If you know anything about me, you know that I absolutely love fashion and beauty. Even in quarantine, I get dressed up and do my makeup almost every day. For me, fashion is a near-essential part of living my best life, and expressing myself through my clothing and makeup has fundamentally revolutionized my relationship with my body, and myself.

When first reading those words, it's possible that you think I sound a bit shallow or vapid, but for me, fashion is not about impressing other people, but crafting an image that reflects to the world how I see myself, and how I want to be seen and understood as a person.

This is particularly important to me as a physically disabled, fat woman who often has false assumptions made about her wants, needs, desires, and quality of life. In a world where I am both hyper visible, and invisible all at once, fashion gives me the tools to express to society who I am, and in many ways allows me to reclaim my femininity and womanhood that is often stripped from me.

Nothing I'm saying here is new, but that doesn't make it any less important. I've written about the importance of fashion and representation many times before, but it's a subject that is very near and dear to my heart, because learning to express myself, and craft an image that reflected how I wanted to be seen and perceived changed how I viewed my body and my place in the world.

A few years ago in an article, I said something along the lines of, "We often think of fashion as a very surface-level thing, but it gets to the core of who you are and how you present yourself to the world. Just because I'm fat and physically disabled doesn’t mean I don’t have my own style, and fashion can’t be something that I care about," and that statement still holds true for me today.

I care about fashion not just on the surface level of trying to fit in to other people's trends, but on a deeper level of having the ability to create an identity and express aspects of my personality through what I wear. This is why inclusive fashion is so important. Whether you like it or not, fashion is something we all interact with in one way or another, and regardless of our body type we deserve to have choices about what we wear, and how we present ourselves to the world. I may be fat and use a wheelchair, but I deserve to have access to clothes that represent my identity and personality, just like anybody else.

I care about fashion because it gives me a voice crafting my own identity. Fashion allows me to create and explore on my own body, as does makeup. It allows me to interact with my body in a positive way, and focus on what makes me feel beautiful, instead of always focusing on the flaws.

Fashion gives me agency over the way I present and show up in the world. My fashion choices are deliberate, almost political statements, that in my case take back the narrative of femininity, and say that it is possible to be feminine, pretty, or beautiful in a body like mine.