I know you think there is no off switch, but I'm here to tell you there is. I've found it, and so have many others. Let me show you that switch in your mind.

P is also for **Priming** (see the letter V for more details).

## Q is for Quiet Power

As your body confidence grows, you develop quiet power.

Quiet power is the knowledge that you can change, and the ability to let others be stuck in disembodiment.

It's the power to know that the discomfort caused by getting glammed up (when you'd much rather stick to that baggy old jumper) is temporary.

It's the ability to ignore, or at least sit with, that discomfort.

This power is the sure knowledge that your self-worth is not reliant on your reflection...and equally, you can put on your heels and best dress if it makes you feel good.

It's the decision to step outside the so-called normal values of 'Health and Beauty' (translation: self-Hatred and Beating yourself up) even when your sabotage self is screaming at you to comply with mass dieting decrees worthy of the nastiest playground bully.

Just like any natural skill, it gets easier to live in your quiet power the more you access it.

Which is, if you think about it, the polar opposite of dieting and unused gym memberships.

They NEVER get easier.

## R is for Revolution!

Yes my friends, the body confidence revolution is here! Once upon a time racial segregation was OK - then Rosa Parks sat in the 'wrong' seat on her local bus and started a revolution.

Once upon a time homophobia was OK.

Same goes for sexism.

In the same way that those prejudices had a shelf life of cultural acceptability, so the days of size zeroism are numbered.

Here's what has been happening in the body confidence revolution at the time of writing - early 2015 (See resources for links):

**2004:** Dove launch their **Campaign For Real Beauty**, which celebrates the natural range of body shapes and sizes.

**2006: Body Gossip** is born. Organisation campaigning to help everyone have greater body confidence through arts and education. Originator of possibly my favourite tagline of all time: *Rock your own brand of gorgeous.*

**March 2010:** British MPs Jo Swinson and Lynne Featherstone launch the first ever **Body Confidence awards** in the UK.

**May 2012: All Walks Beyond The Catwalk** is born  
Not for profit fashion activism working within the fashion industry, education and parliament

**Summer 2013:** The first **Lamilly** (see L) doll goes on sale.

**2014:** Online fashion retailer, **Net A Porter**, starts pushing its high-end designers to produce bigger sizes as its (UK) sizes 14 and 16 sell out first.

**Summer 2014:** **Meghan Trainor** tops the charts in 17 countries with sales of over 6 million for *All About That Bass*. Lyrics include *I ain't no size two/but I can shake it*.

(I know this song has caused some controversy for what some see as skinny shaming. I personally disagree, and feel it's valid to include here).

**September 2014:** First ever plus-sized catwalk show at London Fashion Week

**October 2014:** The first **Body Confidence Week** takes place in the UK, organised by the **Be Real Campaign**.

**October 2014:** The Victoria's Secret *Perfect Body* ad campaign comes under fire for dictating what is acceptable for a woman's body. 27,000 people sign a change.org petition, forcing the lingerie company to change the wording on the ad.

**January 2015:** In just a few weeks, photographer **Victoria Janashvili** raises over \$40,000 in crowdfunding for her coffee table book *Curves*, featuring curvaceous models.

In addition to this, I want to highlight the general trend in recent years towards women with real bodies being in the spotlight. The rise of reality TV (especially *The X Factor*) has played an underrated part in this.

Just look at the growing number of real women with real bodies gracing our TV screens and/or making an impact on the world today.

I did a very informal poll (i.e. posted a question on Facebook) asking for the names of female celebrities with non-supermodel bodies whom people admire.

Here is the complete list, according to anyone who chipped in:

Miranda Hart, Adele, Oprah, Kathy Bates, Aretha Franklin, Dawn French, Sarah Millican, Kathleen Turner, Kirsty MacColl, Sandi Toksvig, Maya Angelou, Pauline Quirke, Meryl Streep, Amanda Lamb, Victoria Wood, Jo Brand, Kirstie Allsop, Nigella Lawson, Roseanne Barr, Sophie Dahl, Sarah Ferguson, Helena Bonham Carter, Eva Mendes, Helen Mirren, Queen Elizabeth II, Beyonce, Christina Hendricks, Marilyn Monroe, Katherine Zeta Jones, Elizabeth Taylor, Holly Willoughby, Jennifer Lopez, Queen Latifah, Alison Moyet, Rikki Lake, Meghan Trainor, Beth Ditto, Christina Aguilera, Gloria Hunniford, Betty White, Rosa Parks, Wangari Maathai, Rebel Wilson, Melissa McCarthy, Camryn Manheim, Ann Wilson (from the rock group Heart), Angela Merkel, Dilma Rousseff, and Hillary Clinton.

I must admit I was tempted to censor this list because it includes one ex-plus sized model (Sophie Dahl) who has indeed slimmed down to the beauty industry norm, and more than one celeb who has resorted to drastic weight loss measures.

But I decided to just let you, the reader, use your intelligence. In the same way that a book can impact the reader in ways that maybe the author hasn't intended, so a celebrity can inspire others when she in fact feels disempowered herself (I must confess my bias that extreme dieting equals disempowerment. It is not always the case. Dawn French, for example, lost a lot of weight quickly in order to have an operation). Who am I to censor this list?

I am writing this book during a cold, grey December when not only am I preparing a new course for January, but life is stuffed to the rafters with exhausting extra-

curricular Yuletide preparations, not to mention my latest job adjudicating the play fights between my two increasingly Christmas-crazed kids with British weather-induced claustrophobia.

No matter - every morning I get up at 5am and write this book.

And why am I heaping this extra work onto myself?

Because *I can't not do it.*

Body confidence should not be some dry, earnest subject where academics sit around describing the present state of mass cultural disembodiment and link it to the sociological and psychological factors at play. Of course that has its place, and it's vital to know why we are in this mess.

But here's the thing: body confidence is something you live, not something you study.

The real gold is in going beyond the *Why* and diving into the *What Now?* That's why I had to write this book - because of the lack of resources that say let's do it. *Let's just bloody do it.*

And *that* is the spirit of a revolution.

## S is for Sabotage You

Sabotage You is a powerful concept which, while it may seem a bit depressing at first, is actually incredibly empowering.

The self-loathing that comes as part and parcel of low body confidence often carries a hidden (or not-so-hidden) assumption: *I am a terrible person, lacking self-discipline and willpower. I just can't want it enough.*

This idea that you are some one-dimensional personality out to ruin your own life is the first thing that must change if you want to change. It also makes no sense. If you are out to ruin your own life, then surely that's two opposing energies in your mind?

How about this concept instead:

*You are a collection of different energies.*

I find it helps to think of these energies as people. You already know on an intuitive level that sometimes you can be a really good person (the one who gives up your seat to an old lady even when your feet are killing you). And sometimes you can be a bit sneaky (who hasn't queue jumped at the supermarket before?)

In the example above, we can see how the idea of these energies is helpful because we can start to consciously choose which person we want to be at any given moment. This is not always simple – all I'm trying to do is to show you that it can be done.

Sabotage You is one such energy in your mind. She is the part of you that looks at your reflection in the mirror and wants to throw the towel in via a quick calorie-filled trip to the fridge. The one who tells you you'll always be fat but insists on keeping up the diet club subscription.

She is also the founder and director of Critical Bitch FM.

I bet you can't stand her, can you?

But there's something I think you should know about her.

**Sabotage You is not your enemy.** Despite all the evidence to the contrary, she is actually trying to do the best she can for you. She's just got it badly wrong. Think of her as the overly-strict parents who forbid their daughter to go travelling. She craves adventure, but all they see is danger.

I see so many books on eating issues that want to help you *overcome* the issue. *Squash* it. *Evict* it from your life. *Cleanse* yourself of any apparent defects.

The truth is that the real power to change your life lies not in overcoming these problems, but in *understanding* them. This allows you to *dismantle* them far more powerfully than you would by making them the enemy.

The way I did this was to get to know my sabotage self, and acknowledge her. Then, armed with my insider info on the reasons I was diminishing myself, it was far easier to overrule her.

Imagine the girl who holds her head high and says, "Mum, Dad - I know you are just trying to look after me by trying to forbid me to go travelling. But here's the thing: I'm 18. I love you, but I need to live my life. I'm off - bye for now."

How much more powerful and happy is she than the girl who rants and raves at her parents then runs away in the middle of the night, only to return a few hours later, because she lacked the confidence to get on the plane.

The secret is to tap into ALL the energies running your mind and redeploy them.

Most relevant for dismantling the hold Sabotage You has over your life is Rebel You - a massively underrated force for change.

At the moment Rebel You is probably Sabotage You's sidekick. You start the diet on Monday. By Thursday, Sabotage You has orchestrated your first binge. But she's far too clever to do her own dirty work. Instead, it is Rebel You who provides the energy to mess up your best laid plans. "Sod it!" you sigh as you throw the towel in.

One of my clients came to me as a diet club refugee. She told me how, for every member of her club, Wednesday was curry night – the post-weigh in ritual.

You can see how everyone's sabotage self created a perfect storm of hunger, boredom and struggle. Once they'd proved what good slimmers they were, their Rebel Selves stepped in to reclaim their right to enjoy food.

For a couple of hours.

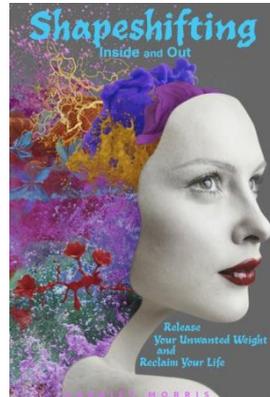
However, they couldn't *really* enjoy their food because enjoyment was mixed with rebellion.

There is massive untapped power in Rebel You. Just as reformed thieves make the best security advisors, and recovering alcoholics can become truly inspirational role models for those who are still drinking a bottle of vodka a day, you too can access this energy within to give you the courage needed to transform your food rebellion into fuel for deep, lasting change.

I will have food rebellion in my psychological DNA all my life - but I manage it well nowadays. I am in successful recovery.

Part of my journey from body hatred to body confidence has been redeploying Rebel Harriet. Turning her against my sabotage self. I talk about both Sabotage You and Rebel You more in my book *Shapeshifting Inside and Out: Release Your Unwanted*

*Weight and Reclaim Your Life*, but for now I just want you to open yourself to the idea that you can redeploy psychological energies within yourself to serve and empower you.



## T is for The Tribal Mind

One of the most useful concepts I've come across in my whole journey from overweight-food-compulsive-and-expert-in-physical-self-loathing to body-confidence-coach-in-successful-recovery is this:

*We are all tribal creatures*

We may think we are sophisticated individuals who know our own minds. And indeed we are. You are a completely unique human being. There is no one on earth just like you.

Now, see how long you'd survive without the support of others, even if it's just to get a power supply to charge up your smartphone.

The thing is, while our technological advances have pushed the frontier of human achievement further than at any time in history, on an evolutionary level, we are still at cave woman stage.

So the tribe we live in is far more important to our sense of self than we'd like to admit.

And because the very technological advances we are so used to - TV, Internet, smart phones, cars - have the effect of isolating many people, everyone starts unconsciously looking for a new chief, some unifying social force that will persuade us we are still part of a tribe, even though we don't speak to our neighbours any more.

That new chief is consumerism. You buy, therefore you are.

Big Chief Consumerism has some very pressing priorities. To be in his tribe, you must also take them on as YOUR priorities.

Here are some of them:

- \* **There is a uniform standard for beauty.** You must enslave yourself to that ideal.
  
- \* **People are too impatient** to seek anything except quick and easy solutions to the deep problems of human existence. For example, why accept the approach of middle age when the latest face cream allows you to defy mortality (for all of a few minutes each day)?
  
- \* **Companies need to crank out** a never-ending supply of these quick and easy solutions because ultimately, they are completely ineffective. Hence the multi-billion pound diet industry that is built on failure.
  
- \* **All these solutions must telegraph the underlying message** that the consumer is deeply defective, and needs product X to be fixed. In spite of the consistent failure

of diets to achieve weight loss, anti-ageing products to prevent wrinkles and self-help books to make people happier, the masses keep coming back for more. Big Chief Consumerism concludes that people somehow want to believe they are broken. And the next shiny bright new magic pill must (appear to) give the people what they want.

## U is for Uncanny Valley

I watch a lot of kids' films - sometimes they are the only way to get through a wet Sunday afternoon when my boys are threatening to play their favourite game of let's-sit-on-each-others'-heads-and-steal-food-ten-minutes-before-dinner. And my favourite children's characters are Wallace and Gromit. (if you've never heard of them, I've included a video in the webpage mentioned below).

What's very interesting about Wallace and Gromit is that the animation is much less technically sophisticated than many other competitors of its genre.

But - to my mind, at least - this animation is far more visually satisfying. I hadn't thought about this much until a friend introduced me to the concept of *the uncanny valley*.

The uncanny valley is a phenomenon where a robot or animated person's features are very lifelike, but they miss the mark. This causes more than disappointment in us. It creates quite a powerful feeling of revulsion.

If you visit <http://www.theshiftinside.com/uncanny/> I've posted a video that explains it much better than I can here.

What's all this got to do with body image?

When I heard about the uncanny valley, I realised that the reason that Wallace and Gromit are so popular is not just that they are gentle and eccentric.

It's that they provide a welcome break for our minds from the uncanny valley.

The creators of Wallace and Gromit must have sat down and said, "We're not even going to try to compete with modern, ultra-sophisticated CGI. We're taking ourselves out of a race we can never win. We're going to produce something completely different."

And people love it.

When today's Pixar and Dreamworks films have been eclipsed by even more advanced animation techniques, Wallace and Gromit will still be as popular as ever because they have no competitors. They create on their own terms.

Giving yourself more body confidence is the equivalent of stepping outside the superficially exciting, but ultimately disappointing, race to produce the most advanced animation.

Nobody can win the techno-animation competition, because the best efforts of CGI can only push animators down into the uncanny valley.

Nobody can win the competition to be the thinnest, because in the universe of airbrushed perfectionism, flesh and blood perfection is unattainable.

Body confidence says: *I'm taking myself out of the size 0 race, and the competition to punish myself slim that uses self-loathing as motivational fuel.*

Curvy supermodels will probably not thank me for comparing them to Wallace and Gromit, but I hope you get the point. In years to come, people will still be watching this hapless and loveable pair in the same way we are still watching the *Star Wars* series and the Ealing and Hitchcock films. Body confidence is something that lasts your whole life. It is something you can pass on to your kids and those around you currently stuck in disconnection and physical self-loathing.

It really is your choice.

## V is for Vision Board with a Difference

You may have come across vision boards in relation to goal setting. You know the ones: create a collage of all the things you want to achieve.

A body confidence vision board is subtly different; it has a very specific purpose: **priming**.

Vision boards are used in goal setting to bring the desired end result alive in the mind of the person setting that target, to keep them motivated. You've probably seen images of thin women stuck onto fridges, crappy diet fridge magnets and so forth.

And they never work.

They fail so spectacularly because:

- (a) It is propaganda, courtesy of the airbrush police.
- (b) They leapfrog a vital first step, which is priming.

Priming is a psychological concept that allows you to recondition your brain. The starting point is the understanding that we are subtly influenced by, not just other people around us, but by the physical environment and images we see and experience every day.

Change these images and you start to recondition your mind and have a different, more empowering idea of beauty. This is not just earnest new age talk. I've done it myself, as I explain below.

If you want more body confidence, you absolutely must recondition your mind to see a wider range of body types as beautiful. Imagine if all supermodels had a BMI of between 25 and 30. That would increase most women's body confidence by about 150%.

This would be a great example of priming.

Things are changing, and the days of size zeroism are numbered, but we need to consciously recondition our minds ourselves.

Enter the body confidence vision board.

I got the idea for it over a year ago, when I picked up an article about the Australian supermodel Robyn Lawley (see M for more on her). I remember thinking *What a positive role model.*

Except a rogue thought kept infiltrating my worthy ruminations:

*OMG her thighs are HUGE.*

I realised this wasn't the most helpful thing to think. Robyn herself, with not only a stunningly beautiful face but masses of confidence and a nice big bank balance to boot, clearly does not give a toss about this.

It occurred to me that being worthy and politically correct would never change my mind about what I perceived as her physical flaws.

Then I had an idea.

I put up all the pictures from the article in my office, so they sat just at the periphery of my vision. Due to the high frequency of staring-out-of-the-window time we writers need (honest!), the images were positioned so that I would be glancing at them multiple times every day.

And over the next few months, Robyn's thighs changed. They stopped being *OMG huge*. They became neutral, bigger than the images that were being fed to me by the airbrush police - but at some point I said to myself: *So What?*

### **Your Vision Board**

I took this a step further and created a vision board of images of women with beautiful bodies that do not fit airbrushed perfectionism. I have made a video about my board at <http://www.theshiftinside.com/vision/>

Now, go and create your own board. Spend an evening finding images and have some real fun. You can even enjoy the *OMG her thighs are huge discomfort* if you need to. Treat it as an experiment in seeing how long it takes for you to become neutral about certain aspects of these images that may be super challenging right now.

For about a trillion brownie points, I have an advanced step that you may choose to take. Print a picture of yourself dressed up from your homework (see B) and include that. You are now up there with your favourite curvy supermodels. Look at the tribe you've just joined!

## W is for What If I Can't Love My Body As It Is?

There is a whole movement within the body confidence movement that is all about loving your body as it is.

This is a laudable sentiment, and if you can do that then I say *hallelujah*.

For me, attempting to plaster love over loathing was like a trying to apply new coat of magnolia paint over a fluorescent yellow, green and orange flower pattern. It never really worked.

The thing is, it's just not that simple.

I can honestly say I love my body now (most of the time), but I needed to do a whole lot of reframing and curiosity-driven change work on myself to achieve that.

The fact is that for so many people, body hatred holds the key to discovering what is really holding them back in life. Can you accept that your low body confidence just might be an elaborate scam created by Sabotage You to keep you diminished, for her own very good reasons?

I have a suggestion. Instead of fruitlessly trying to plaster love over loathing, how about going for acceptance?

You won't feel neutral straightaway, but isn't it a better goal to aim for than what feels like impossible love?

Acceptance isn't something that the conscious mind decides to just take on. It is daily practices like priming (see V) that will embed that acceptance into your subconscious.

And guess what? From acceptance, love can grow. Think of it as fertiliser for personal change.

## W is also for Weight Loss Is (Sort of) Not The Answer

99% of people in body hatred believe that they would love their bodies if only they lost weight.

This is wrong. How many people do you know who complain bitterly that they *just need* to lose that last 5lb?

I have a question for those people. Exactly *how* will their life change when this happens?

However, I want to make the case here that shedding excess weight *can* be part of the recipe for body confidence – if done in the right way.

I held onto my excess weight as a protection mechanism for decades, one that was outdated and malfunctioning. My shapeshifting journey has been a multi-layered process of deep soul-mining: understanding the reasons I overate, while learning to honour my body for what it was, and staying with the surprising (and entirely temporary) discomfort I felt when I released that unnecessary weight. The overarching goal was always connecting to my core self and my power.

So while I maintain that weight loss (I prefer *release*) is definitely NOT the path to body confidence, *it can be an important piece of the puzzle*, as long as it happens in a way that serves you. For example, drastically reducing my consumption of processed sugar helped me release weight in an empowered way, first and foremost because it balanced my hormones, wiped out my PMT, levelled my mood swings and gave me a huge surge of energy, which hasn't abated in over two years. Basically, sugar created a crazy rollercoaster for my brain chemistry: Disneyland In Hell. I couldn't even contemplate making better food choices or accepting my imperfect body while still a slave to the world's most socially acceptable addiction. I must add that I haven't cut sugar out completely – I know how much, and in what form, I can take it.

Not everyone is so affected by sugar. Only experimentation can tell you what affects you the most.

Do you see how neither body confidence nor weight release should be your end goals? Instead, make them the paths to your true purpose in life. Mine is empowerment (of myself and you); yours might be freedom, or love, or anything else that lights your fire.

## **W is also for Why?**

(Don't worry, this really is the last W...)

*Why* is a very powerful word in building greater body confidence.

But, like any powerful tool, it must be used carefully.

Let me explain.

Most people misuse this word. For example:

### **Why is my bum so big in this dress?**

...is code for *I really hate my bum and I want to disempower myself by asking a question I can't answer.*

### **Why can't I lose the weight?**

...is usually code for *I really hate my perceived lack of willpower and I am not in fact interested in knowing the answer to this question.*

## **Effective uses of the word *Why***

**Why does 99.9% of the population, no matter what shape they are, hate their bodies?** If millions of people are suffering with the same problem, then maybe *everyone isn't actually defective*. Maybe they are just tackling the problem in the wrong way. Maybe Big Chief Consumerism is leading everyone down a blind alley.

**Why can't I *really* lose the weight?** This is powerful and ultimately life-changing when asked in a neutral way. Just posing this question takes you out of your self-loathing for a minute and taps into your curiosity - the main fuel for experimentation (see E).

Many toxic thought patterns and unhelpful behaviours actually serve some function for us. My sabotage self always had very good, if utterly misguided, reasons for masterminding my excess weight and poor body confidence. Poor body confidence is NOT the result of excess weight (if it was, then everyone with a BMI of 25 would love their bodies). To think so is to fall for the bullshit PR that Sabotage You serves up to keep you diminished.

## *X is for The X Factor of Change*

You've probably heard of the talent show *The X Factor*, and most people have a vague understanding of this phrase as being that indefinable thing that makes someone special.

X factor also has another, more specific, meaning:

*A variable in a given situation that could have the most significant impact on the outcome.*

What is the x factor in gaining more body confidence? What's the one thing that makes more difference than anything else?

*\* Is it having better role models, like Ashley Graham and Robyn Lawley?*

*\* Is it doing an intellectual intervention when Critical Bitch FM is playing at full volume in your mind?*

*\* Is it buying better tailored clothes?*

*\* Is it priming your subconscious with a stunning vision board?*

I have no answer for you, because **this whole process is about you empowering yourself**. No one else on earth can do that for you. I hope that this book offers you inspiration and some practical ideas to start the deep soul-mining that is part of this change work.

Make no mistake, you are the only one who can give yourself body confidence.

The reasons you are in voluntary enslavement to airbrushed perfectionism are most probably only partly cultural. You may well have personal reasons underpinning your body doubt as well. The cultural/personal body doubt mix is as individual as your fingerprints.

So try everything I suggest. If only one or two ideas work for you, but they turn out to be the x factors of change, then I will have achieved something with this book.

Or rather, YOU will have.

## *Y is for You Can Do This*

There is something you need to accept if you truly want to be more body confident.

You won't like it, but here goes:

In this world of magic pill solutions to deeply embedded problems (change your life for only £99 with this self-study pack; lose a stone in a month - yada yada blah blah blah), it is likely that you have been brainwashed into giving up on any self-help strategy that doesn't offer quick and easy results on a smooth continuum of progress.

Newsflash: gaining body confidence is not a quick process.

It's not easy - not at the start, anyway.

And it's definitely not a smooth climb to success like some perfect sales graph.

It's practising looking in the mirror and saying, "It is what it is" regularly (and I mean almost daily), while squirming and inadvertently playing Critical Bitch FM... then one day you look at yourself and a feeling of, not love exactly, but... well, *like* sweeps over you.

It's that moment when you realise you don't need to love every part of your body - that NOT needing to love it is the key. It's about removing your stretch marks, muffin top, flabby arms, and non-perky boobs from the scrutiny of airbrushed perfectionism. It's covering that mental surveillance camera with masking tape and saying *I refuse to downgrade my precious life-giving body to your one-dimensional-why-aren't-you-Kate-Moss points system where zero is the pinnacle of achievement (What's next? Size minus 2???)*

If you accept this, you can do this. You can **definitely** do this.

It just takes time. But that time is going to pass anyway.

Ask yourself: *Where do you want to be this time next year?*

The good news is that once you start to gain body confidence, you can't go back.

## Z is for Zero Tolerance

What are you tolerating in your life and within your mind that is diminishing your body confidence?

For example:

\* Critical Bitch FM's greatest hits, AKA the put downs you silently churn out on a daily basis. *I'll start dating when I lose x pounds... There's no point in going for that*

*promotion. I know Jeanette wants it, and she's much x-er than I am... Why can't I fit into my jeans? I've just got no willpower.*

\* Your tacit agreement of others' put downs.

\* The job, the relationship or the habit that diminishes you.

It can be downright painful to swap resignation for intolerance, but there is great untapped energy in that intolerance. It forces you to take action.

## Final Words & Resources

I hope that you now have a good grasp of what being more body confident is about. It's not about having the perfect body - although once you stop waging The War of The Mirrors against yourself every time you pass a shop window, it's possible that the excess weight you are carrying will become unnecessary and much, much easier to lose.

This book is definitely not the final word on this subject. Nor is it a magic pill. It's you that has to face your fears of looking more glamorous, sit through the discomfort of implementing the ideas you've just read about, and go against the massively popular and useless strategy of hating your body into perfectionism.

No book can do that for you.

It takes courage to unhook yourself from airbrushed perfectionism.

And time.

However, the great thing is that once you start, you feel a whole lot better, because at last you are tapping into the wellspring of your personal power.

And the benefits of greater body confidence are huge (pun intended). Being able to enjoy your weekends, unhindered by self-loathing dressed up as petty anxieties. Knowing that you may have gained a few Christmas pounds, but you can still go out tonight looking bloody good because you have that tummy-disguising outfit in your wardrobe – the one that you had the courage to try on months ago, even when you were convinced it just wasn't you (code for *too beautiful for a worthless hag like me*).

## What Now?

Body confidence coaching is available in person, by phone or Skype/FaceTime. This one-to-one work will help you refocus the energy you are presently wasting on body hatred, and channel it into personal transformation. You have a great deal of untapped potential for change, and the freedom that releasing this potential offers my clients is life-changing.

Go to <http://www.theshiftinside.com/body-confidence-coaching/> for more details.

## Free Video Course



What's it about? Find out at...

[www.TheShiftInside.com/gift](http://www.TheShiftInside.com/gift)

## Oh Yes, One Last Thing...

If *The A to Z of Better Body Image* has helped you, can I ask you something? I would love for you to review the book on Amazon. I'm not looking for reviews that look like my mum wrote them - I want honesty, warts and all. Reviews are the lifeblood of any book.

I hope you will agree that this subject is a very important one, and if everyone who reads this book gets just one idea that builds their body confidence, the world will be a better place for it.

The more reviews this book has, the more people will be willing to give it a try – and so we all open up more possibilities for people to be happier, and the better I can develop my ideas for future books.

## Resources

Here are all of the links to the videos & other resources mentioned in the book:

\* The Lamilly Doll

[www.theshiftinside.com/lamilly/](http://www.theshiftinside.com/lamilly/)

\* The Uncanny Valley

<http://www.theshiftinside.com/uncanny/>

\* The Body Confidence Vision Board

[www.theshiftinside.com/vision/](http://www.theshiftinside.com/vision/)

\* *Shapeshifting Inside and Out: Release Your Unwanted Weight and Reclaim Your Life*

Available at <http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B00OHMO5RG>

*Audio version available January 2015*



\* Body Gossip <http://www.bodygossip.org/>

\* All Walks Beyond The Catwalk <http://www.allwalks.org/>

\* Body Confidence awards  
<https://campaignforbodyconfidence.wordpress.com/>

\* The Be Real Campaign <http://www.berealcampaign.co.uk/>

\* *Curves* by Victoria Janashvili <http://curvesthebook.com/>

\* Contact **Sian Brophy**, artist extraordinaire AKA Nuk&Kransy at:

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### About The Author

Harriet Morris is a body confidence coach and the UK's leading voice in eating psychology. She spent years of misery on various diets, detoxes, fasts and other weight loss methods, all of which were doomed to failure. At the age of 40, she woke up to the power of her mind to help her change her shape and dismantle a 30-year compulsive eating problem. She lost 3 stone (over 40lb) on a no-diet, empowered adventure in weight release before training in eating psychology and body image with The Institute for The Psychology of Eating. She also offers talks to businesses, organisations and schools. Harriet has 2 children and lives in Shropshire, UK.



Find out more at [www.TheShiftInside.com](http://www.TheShiftInside.com)

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