



Want to get confident?
Get naked!

GEORGINA WILSON-POWELL

It's Saturday night, I'm in the flat of a man I've just met. I'm about to get naked, then hopefully hot and bothered.

So far, so normal for a British woman's weekend, right? I pause, take a deep, slightly scared breath, get undressed and step into the comforting embrace... of his sauna.

I'm in Helsinki to celebrate the first ever National Sauna Day – where more than 50 private and public saunas have opened to invite the masses in for free; to strip off, socialise and sweat.

Having seen more nude men and women in one afternoon than I have in several years, all of whom seemed nonplussed that they were starkers in busy public spaces, it made me realise that regular nudity is a

powerful weapon to boost your body confidence.

There are two benefits to this as I see it. The more often you're nude the more familiar you are with your body, making it easier to be happy about your own skin. It's not an instant process but, just like every time I speak French or put myself through hot yoga, it improves with practice.

The second thing is it's important to see other naked men and women in a non-sexual context.

Rather than only being presented with airbrushed ideas of perfection in magazines, or pimped-up visions of what people, women in particular, are imagined to be in porn, Finnish women grow up with a very clear understanding that their fellow females are as diverse and unique as the snowflakes that cover their country. "It is

very natural for Finnish people – it's nothing sexual, to be naked," says Niina Aalto, a Finnish woman in her 30s. "When I was small I used to sauna with my grandmother," she explains. "It's good that people see bodies that are different ages and you understand that bodies and nudity are completely natural."

Back to Saturday night and sitting starkers in the festival organiser's sauna in Finland. I'm flanked by totally different shapes – from a Japanese lady with not an inch of fat on her, to a more rotund motherly figure – each of us are a little shy, but no less womanly.

It's in our bare skin, unimaginable under our usual Asos armour and make-up masks, that we should find comfort. Our bodies deserve love, not derision, confidence, not criticism.

Your Stars
...probably

JANETTE JACQUES
She knows, you know



ARIES

March 21-April 20

Today you may reflect that the five most important words in a relationship are "you are right" and "I'm sorry". You can have a two-hour argument about whether or not you were fighting in the first place. Take a step back. Lucky shoe: Clodhopper

TAURUS

April 21-May 21

You are a fiercely loyal friend, but that stubborn streak can drive people bonkers. Mark Twain said: "Facts are stubborn, but statistics are more pliable." Of course, 29.4 per cent of statistics are made up on the spot. Lucky egg: Chocolate

GEMINI

May 22-June 21

You put the "fun" in dysfunctional, but some folk don't get you. Leave it to scary Gemini Donald Trump to get it wrong: "My IQ is one of the highest. Please don't feel so stupid or insecure; it's not your fault." Duh! Lucky senator: Ted Cruz

CANCER

June 22-July 23

Slightly downcast today, you reflect that while time is a great healer, it's a rubbish beautician. You'd be wise to steer clear of Boots. No sense adding more age-reversal creams. BTW, what do Bullfighters use? Olay! Lucky shoe: Loafer

LEO

July 24-August 23

You reflect that we never grow up – we only learn how to act in public. Don't feel alienated. Q: How many Leos does it take to change a lightbulb? A: None, Leos are so enthusiastic they carry their own light. Lucky planet: Uranus

VIRGO

August 24-September 23

You're very modest – it's the thing you find most outstanding about yourself. You should show off. Start by taking compliments (don't squirm). It's easy – lose the trapped-rabbit eyes, smile and say thanks. Lucky stance: Hands on hips

LIBRA

September 24-October 23

It's tough to concentrate today. That crazy mind of yours may wander weird pathways, with questions like: "Did Noah take termites on the Ark?" And: "What if he took woodpeckers too?" Snap out of it, Libra. Lucky dessert: Tiramisu

SCORPIO

October 24-November 22

Two cannibals are eating a clown. One stops and asks the other: "Does this taste funny to you?" Rubbish joke, you can do better. That wicked sense of humour will thrill (and possibly outrage) pals today. Lucky belt: Gucci

SAGITTARIUS

November 23-December 21

Always attractive to others, you're on fire today. But as you sizzle someone is going green with envy. Sensational Sagittarian Bette Midler says: "The worst part of success is trying to find someone who is happy for you." Lucky green: Forest

CAPRICORN

December 22-January 20

Sometimes that cool manner can backfire. If you stay calm while all around you is chaos, then you possibly haven't understood the situation. Loosening up today might benefit you. Avoid beetroot-based smoothies. Lucky jeans: Bell bottoms

AQUARIUS

January 21-February 19

Being a hypochondriac will save your life one of these days. Those who sneer at you for rattling with health supplements do so at their peril, so keep taking the tablets. News from afar makes you cringe. Lucky placebo: Toffee Revel

PISCES

February 20-March 20

A diplomat is someone who tells you to go to hell in such a way that you look forward to the trip. Always tactful, your work is cut out for you by a particular nincompoop today. Do your thing, Pisces. Avoid asparagus. Lucky hat: Stetson

Reflections

Buddhist teacher
MAHAMANI CRONIN

Originally I had wanted to write about how practising generosity helps me to be a nicer person.

Instead I am haunted by images of a destroyed Belgian airport and a dead baby lying in



the rubble of a Syrian hospital. War, hatred and destruction: The antithesis of generosity.

So what am I, we, to make of these images? How do we make sense of them and not give up in despair and join the forces of hatred and destruction, demanding revenge?

When faced with

such feelings that are contradictory to my values I am reminded of the Buddha's words: "Hatred does not cease by hatred – hatred ceases by love. This is an ancient and eternal law."

If we reflect deeply on these words we realise we can choose to be either part of the problem or part of the solution. From this perspective generosity seems like a good place to start.