



Kimberly Riggins

Body Love Expert

author | coach | self-talk warrior

Q & A with Kimberly

What inspired you write this book?

I know what it feels like to hate your body, to strive for perfection knowing you will be met with imminent failure, to feel like “your too much, not good enough, not loveable, and not worthy.” Two decades ago, I was that girl. I was spiraling out of control after an unfortunate experience, falling deeper into the depths of what I call “my own personal hell,” only to continue to wage a war against myself that I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy. When I finally asked for help, I was ready and willing for change. I was sick and tired of feeling lost, unhappy and alone. Through several years of therapy, unconditional acts of self-love and a major mindset shift, I was abundantly aware that I held the power to my own happiness. This profound, yet ever-so-complicated “secret” needed to be shared with the rest of the world. While I was healing and learning to love my life, I was painfully watching other women spiral into the same dark places I found myself in nearly 20 years ago.

That is why *Love Your Naked Ass* exists. Each word written in this book, each challenge or action step offered, I have done. My goal is to reach those women who are feeling the same way I did before they spiral out of control. To give them gentle options to change the course of their lives so they can not only restore their serenity but rediscover their own happiness.

What is the most important lesson or message readers will get from it?

The most important message I want all women to learn from using and reading my book, is that being happy is a conscious choice. It is not based on what size or shape you are, whether or not you do everything perfectly (what is perfect anyway?), what career you hold or how much “stuff” you acquire. It is about finding peace within yourself. Loving yourself just as you are. Having the confidence and self-esteem to stand up for what you believe in, to allow your unique qualities to shine ever so bright, and to have the ability to enjoy each moment that life offers you.

Why do you think so many women hate their bodies?

I think the easy answer is to blame the media. Yes, they do play a really large part in how we view our bodies—the media imposes unrealistic norms, definitely sets impossible standards for the female form and is constantly bombarding us with messages implying we need this product or that product to feel or be more beautiful. But I also think we have to take responsibility for our own thoughts and actions. Let me explain...

The latest statistic states that over 97% of women have negative thoughts about their body every day. That's crazy! So yes, the media is partly to blame here but what about the crushing comments from our mothers' mouths? We may be learning to hate our bodies from watching our own mother devalue her body. And what about the added pressure our mothers' sometimes (often unconsciously) impose on us to be perfect? And let's not discount our own bad habits...eating junk, not moving our body, comparing ourselves to everyone else. Shouldn't we also look at that?

Irregardless of who is to blame, the truth is most of our negative thoughts aimed at our bodies have more to do with other unpleasant circumstances in our lives—our frustrating jobs, unfulfilling relationships, not knowing our purpose—than with the fat on our butt or how flabby our thighs or abs are.

It's time we take responsibility for our own lives and create our own happiness.

What is the first thing every woman MUST do in order for them to let go of their so-called flaws and fall in love with their body?

I think Gloria Steinem said it best when she said, “Each individual woman's body demands to be accepted on its own terms.” So the first thing I believe we must do is to emotionally and physically get naked with ourselves. To truly accept where we are. And to be completely honest about it. Of course, for most, this can get quite uncomfortable.

The sad reality is many women do not look at themselves naked. In fact, for some, they can't even remember the last time they stepped in front of a mirror nude. I actually know women who will dress in the dark or in the closet even when their alone. That is why I created an exercise called The Mirror Mantra. The point of this exercise is to help women learn how to celebrate their uniqueness but also to gently teach them how to face themselves in the buff and to inspire them to fall in love with their “so-called” flaws instead of demoralizing themselves because of them.

What three mistakes do women make when they are trying to feel better in their own skin?

The most obvious mistake women make trying to feel better in their own skin is when they participate in unconscious self-destructive behaviors—this includes restrictive dieting, overexercising, abusing diet pills and everything in between. Now I am true believer of eating healthy and lovingly giving your body the exercise it deserves. But it must be enjoyable and sensible. No deleting food groups or working out for six hours a day. It is all about eating in moderation and doing activity that truly make us feel good.

Another mistake women make is creating intentions or goals from a place of fear instead of trust. When a woman is trying to overcome a negative body image or is trying to lose weight or change something about herself that she believes will make herself feel better, it must come from her heart. Not because someone else wants her to do it. Not because she feels like she has to but because she knows without a shadow of a doubt that she is doing it for her and that she will succeed; she absolutely trusts that this is the right choice for her.

The third mistake women make is they let their goal or outcome be determined by their self-worth. If a woman decides she needs to be a size 2 to love herself, but she has never been a size 2 nor will her natural shape ever allow her to be, she is always going to find herself unhappy and wanting more, creating unnecessary flaws that decrease her self-worth and make her goals unattainable.

Making healthy changes is great but it's imperative that we first accept ourselves as the beautiful, loveable, special, unique people we are right now.

What are some of the steps/ideas you offer women to help them fall in love with themselves and their body?

I have lots of ideas and action steps that I offer women but here are the six most common suggestions I encourage they incorporate into their lives.

1. *Get Naked.* Yes, truly get naked. Get undressed and walk around the house nude. Watch your favorite sitcom naked. Fold laundry naked, eat dinner naked. Until you get comfortable in your own birthday suit and the way it feels exposed, it is really hard to love your body.
2. *Move and Groove.* Yes, you heard that right. Get your booty into motion. Turn on some music and dance, go for a run, grab a jump rope, take a yoga or Pilates class. The point is to do something active each and every day.
3. *Daily Om.* I am not suggesting you have to do yoga every morning, unless it's meditative yoga. What I am talking about here is sitting quietly for 5-10 minutes each morning, taking some deep belly breaths and setting an intention for your day.
4. *Indulge.* Feed your body nourishing, delightful things...this could include healthy food, a small portion of your favorite treat, but could also include foot soaks, warm luxuriating baths, steamy hot showers and lathering your favorite lotion into your skin.
5. *Show Appreciation.* Every morning I want you, upon waking, to go to the mirror and tell yourself how much you love yourself. Walk up to the mirror and say, "Hey there [insert your name], I love you girl. You are special, unique and beautiful. Don't let anyone tell you any different." I know, this might sound cheesy to you but it works. Use your own words but make sure you appreciate and love yourself out loud every day.
6. *Go on a ME date.* Take yourself out on a date. Shower yourself with love and fun. Go to that 5 star restaurant for lunch, treat yourself to that iced latte at the bookstore as you page through your favorite magazine, get a massage, manicure or pedicure...the idea is to have fun and do something you love all by yourself.

What is one way women can turn off/shift their negative self-talk?

The easiest way to shift that negative thinking or to turn off those negative thoughts is to retrain the brain. The first thing you must realize is that we are not our thoughts. We are just observers to our thoughts or basically a witness to those thoughts. And our thoughts about ourselves come from society, our parents, family, friends...basically the environment around us. But here is the truth—we can decide whether we listen to them or not.

The reality is our negative thoughts are very repetitive and unoriginal. These thoughts were originally created to protect us. But as we gotten older, those thoughts remain and now they hinder us or essentially keep us stuck.

For some women, starting to retrain the brain is as simple as documenting those thoughts—writing them down, seeing how repetitive they are, and how often they are being said. Another way to retrain the brain is to separate those negative thoughts and to give them their own identity. Essentially, create a persona for

those thoughts or what I like to refer to as your “inner critical bitch.” Give her a name, describe her, what kind of personality does she have, what does she look like? Make her as real as possible. When you feel like you are heading down that negative self-talk path again, sit down with my inner critical bitch and have a heart-to-heart. Allow her to say what she is feeling but learn how to dismiss her.

We all have negative thoughts. No one is immune to them but we can minimize the time we spend with them if we learn the right techniques.

What is the #1 thing a woman can do instantly to feel more beautiful in her own skin?

Since everyone wants a quick fix, the short answer is to raid your closet. Clothes are just garments we drape ourselves in every day but since society says we can't walk around naked, we should at least love what we wear.

So go through your closet and make 3 piles: Must Keep, Not Sure and No Way. Hang the “must keep” pile lovingly back into your closet, throw away your “no way” pile and gather your friends and ask them if your “not sure” pile works on you. The point of this is to sift through your clothes and only keep those things that you feel absolutely wonderful in. So, no keeping those skinny jeans you haven't fit into in the last 5 years is not an option. If you are left with very little after doing this exercise, give yourself permission to go shopping and buy some new pieces you love.

You believe reawakening your senses is an important part of the self-love journey, why?

I think most of us go through life without ever really experiencing it. We are so muted that we only use half of what our senses are capable of. It's time we reawaken our senses. Most of us all have these six amazing, free gifts to experience the world.

Open your eyes and notice the beauty around you. The first sign of morning dew. The intricate delicate simplicity of a snowflake, the first bloom, a rolling thunderstorm. Open your ears to the sound of birds chirping, the wind blowing or the gentle pitter-patter of the morning rain. Take a deep inhale and smell the sweetness of bread baking, the freshness of a cold Fall day, or the pungent, earthy scent of freshly cut grass. Tantalize your taste buds with the simple flavors of a just-picked apple, the subtle sweetness of pure dark chocolate, or the sour essence of a freshly squeezed lime. Touch the texture of your hair, the silkiness of your own skin, the hard, yet smooth surface of your keyboard to your computer. And don't forget to use your sixth sense, your intuition. Enjoy the moments that your belly sings when you know you have made the right choice.

The more we fully experience our life and admire its beautiful moments, the easier it is to be kind and loving to yourself.

What are you working on now?

I am having fun sharing my message with the world and focused on getting my book in as many hands as possible. I am also currently finishing up my first online program called Release Your Inner Vixen. During these classes, I show women how to harness the power of pleasure to ignite their sexy, create sizzling relationships and infuse more fun into their lives, with or without a man. Reawakening their senses is a huge part of that program. For those who are wondering if another book is coming, yes there will be another book but for now I am keeping the details top secret.

Why should anyone listen to you?

I am not asking anyone to listen to me, rather I am asking them to keep an open mind about what they hear and see what comes up for them. All I can do is share what has worked for me and for those I have been honored to work with, the rest is up to you. Only YOU have the power to transform your life. I can give you tools but ultimately, you are responsible whether or not you implement them.

How can someone contact you?

They can find me on my website at <http://KimberlyRiggins.com> or can email me directly to Kimberly@KimberlyRiggins.com.

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