**The Seven Most Harmful and *Totally* “Un-KC” Words You Can Say to A Woman!**

Perhaps it’s because of the journey I have been on thus far and my relatively recent recovery from a lifelong eating disorder or maybe it’s more of a common reaction among healthy people than I realized, but if one more person says to me, “You Look Great! Have You Lost Weight?” I think I will scream! I’m finding it so ironic because I used to thrive on hearing these words and would dance and sparkle inside with glee whenever anyone would bestow me this “compliment.” But that was when I was sick and so consumed with exterior validation I would self-harm in any way possible to get a morsel of approval. Now, I cringe when I hear these invasive seven words and automatically think to myself, “Migod, what was wrong with the way I looked before? Did I need to lose a lot of weight? ”

Honestly, I have no idea what I weigh now and haven’t since the day in treatment 2 years ago when I threw out my scale. I don’t allow doctors to weigh me and I know that they can determine the state of my health based on blood tests, vital signs and examinations. In fact, I would be perfectly content not ever knowing my weight for the rest of my life because I never want to be ruled again by a little white box with a plastic window that gives me information about my body with glowing red digital numbers. I do not need a scale to tell me that I am worthy or beautiful or smart of funny or loving or anything short of amazing! A recent post that I saw on Facebook put this notion into perspective for me: Above a picture of a doctor’s scale a big note read, “This scale can only give you a numerical reflection of your relationship with gravity. That’s it. It cannot measure beauty, talent, life force, possibility, strength or love. Be more, not less!”

So what *is* it with these mere seven little words that when strung together pack a loaded punch with all sorts of hidden messages about our appearance and self-worth? Why are we (yes, sadly I admit that I sometimes fall prey to it) so programmed to make this proclamation to someone we haven’t seen for a while whether or not they have, in fact, lost a couple pounds? And more importantly, why does it even matter? Does someone losing weight make them a better, more engaging and interesting person? Does their physical appearance change how we will talk and interact with them? When we say, “You look great! Have you lost weight,” to someone, the implication is that somehow this person is more valuable, noticeable and worthy than they were before they supposedly lost weight, when the truth is they are the same person with the same soul and the same capacity to love.

Furthermore, we don’t know the circumstances behind a person’s altered appearance nor if, in fact, they even wanted to lose any weight. My public relations rep comes to mind when I consider this scenario. She told me that when she was diagnosed with Stage 4 Lymphoma Cancer and started treatment, she obviously began to lose a significant amount of weight, especially in her middle area. She was astounded by the comments she was receiving from people who knew her but didn’t know about her illness who would marvel at her weight loss and ask how she was doing it. She revealed to me that she never really considered herself to be an overweight person to begin with but that once she started receiving these comments, she really started to become unnerved about what people thought about her natural body’s shape and size. \*\**I made this up obviously, but do you have any stories about this you could elaborate on?*

I really make a concerted effort now to praise people about who they are as a person, not about what they look like. I like genuine compliments that speak to who the person is, not about their appearance. These are some of my favorites:

* You look so happy! You’re absolutely glowing!
* You’re sparkling today!
* I really enjoy your energy. You are such an uplifting person.
* Look at you! Your smile is radiant today!
* You are so calm and peaceful. I really admire that in a person.
* You are exuding warmth and love and it makes me happy to be near you.

So can we get away from the ubiquitous messages we constantly receive about appearance, size and weight? You can bet not! But that doesn’t mean that you can’t help to be a part of the shift in promoting a conscious society that focuses more on the internal facets of a person than the external. Words are incredibly powerful and when you choose them thoughtfully and wisely, you not only generate good feelings in another person, you create them in yourself as well!

Think about it, would you rather someone say to you, “Wow, your hair looks awesome today,” **or** “You are such a passionate, engaging and fun person?” Your hair, just like your weight, changes daily but who you are as a person remains pretty much constant and being complimented for who you are is far more significant. I know that when I praise a person for their character, it makes them feel so good and warm inside that, in turn, I feel just as amazing for having lifted their spirits.

So, make a vow to yourself to be original and think outside the box when complimenting someone for who they *are* versus what they look like. I promise you, if you focus on their inner-person, it will be much more heartfelt and powerful to the both of you. So let’s all join forces and pledge to take the seven little daunting words, “You look great! Have you lost weight,” out of our everyday vernacular and replace them with genuine feel-good compliments!