

BLURRED LINES AND FINDING MYSELF

Posted on **September 10, 2017** by tmp0910

- **September 10, 2017.** A letter to myself on my 51st birthday (This is also for all of you who put others first)

I had always intended to be 50 and fabulous. Even though I am my own worst critic, a popular trait of Virgos, I thought I was kind of fabulous at 40. Why would 50 be any different?

Well, in the span of ten years between 40 and 50 my life was thrown more than a few curve balls. I lost my aging parents, my oldest brother and my only sister to devastating illnesses. If that wasn't enough, in 2011 at the tender age of 13, my gorgeous daughter, Gabriela, was struggling with an eating disorder and body dysmorphia. I, being the optimist, kept looking at the glass as half full. It's fixable I'd tell myself. We will get through this. While I always managed to rise above these challenges mentally; at times, I failed miserably at maintaining my physical self.

As a mother, a wife, a friend, and a leader in a Fortune 100 organization, I was so busy taking care of everyone else's needs I forgot about ME. The scale would go up and down. I never had any desire to be skinny just fit and strong. I'd feel my personal best when I was swinging kettlebells, flipping tires or getting my ass* kicked in a tabata class. There was nothing better than hearing Carl, one of the trainers yell, "Theresa, you aren't giving me all you got. (*have). faster, harder, 10 more".

I got caught in the stressors of my life and they made it so easy for me to cheat on Carl w mindless tv.

High school was flying by for Gabby and soon she would be headed off to college. The thought of her leaving put an extra strain on my well being. Will she be ok? Will she eat enough? What if she develops bradycardia and her heart doesn't fire correctly? People would say she looks great. She doesn't look anorexic. She looked like a normal high school girl. She also ate every meal *but* every calorie was calculated, counted and measured. I worried non stop.

She'd start St Joseph's University fall of 2015. Her freshman and sophomore year I had every light timed on Montgomery Ave. Sunday morning I'd make the drop. I would arrive at campus with her home cooked meals for the week. This was my way of knowing she'd get the nutrition she needed. There was no way in hell she'd eat pizza, sandwiches or cafeteria crap as she called it.

It became a second job for me. I was a short order cook. I kept her healthy the first two years of college and also

saw the transition of her beginning to see the light for herself. One of her first breakthrough moments was experienced during a spin class at Soul Cycle. She was finally turning the corner. She was opening up about ED (eating disorder) and putting her experiences out there and letting it go.

I could breathe again.

Fast forward to April 2017. I decided to revisit my desire to have a breast reduction and go for another consult. The first two docs a few years back were unimpressive. Their egos got in the way of my consultations. I had heard about a top notch Villanova surgeon, Dr Kevin Cross, and figured it was time for me to do something for myself.

What I thought was no big deal turned out to be one of the greatest “aha” moments in my adulthood. It’s never too late to find yourself and make yourself a priority.

Consult day May 31st, 2017. 4:00 pm

I enter the tall glass doors of Dr Cross’s office and I am immediately greeted by several smiling faces behind the sleek desk. The place is beautiful. Clean lines and colorful art. I can feel my palms begin to sweat and my heart start to race. While I don’t suffer from high blood pressure ~ today was different. I am sure I was off the charts. I can’t believe I am really doing this. All of these thoughts are racing through my head.

Am I too vain?

Who am I to pay someone to fix me? Is that cheating? I am not a cheater. Should I be spending this money on “me” when there are starving kids in the city of brotherly love? Before I can think anymore my name is called and I am escorted to the back by a beautiful blond nurse. Along the way we passed a few other staff members and one was prettier than the next. Everyone is beautiful. I decide I am in the land of beautiful people. Never once though did any of these beautiful people ever make me feel inferior or less important.

Once in the exam room I asked the nurse about her schooling. She tells me she graduated from Drexel and I am immediately taken back to the one year of nursing I have under my belt at Hahnemann. For a brief minute I relax. I have a quick flash back to cadaver lab and Brian, the cute med student who was my partner. To this day, I’m still not sure why he thought giving John Doe a penectomy would be impressive.

Show time. I am handed a gown to slip on and the nurse steps out. I stand there and the past ten years flash in my head. I think WTF!!! I am 50, menopausal, and in the worst shape of my life. How did I lose myself? Once again, I feel my heart racing outside my chest. I want to run but I don’t.

In comes the pretty nurse armed with a camera. A frigging camera! Not only do I have to take my clothes off, I now need to have photos taken with said clothing off. Yes, I signed up for this on my own. While I knew all of this going in, it doesn’t stop my throat from feeling like the desert in summer -getting drier by the second and the inside of my mouth feels like someone stuffed 100 cotton balls in there. The minutes feel like hours and finally there is a knock and in walks the surgeon. The miracle worker. The dream maker. We exchange introductions, he asks about my goals and expectations, shares his thoughts and professional opinion. His demeanor immediately puts me at ease. There is no ego on display. I see a decent human being who clearly has the brains and the skills to change lives for the better. I *almost* forget I am standing there, in a gown, bare chested in front of Villanova’s own “Dr McDreamy”. Are you surprised? I just said I’m in the land of beautiful people. Ten minutes in and I knew I nailed it. This is the surgeon for me. I am getting this done no matter what. No one is stopping me. What I didn’t realize at the time was how this procedure would make me feel WHOLE again. It’s not just the physical change rather the mental. It’s given me the push I needed to take the steps to make ME proud of myself, to fall back in love with myself and to do this for no one other than MYSELF.

If I were in to marking my body with tattoos; I’d proudly sport the surgeons initials “KC” on the left boob for good measure -a reminder of sorts. I no longer look at all my flaws in disgust but look at all of the positive changes I’m making to be my personal best.

Thank you KC! And thank you SELF for having the courage to step outside of your comfort zone. After all, that's usually where all of the magic happens.

So today, on my 51st birthday I am stronger, wiser and I am feeling a little bit fabulous!
My girls aren't too bad either.

<http://crossplasticsurgery.com/>

(Please note: I do not work for this medical practice nor was I paid for this post)

Next up on the blogmy 18 day European vacation w the hubs. No kids, no work, no buffers. Holy crap! We've never spent every waking hour of 18 days together. Stay tuned. Don't look for our profiles on Tinder just yet.....