

## Let Your Inner Beauty Shine



Christopher News Notes

*“Beauty is the illumination of your soul.”—author John O’Donohue*

**H**AVE YOU EVER MET SOMEONE WHO SEEMS TO GLOW FROM THE INSIDE OUT? Something about them makes you say, “I want what they’ve got.” It’s not necessarily a perfect complexion or lustrous hair that catches your eye; it’s something deeper, something profound. There’s something about their spirit that shines through and makes them a joy to be around.

Inner beauty is underrated in our society. From the looks of things, you would definitely be under the impression that beauty is, in fact, skin deep. The endless array of photo filters provided on various social media platforms is all you need to know about our views on beauty. When we step away from the camera, however, and focus instead on the person in front of us, sans filters, we remember that true inner beauty has very little to do with what we can see and everything to do with what we can sense.

## Beauty Marks

Publicist, author, and business owner Liz Faublas is one of those people who truly is beautiful both inside and out. She lights up a room with her joyful spirit, her humor, her commitment to important causes, and her inspiring attitude. When asked how she manages to make outer confidence and inner beauty look so easy, she confessed that it's a day-to-day, sometimes minute-by-minute commitment to be her true self and live her best life in a world that can be negative and defeating.

"I have learned to make a conscious decision, to accept who I am, give myself credit for doing the best I can, and challenge myself to change what I do not like about myself. The only reason that bad hair day affects us is because we are too consumed with what others will think or say...I tell myself every single day (without fail), especially when I am feeling low: 'I am the daughter of a King! A child of God!' There is nothing anyone can say to diminish that!"

As a stand-up comic and former TV anchor, Liz is no stranger to the sometimes-withering comments and unrealistic expectations that can siphon away our strength to keep on keeping on. It comes down to being accountable—to God and to herself. "I meditate, pray, and reflect daily. I ask myself why I am unhappy...and I make a conscious effort to change whatever it is sowing that seed," she explains. "If I am watching or reading something that upsets my spirit, I turn it off. I literally guard my heart without ceasing."

Liz has written her first children's book, titled *You Have a Superpower*. It's about accepting the gifts we have within us and using those gifts to change the world. She visits schools, youth ministries and businesses to talk with women, young and old, about how getting out of her own way changed the course of her life. "It's my mission to help others discover they can do the same," she said. "I'm not saying any of this is easy. But I am living proof it is possible. I promise. You just have to want it bad enough."

*"Beauty is how you feel inside, and it reflects in your eyes. It is not something physical."* —Sophia Loren

## You Are Wonderfully Made

We can usually spot the beauty—inner and outer—in others, but we often have a hard time seeing that same beauty in ourselves. Psalm 139:14 is a good refrain to keep posted on a wall or imprinted in our minds: "I praise You, so wonderfully You made me; wonderful are Your works!"

Can you say that line, pray that line, and believe it in your heart and soul? When we begin to nurture that seed of self-acceptance and inner beauty planted inside us by our Creator, we begin a transformation that eventually leads to the kind of beauty that cannot be captured in a photograph. Inner beauty is a way of being. It's the thing that catches your eye when you meet someone, perhaps even an older person whose skin bears the marks of age and experience, but whose eyes dance like those of a child. When we know who we are, when we trust that we are exactly as God made us to be, we blossom, and all the world takes notice.

It was another day at the office for Vicki Heath. In her case, the "office" was a Southwest flight to Sacramento aboard which she was serving as a flight attendant. When she caught the eye of Tracy Sharp, a young woman with Down syndrome who was traveling with her parents, a friendship blossomed. Vicki talked with Tracy, kept in touch with her after the flight, sent her a set of Southwest

Psychiatrist and author Elisabeth Kübler-Ross was known for her book *On Death and Dying* and for developing the five stages of grief. But she also offered many insights about living. Here are a couple:

- "The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen."
- "People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within."

wings with her name on it, and, finally, invited her to be an assistant flight attendant on a trip from Sacramento to Seattle.

"I will never know why God chose me to befriend Tracy, but He did," said Vicki in an interview for *Women's World*. "I've learned it doesn't take much to make somebody happy...and it brings you amazing joy, too!"

Vicki's kindness—the inner beauty that makes her the kind of person who would strike up a long-term relationship with a family she's encountered—makes her someone who emanates joy and love and, yes, beauty. Tracy's parents say Vicki is not only part of their family, but she is their "angel" as well. You don't get to be anyone's angel if you don't have a beautiful soul that simply can't be contained.

*"Pretty is something you're born with. But beautiful, that's an equal opportunity adjective."*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Is It Any Wonder?

In an article on “10 Understated Qualities of a Truly Beautiful Woman,” *Huffington Post* writer and clinical psychologist Sherrie Campbell says that “to be beautiful inside and out, you must possess more than a pretty shell.” Kindness and courage, humility and honesty and, of course, love are on the list of must-have qualities. “To be truly beautiful, it is the understated qualities of beauty which are sustaining,” she writes. “Who you are internally is the marker of your influence on the world.”

Kindness and courage are co-stars in the Christopher Award-winning middle-grade novel *Wonder*, a book by R.J. Palacio which was made into a Christopher Award-winning hit movie as well. We follow the often-difficult story of 10-year-old Auggie Pullman, who is born with severe facial differences and is entering a school setting for the first time, after being homeschooled for years by his mother, played by Julia Roberts.

Roberts, who says she knew she wanted to play the mom in *Wonder* after reading the book aloud to her own three children, told *Good Housekeeping* that the story changed her. “I think we need to stop criticizing,” she said. “Honestly, it’s become a sport—at lunch, online, wherever...And I’m talking about myself here, too, because I find the sarcasm and the criticism and stuff like that very humorous, but there’s a time when you go, ‘Well, why don’t I say all the true and kind things?’”

It was an untrue and unkind thing that left a permanent scar on Kate Wicker, Catholic author of the

book *Weightless: Making Peace with Your Body*. As she approached her school bus when she was only in sixth grade—a time in her life when she was somewhat overweight—two boys pushed their noses against the window like pig snouts and made oinking noises, pointing at her. She says it’s taken years to “silence that oinking.” Her journey included a battle with bulimia, anorexia, and the slow, difficult path back to true health, acceptance, and balance.

She writes, “I’ve learned these crosses never completely go away; we just get better at managing them. There are still days when I have to blink and wake up and remember that I am an adult now and not an awkward, insecure kid. And I’m responsible for raising children who will believe, in the depths of their souls, that they are God’s valuable creation.”

Wicker adds, “I have to silence that voice in my head that says, ‘You’re not good enough.’ If I invite God into my life, I am and always will be good enough. Because of God’s love, I was good enough when I was too thin and in control of every single bite that passed or didn’t pass through my lips. I was good enough when I wasn’t thin at all and was the victim of teasing. I am good enough now. So are you.”

### You Are Wonderfully Made

Say this prayer—from the book *Cravings: A Catholic Wrestles with Food, Self-Image, and God*, by Mary DeTurrís Poust—when you begin to doubt yourself.

*“So often we look in the mirror  
As if through a glass darkly,  
Seeing not what God has created  
But what we have created  
In our own minds, our own hearts.  
We pray today for the grace  
And the wisdom to look beyond  
The surface, to see into  
Our own souls and recognize  
The hand of God at work there.  
We are wonderfully made,  
Known and loved by our Creator  
Before we ever drew breath.”*

**“It’s better to light one candle  
than to curse the darkness.”**

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