



Comfortable in Your Own Skin

A GUIDE TO LOVING YOURSELF

Leandie du Randt

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I dedicate this book to my mother, Elmarie du Randt.

*Thank you, Mom, for your unconditional love,
attention, motivation, patience, support, praise,
encouragement and guidance.*

I will love and remember you forever.



Letter from the author

Hi girls, I am Leandie du Randt, the author of this book. I grew up in a very small town in the North West Province of South Africa, called Makwassie. This little town only has one paved road and no robots. I had to entertain myself much of the time as there were no shopping malls or cinemas nearby, and all my friends lived on farms outside of the town. This made me realise how important it is to be able to spend some time with yourself and to be able to be comfortable in your own space. Since then I have always lived in my own little imaginary world where I escape to when I need time out. When I was nine years old we moved to Kempton Park in Gauteng, where I finally joined the rest of civilisation, as most people like to call it. After school I studied at the University of Johannesburg. Today, I have a BCom (Hons) in Industrial Psychology and I am a registered psychometrist.

My passion lies in helping people to develop to their full potential, and to guide them to a greater self-knowledge or to understand why they may act or react in specific ways in certain situations. If you're not familiar with the term 'psychometrist', basically it means that as a psychometrist I have the authority to administer specific psychological assessments, to interpret such assessments and to comment on them. The psychological tests may be relevant to personality or linked to career and development, depending on the requirements of the person being tested. These tests are used to assist individuals with career selection, to learn to know themselves better, or even to identify problems or areas requiring improvement.

In addition to being a registered psychometrist, I am also an actress and have appeared in a variety of Afrikaans series, films and music videos in South Africa. I absolutely love the world of entertainment. Because I come in contact with so many different types of people on a daily basis, and am in a position to play so many different roles, I have been privileged to learn to

know myself very well. So too, do I discover something new every day about others and I try to learn from them, especially those who are different from me. It is also my dream to inspire others to reach their potential.

I wrote this book specifically for teenage girls, because it's not that long ago that I was one myself and because I have such an interest in teenage girls. It really is an amazing time in any woman's life and if you're able to steer through this time correctly, it will mould you to become the best you that you can be. I remember how bitchy girls can be at this stage and how awkward I felt in my own body because there were so many changes taking place. I also remember how I sometimes annoyed my mother and how often I just wanted to run away and never return to school or home. But I also remember how wonderful it was and how many lessons I learned from the difficult and hurtful times. And that is why I am the person I am today.

Ironically, it is only once you have completed high school and university that you realise what a good time it was and that you shouldn't have worried about so many little things and school dramas. Unfortunately, I must also warn you that girls never stop being bitchy. You simply learn not to take any notice of them and to make friends only with the non-bitchy ones and those who aren't jealous and who accept and appreciate you.

Everything that I have learnt over the past few years I'd like to share with you, so that I can help you through the things you are experiencing now. I'm not here to teach you right from wrong, I'm not your parent, teacher or spiritual leader. I am here to share my experience and life lessons with you, which will hopefully give you a better idea of what to expect and what the consequences are likely to be of decisions you make now as a teenager. The choices you make now may make or break you. Every person must follow his or her own journey through life – and what works for one, may not necessarily work for all, but the lessons we learn from the journey are pretty much the same. And that is what we will be sharing with each other in this book.



My aim with *Comfortable in Your Own Skin* is that you should learn to know yourself better during this confusing stage of life. I want to motivate you to look deep within yourself and discover who you really are: your hurts, your dreams, your passions, the things you like and dislike, and more. I want you to realise that you may be hiding something or keeping something bottled up. Perhaps you're hurting about something that has happened, or something that someone said to you in the past? It is important to open up about such things, to work through them so that you can heal and then begin to grow as a young woman. I would also like you to enjoy this beautiful stage in your life to the full.

I also want you to know that whatever you may be feeling now or whatever you may have been through, it's OK. You have a right to feel the way you do. I invite you to come with me on a journey of self discovery as we learn to know ourselves. Please open your heart and mind to the ideas and exercises we will be doing. Allow yourself to grow over the next month and to feel what you feel. Be as honest with yourself as you possibly can be.

No-one need know what you feel or think, or what you make a note of in the book. It is your personal property and nobody has the right to look at it or to read it unless you have given them permission to do so. It must become one of your best friends; you mustn't be afraid to open up and write from the heart. I have written this book to help you to heal as a person and as YOURSELF, because you are special and beautiful just as you are. Thank you for reading the book and for working through it with me. I hope you enjoy it and that you will experience more and more blessings as you read it and work through the exercises, so that you will be comfortable in your own skin! Should you have any questions arising from the book, you may contact me on the e-mail address provided at the end of the book.

Be comfortable in your own skin

Life is too short to wake up in the morning with regrets. So love the people who treat you right, forget about the ones that don't and just believe that everything happens for a reason. If you get a chance take it, if it changes your life, let it. Nobody said it would be easy, but it will be worth it.

– Anon

So many girls try to be something or someone that they aren't. Wow, that annoys me! Some continue on this road until the day they die. That's just the way it is. There are women who realise at a point in their lives that it really isn't worth trying to be someone they aren't, and then they put a stop to it.

As a teenage girl it is completely normal to go through such a stage. I mean, I did. And yes, come to think of it, I annoyed myself. I was in high school, around grade eight or nine. I would watch somebody who was cool and popular, and then try to be like her or try to make friends with her. While I was at university I remember how many clothes and hair stages I went through. I went from being a skateboard chick to a rock chick, from black hair to Barbie doll hair. Sure, it was confusing but I did it. That was my journey. Why did I do it? Because I wanted to be different.

We all want to be different, don't we?

The irony is, you were born DIFFERENT! So it doesn't matter what you do or how you look, nobody else will ever look exactly like you, or dress or sing or speak the way you do, or be you. PERIOD. You just have to be yourself, and you will automatically be different to those around you. But to be yourself, you have to know who that self is, and that is the difficult part.

Who are you? What are your likes? What do you do when you are alone? What are your private thoughts? What do you really think about the things



your friends are up to? Do you even like them? If you don't, it is OK. Remember, we're trying to figure it all out. If you think you already know who you are and what it is you want, well that's fabulous. But don't forget that you're probably still going to change your mind about people and things, so the journey of self discovery is a never-ending path. The truth is we've been placed on this earth to learn and to keep growing. Life will never be easy, but it will become easier to handle the things that life throws at you. The better you know yourself, the easier it will become to cope with your life and the more likely it is that you will truly enjoy life.

I believe that it is important to know who you are and how others view you. Are you funny? Do you have annoying or bad habits? Are you shy to speak in public or do you love to entertain people? Do you have any hobbies and what do you enjoy doing in your spare time? Are you a loyal and pleasant friend or are you the school bitch that always gossips about others? It is important to know these things and to understand what you feel and why.

It's also important to surround yourself with real friends and family who will tell you when you mess up, or when you've been rude or nasty. You need their support and encouragement when you strive towards your dreams and work hard at school, so that you can be the best 'you' possible. You should also have this type of relationship with yourself. That is what the exercises in the book are for; to allow you time with yourself each day and so to learn to know yourself better.

'You sow a thought, you reap an action. Reap an action, you sow a habit. Sow a habit, you reap a character. Sow character, you reap your destiny.' – *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*

Reputation is how other people see you, but character is what you know you are. To build good character, you need to cultivate good habits and to practise them often. These habits will mould you into a certain type of person with a certain type of character. That is precisely why it's necessary to

adopt good habits. Research has shown that it takes 21 days of practice to establish a new habit. You become what you do and think repeatedly. If you're not prepared to work on your character, or to find out who you are, you will start to believe the reputation you have gained, based on the opinions of others, instead of discovering and trusting in your own character.

This book is divided into three sections: your body, your mind and your soul. Robin Sharma talks about the three aspects of a person in his book *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*. He maintains that your body, your mind and your soul are all part of your human endowments. These endowments refer to your talents, your strength of character and things you do well. From birth, your body, mind and soul are interdependently tied together. In other words, indirectly they all support, influence and affect one another. To change your mind without considering your body will only result in tragedy. To examine your body and mind and ignore your soul will leave you feeling empty and worthless. Only if you direct your energy and love towards all these aspects of your humanity, will you begin to feel whole and fulfilled.

For the next 21 days I would encourage you to make your body, your mind and your soul your new best friends. You must treat your body, mind and soul just as you would any of your other best friends. In real life we put our best friends first, often even before ourselves, not so? But now you must make yourself your first priority. If you're not happy with yourself, or you don't love yourself, how can you love someone else, or expect them to love you?

How do you start to like yourself and to feel more comfortable with yourself? By learning to know yourself. By falling in love with yourself. I don't mean that in an egocentric way; I'm talking about respecting your own opinions, humanity, personality and endowments. Best friends are meant to bring out the best in one another and to let you be yourself. You must first give to yourself before you can expect it from others. If you could just do that, you would be less concerned about what others think of you.



I want you to create your own world in this book. Begin by learning to know your own body, mind and soul, to make friends with them; best friends. Over the next three weeks, let them to teach you about yourself. Just as you would spend time alone with your best friends in a group, spend time on your own with your body, mind and soul. So we're going to focus just on your body in the first week, your mind in the second week and your soul in the last week. After three weeks we'll combine them and by then you should have have a better idea of who you are and how you feel about yourself.

Just as any relationship needs time, loyalty and attention to grow, your body, mind and soul need this from you too. If you don't have a relationship with them, you will never grow as a woman or as a person. Each chapter has a daily exercise at the end, so you have 21 days to complete the book. The chapters aren't long and the exercises are quite simple and a lot of fun. There are also some QR codes for you to scan with your cellphone to show you how I approach the relevant exercise. Just download an app on your phone that lets you scan such QR codes. These apps are free, for instance the 'QR Barcode Scanner'. Google and you will find one suitable for your type of phone. Once you've seen what I do in the exercises and you do it yourself, you will understand the benefit, so please try them.

If you are unable to complete a chapter every day, you can also do one chapter per week. As long as you work through everything. You could even do a chapter every three days. Just don't leave it too long between chapters otherwise you'll forget what the previous chapter was about.

It is most important that you don't allow anyone to read your book unless you have given them permission to do so. It is your personal business and your heart and soul will be poured into it, so be sure to keep it in a safe place.

Remember, this is not a test – there are no right or wrong answers. It is YOUR journey and YOUR life; no-one else's opinion about it matters. Enjoy the journey and I challenge you to know yourself better by the end of it.

Part 1

YOUR BODY

*Take care of your body.
It's the only place you have to live.*

– Jim Rohn

Your body is the vessel that transports your precious insides anywhere you like. It keeps you alive. It is one of the few miracles you will experience in your life. Your body should therefore be important to you and you should take good care of it. But how do you take care of your body? By looking after it. By respecting it. By seeing it as worthy. When you look after yourself by eating well and healthily, exercising regularly and ensuring that you get enough sleep, then you are taking care of your body. You are saying: 'Thank you for this gift of life. I choose to care for myself so that I can live wholeheartedly.' Let that motivate you to stay on track with good habits. The better you look after your body and appreciate its abilities, the more it will work with you to bring you joy and help you get what you want out of life.

Your body and the way it functions to keep living must be one of the greatest miracles ever. Your body is like an engine for your mind and soul. Robin Sharma says in his book *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*, that just as you care for and feed your body, so do you care for your mind. Your body protects your organs and provides a safe place for them to function, to grow and to survive. We use our our bodies to run, sing, eat, see, dance, hear, smell, feel and our favourite, to kiss.

Have you ever walked past someone in a wheelchair, or who is blind or deaf? It is an enormous wake up call for me every time I do so. It teaches us to be thankful for all the parts of our body that are healthy and working well. Without a body that functions properly we would not be able to do many of our favourite things; often things we do on a daily basis. Just think about how much you enjoy playing netball, learning, singing, going to movies, eating and seeing. Imagine how difficult it must be for people with physical disabilities. And how many people laugh at them daily?

But I realise, in spite of the amazing blessings we've been given and the fact that our bodies function normally, there are still things about them that we as girls simply don't like. How often do you really look at yourself in the mirror? I mean, *really*, to notice just how uniquely you've been created and put together? Is your body one of your best friends? Do you know and respect her? Are you comfortable in your own skin? Do you like the way you look?

The funny thing is that it is important to each girl how she looks, because we are programmed to think that guys and other people accept us on the basis of how we look. Yes, it may be the first thing that people notice and possibly use to form an opinion about you, but did you know, ironic though it may be, that it is also the last thing that guys and other people use in order to love and respect you. After all, beauty passes, but who you are and what's in your heart is what really matters because that lasts forever.

Over the next week we're going to chat about your body and everything that affects it. I want you to learn to know your body well, and I want you to discover what it is about your body that you like, what you'd like to change about it and what not, and what you're thankful for about it.

Enjoy it because it's going to be fun! And hopefully after this week you'll be more relaxed about yourself and less concerned about the things that bitchy girls and guys say. I say: 'They can all go and fly!'

Step away from the mean girls ...

... and say bye-bye to feeling bad about your looks.

Are you ready to stop colluding with a culture that makes so many of us feel physically inadequate? Say goodbye to your inner critic, and take this pledge to be kinder to yourself and others.

This is a call to arms, a call to be gentle, to be forgiving, to be generous with yourself. The next time you look into the mirror, try to let go of the story line that you're too fat or too short, too shy or too loud, your eyes are too small or your nose too big; just look into the mirror and see your face. When the criticism drops away, what you will see then is just you, without judgment, and that is the first step toward transforming your experience of the world.

– Oprah Winfrey

Day 1 – Introduce yourself to your body

You are imperfect, permanently and inevitably flawed. And you are beautiful.

– Amy Bloom

I don't know about you, but I've had to introduce myself to every person that I've ever befriended and I've had to learn to know him or her. That is an essential step in any relationship. The moment you meet someone, is often the make-or-break moment. It is the moment that determines whether you want to see them again or not.

Have you ever introduced yourself to your body? Yes, I know, you're probably laughing now, but I'm serious. Have you ever stood in front of the mirror and said 'Hello, my name is XYZ and you are my body'? No, because we take our bodies so much for granted that we're blind to the magic and beauty of how it works and how it's made. We use that body every second of every day, but we never spend any time with it.

We get up every day, brush our teeth, shower, dress, go to school, learn, listen, speak, play, exercise, watch TV, sleep, and so on, without realising what a great privilege it is that our body keeps up and keeps functioning. Until the day we fall ill, or break an arm, or have a headache, or yes, even lose a leg. What then? What will we do? Are you grateful that you can actually see the board in class? Thankful that you can chat to your friends and are able to go to school to learn? Are you grateful for being able to exercise in the afternoons and can go to the bathroom by yourself and dress yourself?

Today's challenge and exercise is to become aware of all the amazing things that you use your body for every day and take for granted. I want you to stand in front of your mirror and say hello and thank you to your body that it allows you to enjoy a normal and comfortable life. Examine your body