



Denna Shelton, cPT

Denna Shelton, cPT is an inspiration to others in the field of health and fitness as leader of both group exercise classes and one-on-one personal training. Her innovative training embraces the needs of her students... mind, body and spirit. She is author and producer of, *Twenty Gems, Journeys to the Self*, a multimedia journey of focused meditations designed to touch the soul with truth, love, peace, joy...

<http://www.twentygems.com>

The Inner and Outer Beauty Of Who You Are!

Being in the physical fitness industry has given me many opportunities to focus on where I am in terms of my physical appearance. When I enter a room to conduct an exercise class, I know most eyes are on my physical structure. Students check to see how sculpted my arms and legs are, and they are probably trying to guess my percentage of body fat. I am definitely being evaluated on how well I "walk the talk," which is as it should be. This is a huge part of what I am representing - a lean, strong, healthy body. However, when too much emphasis is placed on physical appearance, your Outer Beauty, to the point of thinking this is where most of your value lies, you can lose touch with your true essence - your Inner Beauty.

I am a huge advocate of taking care of your body through proper nutrition and physical exercise. I have had the great pleasure of helping many people reach their fitness goals and observing how achieving their goals transfer into other aspects of their lives in very positive ways. Being physically fit gives you a sense of great accomplishment and empowerment. It will raise your self-esteem, which can improve your relationships and give you an overall feeling of well-being. The benefits of physical exercise have been proven to reduce stress, improve cardio-vascular function, lower blood pressure, increase bone mass, and improve body composition, to name but a few. Being all you can be on a physical level is an admirable goal, but it can be detrimental when out of balance with other aspects of who you are. A general rule of thumb in training

the physical body is that when you train one body part you need to then train the opposing body part. For example, if you do three sets of bicep curls, then you must do three sets of triceps extensions. The exception to the rule would be someone who naturally has very strong biceps and weak triceps. Then, of course, you would train the triceps more to catch up with the biceps to create symmetry in the arm. But generally, if you train one body part more than the other, there will be an imbalance and this can lead to an injury or a postural problem. I had a lady attend one of my classes with a knee brace on her right knee. When I asked her what had happened she said a sports orthopedic doctor told her that she had over-trained her quadriceps and under-trained her hamstrings and this had actually created a displacement of her patella due to the imbalance.

Just as over-training or focusing on one body part in your workouts can create an imbalance and possibly an injury to your body, so it is when the focus on who you are is one-dimensional. If your focus is all on your external circumstances, either in

It is not an easy task to balance the Inner Beauty with the Outer Beauty.

physical appearances or image, you can have feelings of discontentment and on-going restlessness. You will find you are always striving for the next external gratification to give your life a sense of passion and purpose. You can create injuries in your relationships and simply feel of ill at ease.

You are bombarded with messages from the media that to be worthy you must look a certain way. You are told your value is in your dress or pant size and the image you present to the world. You compare your body to others to see how you measure up. (A psychological study in 1995 found that three minutes looking at a fashion magazine caused 70% of women to feel depressed, guilty, and shameful.) You are led to believe that your happiness lies outside of yourself. You think if you have a particular car, bigger house, more credentials or the perfect partner, then you can feel good about yourself. Yet...we have all experienced the person who has a 'glow' about them even with all of their imperfections and bad hair day. This person moves gracefully and confidently with a smile upon her face. People are drawn to her like a magnet. This person clearly knows who she is. This person knows that she is an extension of her Creator, the Source of ALL THAT IS.

She connects with her Higher Self daily by spending time in quiet reflection either through prayer, meditation, music, art, or words of wisdom. She is fully aware of the higher aspect of herself, her God-like nature!

She is Truthful! When she is having conflicting thoughts or negative emotions, she knows there is a good chance she is not listening to her heart. She stops and asks, "Whose thoughts are these...mine or someone else's? Whose judgments are these? Whose standards are these?" She knows her Truth is her decision, no one else's.

She is Joyful! She has a playful spirit throughout her day. She doesn't walk away from her daily responsibilities. She has a playful spirit as she attends to her responsibilities. Even those "dreaded" tasks on her to-do list are done with a light heart!

She is Peaceful! She releases her problems to a Higher Power and rests assured that everything is working for the best. She may not understand what the "best" is, but she will be flowing peacefully with all her life experiences, and this greatly lightens her burden.

She is Harmonious! Her focus is on that which brings her delight and pleasure. She experiences herself as a co-creator with God and sees the beauty in her world. She knows that she is one with ALL There is nothing she has 'to do' or 'not do' to prove her worth.

She is Non-judgmental, Self-accepting, and Feels deserving. She strives for growth in all areas of her life whether it is in academics, relationships, physical performances, emotional experiences, etc. She also lets go of judgments in the process. She accepts all parts of herself, loving herself and others unconditionally. She not only is the giver of love but also opens her heart to receive the love that surrounds her. She knows she is deserving of all the pleasures in life simply because she exists. There is nothing she has 'to do' or 'not do' to prove her worth.

You are an extension of your Creator, the Source of ALL THAT IS! Connecting with your Higher Self daily by whatever means you enjoy, such as meditation, will keep you in touch with your true essence - your Inner Beauty. Remembering who you are and allowing this part to shine forth creates a life of Truth, Joy, Harmony and Peace. It creates a glow around your presence that others cannot help but notice. When you reflect your true God-like nature, you touch the lives of others. **When you touch the lives of others, you show them their own Inner Beauty. You help them remember who they are!**



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