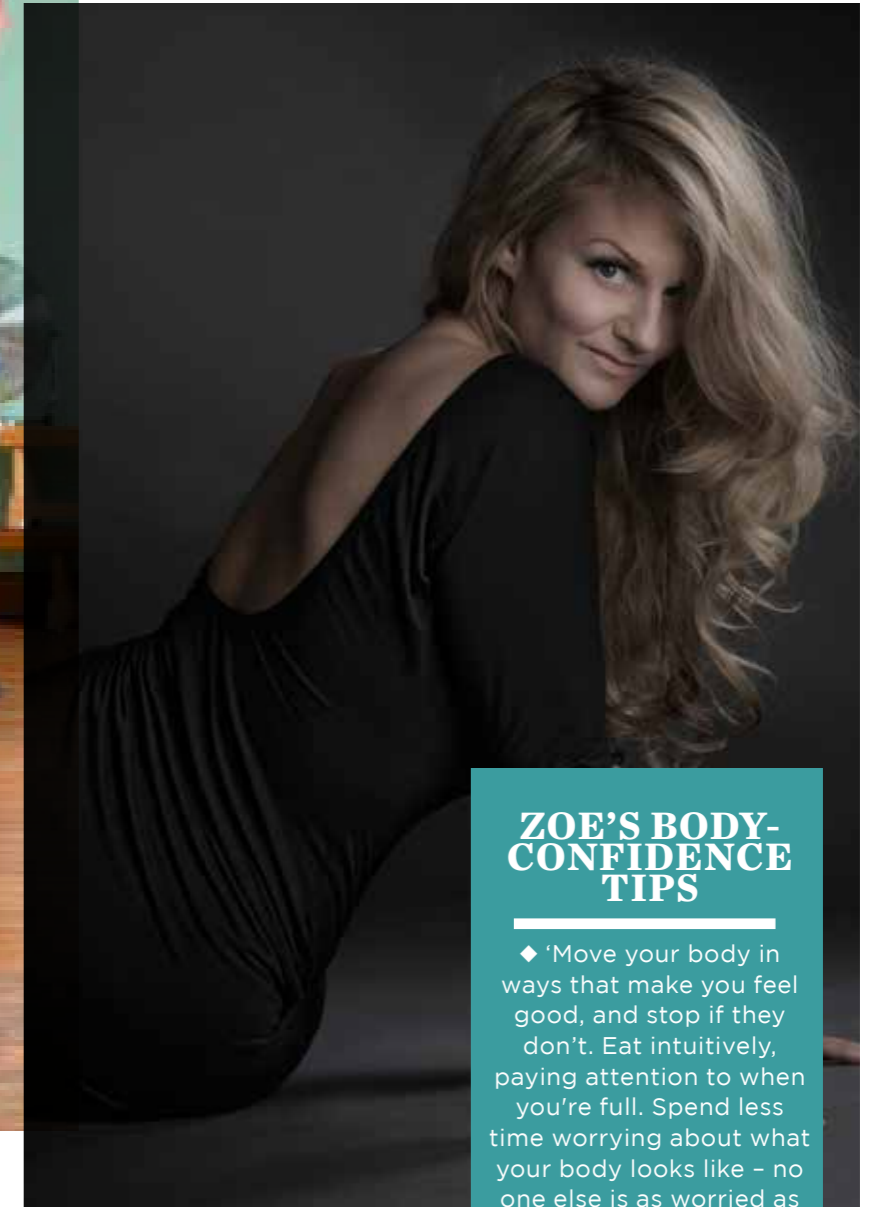


Love *the skin* you're in!

Meet the women championing the body-positivity movement in three very different ways, and discover their secrets on how to gain ultimate self-confidence



ZOE'S BODY-CONFIDENCE TIPS

◆ 'Move your body in ways that make you feel good, and stop if they don't. Eat intuitively, paying attention to when you're full. Spend less time worrying about what your body looks like – no one else is as worried as you are, so try to shift that importance until it isn't important. Reinvest your time in relationships and hobbies. Nourish and live your life. That's what body positivity means to me.'

◆ 'Curate your social media. Is what you're seeing helping or hindering? Stop following accounts that make you feel bad about yourself, and follow people that look more like you – you'll always find a like-minded community that helps you feel "normal".'

Zoe McNulty, 41

The former top UK fitness and dance presenter turned founder and headmistress of the School of Strut (schoolofstrut.com), extols the virtues of finally being free to let it all hang out

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ecoming truly body confident has been a journey for me, starting 13 years ago when I taught my first high-heeled dance class. Women of all shapes and sizes came in, vulnerable and embarrassed, and left feeling confident and empowered. It dawned on me then that we don't need to change our bodies to be confident in our skin – it's all in the mind.'

YO-YOING WEIGHT

'Growing up and working in the fitness and dance worlds, I was always bigger than I

apparently should have been. My body prevented me from getting work, and I went through periods of restricting my diet, then bingeing, and putting on even more weight. I knew there had to be another way so I forged my own path, eventually setting up the School of Strut five years ago – an education and events company teaching four core subjects: Raunch, Strutology, Divanomics and BodyLanguage. Each class has the same ethos – that women should be able to feel fabulous, regardless of their shape and size – but uses different ways of delivering the movement. Raunch is rather seductive and I describe it as 'burlesque on steroids'; Strutology teaches you to walk tall in heels and feel fabulous through dance; in Divanomics, you'll learn a dance routine to a song; while BodyLanguage is a sensual yet energetic dance session, focusing on posture and grace. All participants sign a code of conduct, promising to be non-judgemental.

'When the body-positive movement emerged, I thought I'd invented it, because I'd been promoting self-acceptance for so long. But it was only two years ago that I understood what I'd been preaching about on a much deeper level. Until then,

I'd still hoped I'd be a size 10 again to feel more accepted within society (thin privilege is real). But then I decided to accept my size 16 body. Until you do that, I think it's difficult to love your body. I'm now finally in a place where I've ditched the shape wear and am happy to let it all hang out. It's so freeing not worrying about my weight, and it's given me more space and time to do many positive things. Health isn't a size, especially mental health. The idea that a bigger body is unhealthy is something the

'I'VE FINALLY DITCHED THE SHAPEWEAR AND AM HAPPY TO LET IT ALL HANG OUT'

diet, wellness and fitness industries exploit to make money from our insecurities, and there's a ton of buried research that backs me up on this.'

SELF ACCEPTANCE

'In promoting self-acceptance, I'm not suggesting people sit on their bums and eat pizza. Saying 'just be you' simply means letting go of the idea that there's an ideal body type to live up to, and accepting you're awesome as you are. Then you can treat yourself with kindness and make positive changes from a position of love, not fear. I still fight fierce criticism, but I'm inspired to carry on by all the women who message me saying 'you've changed my life'; from the woman who cancelled a tummy tuck to the girls battling anorexia. It's so much deeper than dancing around in heels.'



Kim Roebuck, 40

The co-founder of clean Australian skincare brand, Dr Roebuck's (available at Spacenk.com), explains why feeling beautiful is so much more than using skincare products alone



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rowing up in Australia, nothing could get in the way of the love my twin sister, Zoe, and I, had for the great

outdoors, until we both developed dry, sensitive skin and eczema, which prevented us from doing the things we loved. Luckily, our parents were doctors, so they created a one-of-a-kind cream to protect us from the elements. The secret was to remove ingredients instead of add them. Zoe and I went on to have very different careers – I worked in media while she worked in pharmaceuticals – but when people kept asking us what we used on our skin and how we looked 10 years younger, we decided to work together to create a clean Australian skincare brand inspired by our parents' philosophy, that

also represented our natural, holistic lifestyle (we exercise daily and eat only non-processed food), because if you don't change the fundamental habits of your life, it doesn't matter how good your skincare is – you're not going to get the best results.'

NATURAL BEAUTY

'Our mission for Dr Roebuck's (drroebucks.com), was to create great products and educate people but, funnily enough, it feels like every brand is talking the same way right now because living a holistic lifestyle and using 'A-Beauty' (ethical, plant-based beauty products from Australia) is so on trend. We never jumped on the bandwagon – it's just who we are. We champion clean beauty and our tag line is 'minimum ingredients, maximum results'. Many other

'WE'RE ABOUT BUILDING HEALTHY SKIN THAT LASTS, RATHER THAN SUPERFICIAL SKIN'

products have great ingredients such as vitamin E, rose hip and hyaluronic acid, but they're mixed with additives and chemicals. Even if they're not bad for you, your body still has to break them down.

'In beauty and wellness, there's now a big global, cultural shift towards prevention and looking after yourself, rather than

correction, and we're also moving towards ageing gracefully rather than joining the plastic movement. Of course, there will always be a place for heavy make-up in some people's lives, and many women wear it to give them the confidence to 'face the day,' but they're also recognising it's essential to use cleaner products to counterbalance the chemicals in make-up.'

DITCH OLD HABITS

'My advice to people is to not wear make-up for two weeks (it's compulsory for our new employees), as well as go to a steam room every three days, cut alcohol and coffee, and drink green juices and water. You'll be converted once you see how your skin heals when you give it time to remove congestion on congestion. Then you can use make-up to simply enhance your beauty, rather than cover it up. The feminist movement is helping women to

become happier and more accepting of who they are, and it's very inspiring meeting strong, independent women who want to make their own beauty choices, rather than trying to look like a perfect model.'

HEALTHY LIVING

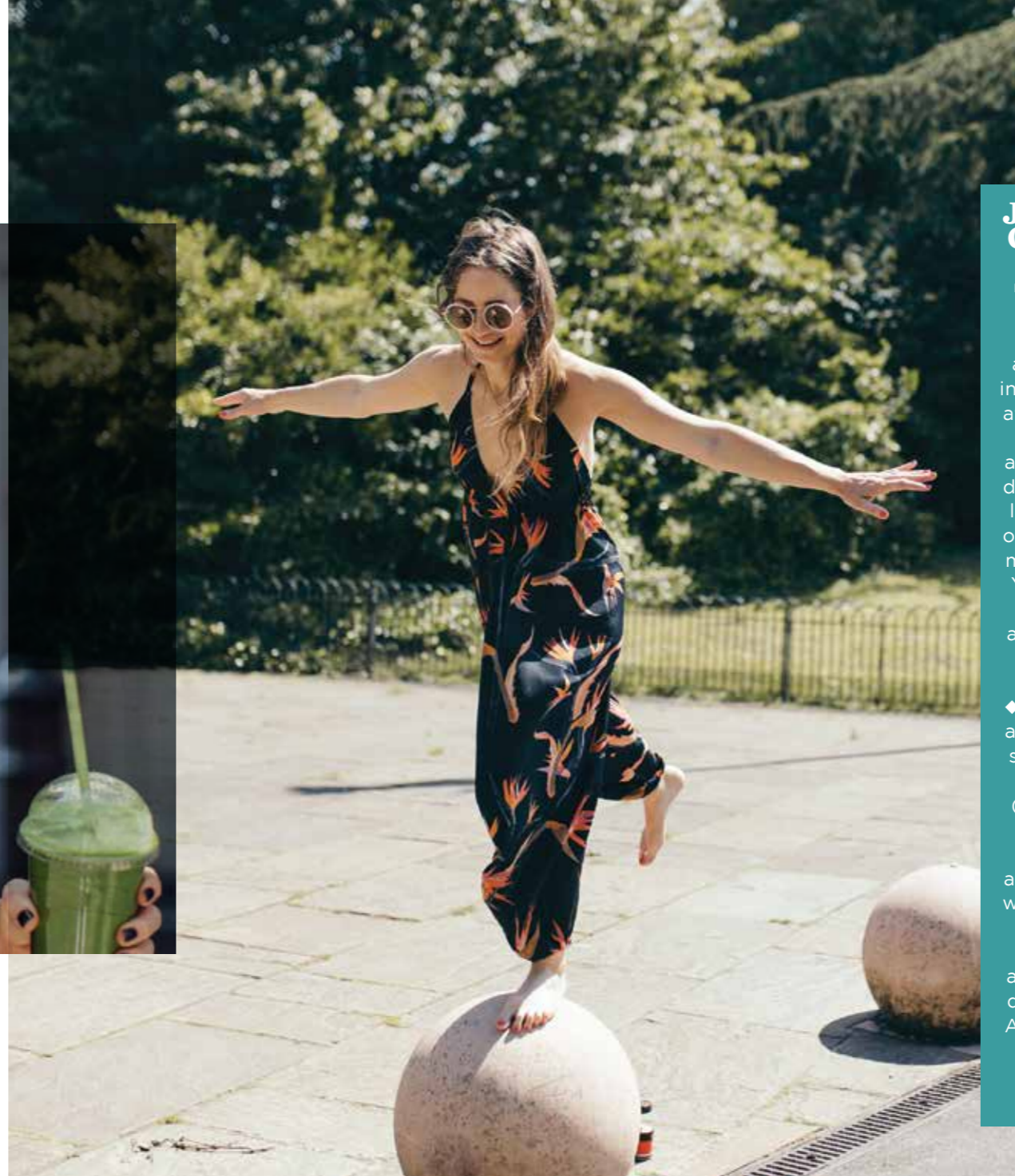
'We're about building healthy skin that lasts, rather than superficial skin that looks perfect but actually isn't. There's no fluff, fillers or exaggerated marketing required, which is why we're the face of the brand, rather than models. We let the products do the talking. Being clean can be fun and beautiful. Being clean is finding the right balance of living life and keeping clean. We want people to feel clean, healthy and in control through using our brand.'

KIM'S SKIN-CONFIDENCE TIPS

- ◆ 'When you adhere to your own version of clean and beautiful, you can then make wellness decisions in your life that will make you feel better overall.'
- ◆ 'Changing one thing, like juicing for a week or trying a new moisturiser, won't make much difference. Taking a holistic approach and changing several small things will make a huge difference. Improvement only comes from within, so pick four changes covering your mind, skin, wellness and diet, and stick with them for a month – whether it's introducing a cardio session, meditation, a supplement, serum, or more fresh veg into your diet. When you tackle several areas in one go, you'll really feel a change in your skin and overall health.'

Jody Shield, 38

The renowned success coach, motivational speaker, wellness influencer, and self-help author of *Self-Care for the Soul* (£9.99; jodyshield.co.uk) talks about the importance of finding your authentic self



JODY'S MIND-CONFIDENCE TIPS

◆ 'Look at the words and phrases you use about your body, then introduce really positive, affirming ones, i.e. "I am open and inspired to accept my body". Write down some really lovely lines that you can read out to yourself for a few minutes every morning. You'll soon create new pathways in the brain and new belief systems about your body.'

◆ 'Mindful meditation is a great place to start. A slow, explorative study through your body (looking for areas that feel heavy, resistant, tight or in conflict) allows you to reconnect with your body, and this helps process self-acceptance. For an accessible way to start, download my LifeTonic Album (£22; jodyshield.co.uk), containing 10 guided, healing meditations.'

The way we feel about our bodies is a product of many things, from our experiences in the schoolyard and going through puberty to the things people have said to us. Something as simple as your mum saying, 'look at your tummy!' when you were

little can lead you to being self-conscious of that area in adult life. As we get older, these bits of old information turn into fears and create limiting beliefs about our bodies. And because the mind believes life is whatever we say it is, our beliefs become the 'reality' of our situation. The mind's

primary goal is to keep you out of danger, so it will try to protect you from situations where you might feel vulnerable, exposed or open to criticism, leading you to hide away in a safe place, get 'stuck' – perhaps even in a place of hate and anger – and not move forwards.'

INNER STRENGTH

'Imposter syndrome and comparison anxiety are very real mental conditions in our society. You need to go on a journey to accept yourself as you are; to realise your talents, gifts and visions; and be authentic. Because once you do that, you'll no longer be afraid or threatened by other people. The faster you can accept what's going on in your life, how you feel and what you're thinking, the faster you'll become happy, healthy, fulfilled, and in love with yourself.'

'YOU NEED TO ACCEPT YOURSELF AS WHO YOU ARE AND REALISE YOUR GIFTS AND VISIONS'

'My own journey to self-acceptance began 10 years ago. After a decade working as a business director in advertising, I was a workaholic, suffering from an eating disorder, chronically stressed and ridden with self-limiting beliefs. So I took a sabbatical for a few months, travelling around South America. In Peru, I went on a Shamanic plant retreat, taking the hallucinogenic substance,

Ayahuasca. It allowed me to peek into my subconscious mind and unravel the fears, past experiences and traumas that were keeping me small and holding me back. I realised I could live my life another way. When I returned to London, I retrained in alternative therapies to understand how the mind creates physical conditions in the body, including body dysmorphia and eating disorders.'

RESET YOUR MIND

'As well as working with big brands such as Nike, Estée Lauder and LuluLemon to improve employee wellness or create campaigns and content, I also offer private, one-on-one, bespoke packages on success, business and life coaching, spiritual healing and goal setting, where I support people to connect with their life vision and develop strategies on how to

achieve it. There's a waiting list, so I also offer coaching via the internet. With the Tribe Tonic package (£33 per month), for example, you'll receive four training videos a month, including a new guided meditation and EFT tapping to release blockages and develop confidence in areas such as resetting your mindset, being more real, and attracting abundance.'

BEING HONEST

'Authenticity is so important – I talk about it a lot. It's great that more influencers and celebrities (and regular women) are joining the body-positive movement, showing their authentic, exposed selves, even if they're feeling anxious, depressed or vulnerable. Hopefully, we'll all feel less threatened by each other, no longer inadequate, and more positive...' ■