

CAROLINE NIJS
—PHOTOGRAPHY—

Dear ,

Every Sunday, we do a 'Sunday Check-in' with our daughter, who's in college in the UK. We chat about how she's doing—mentally, romantically, you know, the serious stuff. But we also talk about pretty random stuff.

And somehow, we ended up talking about how she made it to the Michigan state championship for swimming at a young age—even though she couldn't even swim a year before that. And as we were chatting, I was scrolling through my photos, trying to find a shot of her from the competition.

And I came across a photo of me from years ago.

And my first thought? Damn, I looked good.

Which is funny, because I remember exactly how I felt back then. And it wasn't good. After moving to the USA I quickly started gaining weight. I was picking myself apart, unhappy with how I looked, convinced I needed to change something. But looking at it now, with some distance? I wish I had seen myself like that at the time.

The photo (from 2015 🙄):



It made me wonder: how often do we misjudge ourselves in the present? How often do we only recognize our own beauty in hindsight?

And most importantly—how do we stop doing that?

Why We Struggle to See Ourselves Clearly

The way we see ourselves is never neutral. It's shaped by societal expectations, the way we've learned to think we should look, and by the way we think others perceive us.

And then you look at that old photo and wish you had appreciated yourself more. But at the time, you were too busy focusing on what you thought was wrong.

Yet... you're still doing it. We all are still doing it. Every damn day.

We don't actually see ourselves as we are. We see a version shaped by years of societal expectations, criticism, and comparison.

The good news? *That perception isn't reality.* And it sure as hell isn't permanent.

So how can we change it?



Try This: Stop Waiting to See Yourself in Hindsight

If you've ever looked at a photo from years ago and thought, why didn't I realize I looked fine?—this is for you.

1. *Stop avoiding the mirror.*

Not to adjust, not to fix—just to look. Give yourself a minute every day to simply exist in your reflection. No sucking in, no tilting your chin. Just see what's actually there.

2. *Notice the thoughts that come up.*

What do you immediately focus on? What do you criticize? Where did you learn to think that way? These thoughts didn't come out of nowhere—society drilled them into us. And that means they can be unlearned.

3. *See your photos for what they are.*

Instead of asking, "Do I look good in this?" ask, "Does this feel like me?". The photos that feel most like you are the ones that will matter most in the long run.

This is exactly why I do what I do.

A session with me isn't about making you look good. What I strive to do is help you see yourself clearly—without the distortions, without the pressure to be 'sexy'. We are capturing you, exactly the way you are.



A studio experiment (for those who are up for it)

I've always preferred working in your home, in a real space, where everything feels familiar and comfortable. But sometimes, a client prefers something else, for whatever reason, and that's absolutely ok.

This is why I want to try something new. I've found a studio that might actually work for my kind of boudoir, and I want to test it out.

So, I'm offering a beautiful discount to anyone who's up for an experimental session while I figure out the best way to use this space. Same experience, same focus on real, honest images—just with a little more 'hmm, let's see how this works'.



Where? Horgen area.



When? Flexible.



What's the catch? Just a little patience while I play with the lighting and the setup.



What do you get? A full two hour session at a steep discount (CHF400), and 10 complementary images that might just change how you see yourself. (No makeup included).

If that sounds like something you'd be into, hit reply and let's talk.

Some final thoughts...

It's easy to get caught up in how we think we *should* look—shaped by expectations, comparisons, and the constant pressure to fit into someone else's idea of what's acceptable. But waiting for outside validation, or for hindsight to soften our perception, just means postponing self-acceptance.

Audre Lorde put it perfectly:

"If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive."

If we don't take charge of how we see ourselves, society will do it for us.
So why not start defining yourself now, on your own terms?

You don't have to wake up tomorrow with endless self-love. But you can stop waiting for hindsight to give you permission to appreciate yourself.

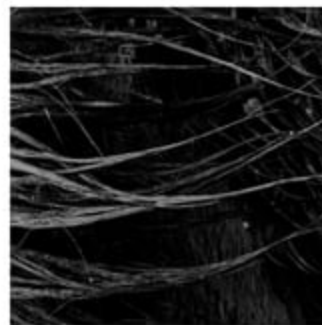
You can choose to start seeing yourself now.

What **caught my eye** on social media this month.

our brain isn't sabotaging you—it's just doing its job. But what if you could teach it something new?



My month in 3 images



As always, thank you for being a part of my journey.
Embrace your unique beauty, and let's continue to celebrate ourselves together.

Caroline



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