

# LIFE IS NOT POSED

by: c. michelle bryant

**D**o you see this photo? I hate it. And yet I love it. Is that possible? I hate it because I feel as though I look as big as a house in the crinoline dress I thought was so beautiful and that my butt appears even moreround than it is. Yet I also love it because it is a photo of me dancing to the special song my son personally selected for his mother-son dance at his wedding. And, yes, I was a blubbering idiot, crying the entire time on the shoulder of my handsome 27-year-old son. But I have to confess when I saw the photo for the first time my initial response was, "Ugh! That can't go in his collection of wedding pictures to be remembered for all time." Of course, I kept the thought to myself, as the day was, after all, about my son and his new bride and not about me.

However, it was after I made it home from that long, grueling 12-hour road trip and a whirlwind weekend that I found out a dear friend of mine was under hospice's care, and something happened inside me to prompt this message. My dear friend was only 63 years old and had been married to the love of his life for 45 years. I was blessed to know him for 10 of those. He had two beautiful children who often played with mine, and our families shared many cookouts, parades, outdoor fun and laughs together. I was unable to make his funeral service but sent a plant along with individual, personal messages to each of my friends with prayers, thoughts, sentiments and condolences. Sparing the long story, I'm sure you gather that we were a very close family with their family. Yet, through the distance, I do not think they knew the hurt that I really felt at his loss.

It wasn't until his daughter posted on Facebook the 15-minute video the funeral home made of him and his life. The photo slide show passed frame by frame of images from the young man working on cars, fishing with friends, marrying his lovely bride, dancing with his daughter, wrestling with his son and so much more. Some of the photos were old, tattered and faded. Some he looked like a movie star, very handsome with no shirt. I actually thought, "Hubbahubba!"

I'd never seen him that way before. Other photos he was as I remembered, smiling, a bit scruffy, with kind eyes. For 15 minutes I watched a man's life pass me by in pictures, and I realized that he had really lived and was really loved.

I've seen these videos before. In fact, I have even made them. Carefully choosing the right song to portray the personality. And yet, this one struck me for some reason. Perhaps it is the photographer in me now. Watching these photos slide one by one as songs were being sung. And then I realized, there was not a "posed" picture in the bunch. All candid, all raw, all truly who he was. Shirtless, covered in mechanic's grease, fish guts, cigarette hanging from his mouth, goofy personality shining through, a child clinging to his leg. It was who he was. Who he lived to be. It was rare and beautiful, and I realized at that moment, especially as a photographer, that I have hidden behind the lens and as a mother that I have spent the past 30 years or so avoiding being in the picture or even accepting a picture unless I look "just right." It was while watching his video that it came over me like a flood. What would my children do if they had to make a video of my life? My memory? My legacy? Where are the pictures of my life? I HAVE lived quite the life. I've been blessed with quite the personality and yet hidden away due to pride or vanity or some other silly reason.

Memories stay in our minds, but the moments that get captured by the click of a button are frozen in time. So I encourage you to stop posing and stop worrying. I can assure you when I'm gone my son will remember the dance, not the dress or the size of my butt. Embrace every moment and every dance. And remember, life is not posed.

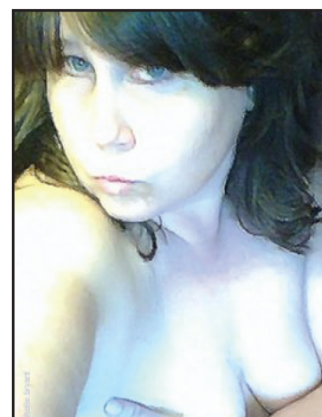


## SHOW US YOUR Selfie

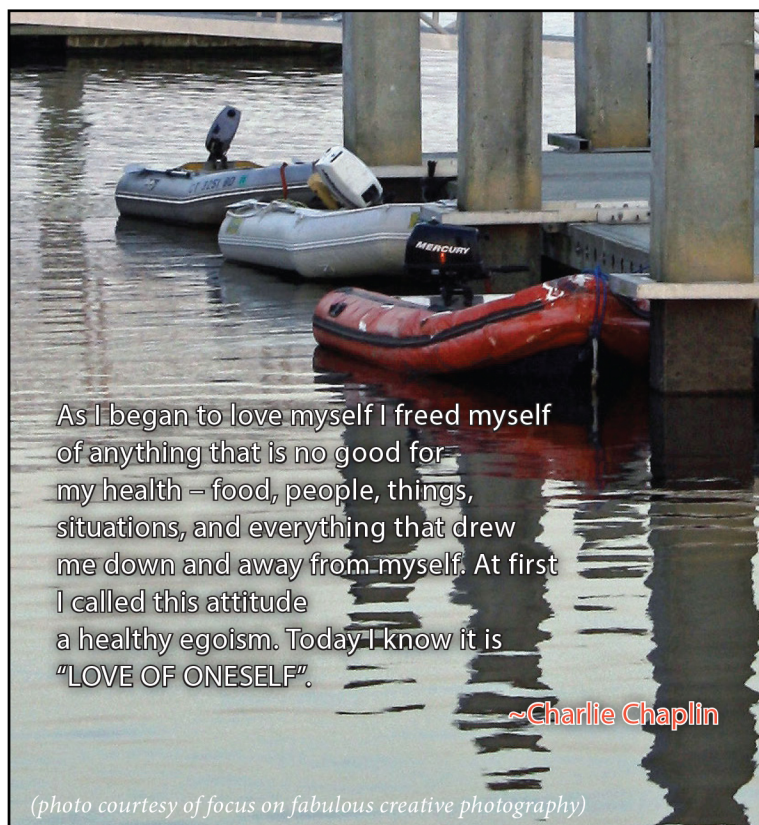
A little less than six years ago, Editor-in-Chief, Michelle Bryant was getting divorced from a twenty-five year relationship with her husband of twenty-three years. Although the ordeal was amicable, she felt unattractive, unwanted and then "pushing fifty" she felt as though she was "damaged goods." A friend encouraged her and told her she simply needed to get her SEXY BACK. Being a photographer and preferring to be on the other side of the camera, Michelle decided perhaps it was time to give it a try for herself. She went in the bathroom, stripped down, took her first "oohhh-la-la" SELFIE and found it to be quite liberating. Adding a special artistic effect to the photo Michelle soon realized her friend was correct. The original photo (shown here) was cropped for her Facebook profile photo received immense feedback and not only was the selfie a confidence booster but the entire experience was the catapult to her FOCUS ON FABULOUS glamour/bombshell photography business.

**We want to see your selfies. Tell us your stories. A special future issue will be dedicated to this topic and the courageous women who took the plunge to believe enough in your self(ie) and go for it!**

*(No nude photos please)*



Send your submissions to:  
[fofmagazine@mail.com](mailto:fofmagazine@mail.com) (subject SELFIE)



As I began to love myself I freed myself of anything that is no good for my health – food, people, things, situations, and everything that drew me down and away from myself. At first I called this attitude a healthy egoism. Today I know it is "LOVE OF ONESELF".

~Charlie Chaplin

*(photo courtesy of focus on fabulous creative photography)*