

Musings on Self-Worth

Your perception of your worth is often coloured by how society judges your so called 'value', based on arbitrary measures of worthiness that are impossible for any one person to scale or fit into. Life has taught me that to chase some imaginary version of yourself, because others demand it of you, is a futile endeavour and often a betrayal of your own ideals.

If you let them, people's opinions can affect your self-worth negatively, especially if you internalise comments that are not true or said with malice.

Much as I appreciate family or friends' input (when I have sought it), I have learned to take most people's opinions or advice with either a grain or a sack of salt, depending on who is dishing it out and why.

I can brush off most unsolicited comments but still find myself annoyed by the phrase 'you're a strong, independent Black woman'. It's said to me in all manner of conversations, often out of context, assigning me a two-dimensional stereotype of a role where the nuances of my life – like my physical or mental health – are not given any real consideration.

'You're a strong, independent Black woman!'

It's sometimes said to me when someone finds out that I have – yet again – advocated for myself or others in the face of prejudice. I often don't find it complimentary as instead of them focusing on dealing with the factors that lead to discrimination, based on stereotypes that could damage my perception of my self-worth, I am instead praised for my 'resilience'.

I would love to have the luxury of not having to be resilient all the time.

Dealing with negative opinions, experiences and people since my childhood has often been draining but I recognize that those experiences have been a factor in shaping my strong sense of self.

Thankfully, my perception of my self-worth is not tied to extrinsic factors that others may have an effect on as I choose to see my self - and therefore my self-worth - from a multitude of angles... from the things I am... the things I know... the things I do... the things I

strive to be.... and the things I wish to learn or experience one day.