

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CANDOR

Let's walk back through history for a moment, to a time (long ago) when I pranced in sequins on the Open Seas for money. That was 2015, but it all started waaay back when I rarely talk about my previous career as a dancer in much detail even though they were some of the best years of my life. It felt like that euphoric existence became a slightly depressing memory and I just decided to talk at a minimum. A shift more recently to shed the sadness has led me to shine a new light on my life as an overweight and over joyous professional dancer/mixed media artist at 29.

I left Australia fresh out of High School and got my first job (dream job since I6) at Tokyo Disneyland. This started a career in dance that spanned 7 years and led me to places around the world I never thought I would be privileged enough to visit. It was a dream existence; Be flown somewhere international, rehearse a bit, dance, travel, save money/spend money... party. Yes, I was a bit of a party boy (shh! Don't tell my mum what she already knows haha). I worked contracts back to back and didn't even consider stopping, believing that eventually my body would quit on me at the ripe old dancer age of 35. That was not the plan for me, and despite my best efforts to hold onto that dream, God had a different idea of where I should go and what I should do. Long and dramatic story short, I got hit by a taxi van whilst riding on the back of an ATV after a relaxing beach day out in St Maarten. I was working for Disney Cruise Line at the time and was sent home to 3 surgeries for a crushed foot that eventually led to a 16 month physical therapy journey back to dancing again. Fired up and ready to get back to dancing, I got married, moved to the United States and was ready to jump back into the glamorous ol' spotlight of the stage... but it didn't happen. I would get to the end of auditions and wouldn't book the job. Then I started to make it half way through, until eventually I went to one particularly traumatizing audition where I was cut first round. I was not used to this type of rejection and my long string of previous contracts really didn't prepare me for accepting this as my reality. This was not what I expected or wanted and for a long time I fought off feelings that started to eat away at my self-worth and confidence. I was in such bad denial about where my life was being taken and I kept searching for a "2015 reset" button. I know many of you have been around for these past few years and have watched this business grow and eventually become my new dream/focus and passion, but I know I also held a lot back from you about the journey. More recently I feel I have been called into Candor: I can't even explain what shifted or what made me feel like now was the time to open-up, but I just don't think I could keep it all in anymore. I smile and I laugh often, because I am happy often. I also get sad and frustrated often, because I am a human - I guess somewhere along the way I thought being "too human" for everyone would be bad for business. I'm not saying a memoir about all my life's struggles is in the works, but I have found a peace in starting to open up gently about my struggles. I open up, sometimes, or drop little stories here and there, but there's so much I don't say or delete from a voiceover. Enter this new season of candor: I am practicing it. Applying it. Committing it to memory so that one day I will speak as freely as I did in early adulthood, before experiences made me feel like silence was safer.

So, here's my candor for today: I am dancing again and I love it! I pay for my adult dance classes (which I used to scoff at as a pre-teen) and I LIVE for those Wednesday evenings that I can make it. I dance all of those feelings out and the refreshing feeling of that creative expression overshadows any insecurities about the extra 60lbs I carry whilst doing it. I've been back to an audition and I imagined Gran at the table, feeling excitement and joy I shouldn't have felt knowing I was not suitable for that job. I got cut first round, but not before I had a chance to tell another plus size girl in the room how much joy she brought me just watching her. I left without the gut-wrenching sting of being rejected, instead, a newfound compassion for others in that audition that showed up for their dreams despite not looking like everyone else in that room. I've been losing weight and I feel good about it. I also ate Burger King twice this weekend. I get scared about my dancer friends knowing I'm going through all of this because it might look like I'm a failure, but I don't feel like a failure, so it's starting to matter less. When I get scared and start making excuses, I pray for courage, because I operate in a lot of fear. I'm practicing vocalizing more encouraging words and compliments - fun fact: I can write them and dish them out all day on social media, but actually giving compliments out vocally is challenging for me. I don't know why, but I am trying to do it more because I want to be that type of a person. I'm a little mad at myself for pushing back my Memory to Memento deadline but I'm also happy that I care enough about it to give it proper attention and time. I'm so happy with how Patreon is going, even with the hiccups. I am a little stressed when things go too well because my cynicism makes me think that something bad will inevitably happen. I am more comfortable inside my own head right now than I have been in years.

Wow, I feel like I just gushed all of that out as if I were journaling. I'm sure it doesn't even read well! Logic makes so much sense to me, emotions make me feel as chaotically jumbled as this whole article. If I were one to "track habits" I would give myself a check mark for self-reflection today.

