

This Summer-Be You & Let the World Catch Up!

Hello. I'm Michelle & I see you

I started shooting the “boudoir” style of photography in 2009 while dealing with the dissipation of a nearly 24-year marriage. “Who would want ‘this’?” I asked myself. I was pushing 50, overweight, and felt unwanted and unattractive; like damaged goods. Then a wonderful friend of mine said the words that forever changed my life. “You’re beautiful, talented and smart. You just need to get your sexy back. Just be you and let the world catch up.”

And so, it began. I went into the bathroom, stripped down, and took a selfie (a little cleavage included) – and it was stunning. It was art. My eyes sparkled, my skin was silky, and confidence oozed in this image. I saw myself as I had never seen or noticed. Then it hit me – if I could make myself feel beautiful, attractive, special, and worthy of note, then surely, I could do it for others.

Often people comment on my photos of myself saying “you’re hot” “you’re gorgeous” etc. It used to motivate me as I looked for validation that I had something to offer. After time, it began to bother me, because I felt my appearance was and is, literally, the least interesting thing about me. There definitely seems to be people looking for photos of women. They judge us as sexy or not sexy. That said, I’ve gotten a lot of negative remarks too, and that’s ok. I know that my value is not contingent on their opinion. Some have even accused me of having no self-respect. I think it’s quite the opposite.

See, since I’ve become a boudoir photographer, I have adjusted my mindset. I realize that posing in a sensual manner is not something to be ashamed or embarrassed about, and certainly not something to be bullied about. And I despise the word “boudoir.” It means bedroom, but we are always beautiful – not JUST in the bedroom. Every. Single. Day.

I suppose I should have just said “thank you”, but the truth is, I never considered myself beautiful. But I am. I’m beautiful. Everyone is beautiful. You are beautiful. Every woman I am blessed to take photos of is beautiful. Everyone has body issues. Every. One. Even men. Frankly, I think the fact that we are beautiful is sort of – uninteresting. No matter our age, shape, or size, we all find some flaws with our bodies.

But our beauty isn’t what’s important. What’s important is that we pour out our souls. We become vulnerable. We muster strength we didn’t know we had to expose ourselves, raw, and uninhibited. To have this reduced to its least important factor – appearance – isn’t a compliment, and assuredly it shouldn’t be an issue.

It’s typical for us to see appearances first, and therefore, how we immediately judge others – but if we go beyond the “appeal”, there is so much more we can learn about a person by their appearance, by how they portray themselves, by the look in their eyes, and by the smirk in their smile.

Perhaps if we quit putting people in those boxes, we could really see them for who they are. If we stop looking for “beauty” we might see joy or pain. We might notice a woman who perhaps recently lost



a few pounds and feels better about herself for the first time in years, or who is the product of divorce, feeling like damaged goods; and needs to see how beautiful and worthy she really is. We may even see the more confident woman, secure in herself and her body despite her years. We might see an actual human who needs more than sexual validation. The photos I post of my clients are the least important part of their experience.

It doesn’t matter to me if they think they are “sexy”. They are. Each of these women has a story. I know because, often with tears running down their faces, they tell me things like, “you brought the inside to the outside, “You made me look and feel beautiful again.” I witness firsthand the way their demeanor changes from before and then after a session, the way their comfort and confidence grows. Their energy changes as they start to feel comfortable in their own skin, as they leave the lens feeling liberated.

The way they look is honestly uninteresting. It isn’t what is important. The way they feel about themselves? That is everything. I am not aiming to be “sexy” or “hot” or to seek validation by posting photos of myself. I simply want to inspire my clients to embrace their beautiful selves in an uninhibited way no matter their age, size, etc., to pour out their soul, become vulnerable, and be free to bare their scars, stretchmarks, wrinkles, and flaws in a liberating and confident manner: to notice the light they truly possess and own it, that they may shine bright day by day in the world. That they too, will be their own kind of beautiful and let the world catch up.

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