

PRESS RELEASE

A new book provides a fascinating insight into how a group of 12 to 15 year old girls change their lives through creative writing.

A new book edited by a Birmingham based empowerment specialist aims to help young girls regain their confidence and deal with the pressures they face as they move into young adulthood.

Loving the skin I'm in: Healthy Living Project delivered by Tonya Bolton gives a unique insight into how creative writing can help young women build their confidence, learn to understand themselves and find ways of expressing previously suppressed painful emotions.

The book follows the progress of three groups of girls aged between 12 and 15. They were selected for the Healthy Living Project because they had already exhibited some or all of the characteristics of disordered eating and distorted body perceptions.

"Many of these girls are talented, gifted and beautiful," says Tonya. "Yet most have lost sight of their uniqueness and feel as though they are failures, ugly and alone."

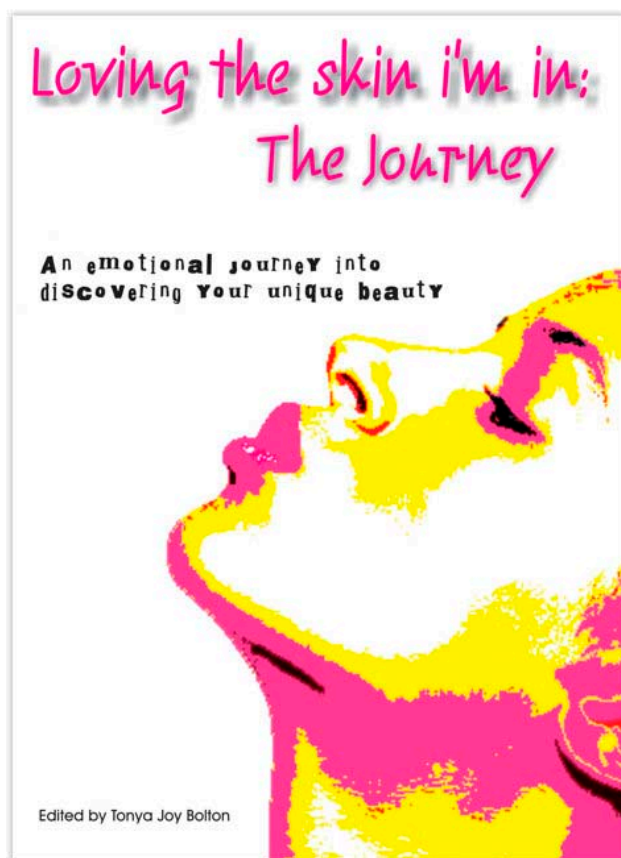
This perception of themselves can lead to destructive eating habits and obsessions with dieting. Worryingly, Tonya found that none of the girls who took part in the project felt that they measured up to the women they saw portrayed in the media. Even more worryingly, more than half believed that cosmetic surgery would give them more self-confidence and success.

At the start, they struggled with low self-esteem and ignored their positive qualities. But through creative work, the girls began to challenge popular images of beauty and reflected on their own unique beauty for the first time.

They wrote about the things that mattered to them and the many issues that young girls face today, such as eating disorders, the pressure to conform, family problems, their desire to be thin, low self-esteem and body image - and the obsessive striving for perfection and self-critical behaviour.

"The journey is both fascinating and emotional", says the editor. "The girls started to actively take control of their lives and to adopt a healthier way of living, eating, thinking and behaving. It wasn't an easy process, but by the beginning of Part 3, these girls finally accept that they are valuable people who deserve love and respect, especially from themselves."

Loving the skin I'm in: The Journey is a life changing read! It not only brings a wealth of creative talent to the fore, it also provides a unique insight into the experiences of young women from a variety of backgrounds.



---NOTES FOR EDITORS---

Tonya Joy Bolton is an empowerment specialist who works closely with young girls from all backgrounds, delivering successful programmes that help them realise their full potential.

The Healthy Living Project was delivered by ICU Transformational Arts Ltd [<http://www.icu-transformational-arts.co.uk>] and funded by The Awards for All Lottery Fund.

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