

There's no denying the fact that today, society is more concerned with the superficial aspects of a person. Retail stores boast their non-existent 'one-size-fits-all' concepts, indirectly telling people there's a 'universal' size they should fit. Magazines and billboards set impossibly high standards of 'natural' beauty with their heavily retouched photos. And let's not forget the chaos that ensues every time the next iPhone is launched. These kinds of things have left the public scrambling to make the cut. This is a sad reality and one that everyone should be striving to change, but not all that goes around in the world is vanity. I'm not going to pretend that I don't care about the way I look and that I don't spend a little extra time in front of the mirror every day to ensure that I'm presentable, because that's all I'm doing; I'm making myself presentable. One doesn't have to be up-to-date with all the latest, expensive, and sometimes completely unrealistic and impractical trends to fit in with society. One simply needs to take oneself seriously, only then can one be taken seriously by the people around them.

This isn't one of those articles that will say you can dress, look and act however your beating heart pleases, because, frankly, you can't. You have to be appropriate, and more importantly, you have to take care of yourself. I came across a post on Facebook recently where two photos of two separate girls were placed side by side. One of them was a smiling, overweight girl with oversized glasses, greasy hair pulled back in an unflattering, low ponytail, and an old grey shirt. The other was of a pretty, slim girl, in summer shorts and blouse, sleek glasses, with curled blonde hair hanging to her shoulders, looking coyly off into the distance. Both girls were given bullet points such as 'Gets straight A's,' 'Plays video games all day,' 'Sits behind you in class.' Why is it, that when people read these points about the first girl, they say she 'is a creepy nerd,' 'has no life,' or call her a stalker, but for the second girl they say things like 'I love smart girls,' or 'gamer girls are so cool,' or even wonder if the girl may be interested in them? Yes, part of it is because the second girl was attractive, and was close to today's appearance standards. But, could it also be that first girl did not take care of herself? Could it be that she didn't even try, or put any effort in herself, and that was visible in the picture?

Looks Do matter, but not in the way you think. I said earlier that this isn't an article that will say that you can dress or look however you like, but it is one that will tell you that you have to Love yourself. Taking care of yourself is a big part of that and is one of the first things that leave an impression on people. You may have a passion for something that burns so bright it's all you think about, but losing yourself in something doesn't literally mean losing yourself. Don't forget to maintain yourself too! Some people are higher-maintenance than others and that's ok. Some people have frizzy hair that needs a lot of tending to, some may simply not be comfortable stepping out of the house without a fresh face, that's

ok. Everyone has different circumstances. Simple things like making sure you've washed your hair and are wearing presentable clothes can do wonders for the way people perceive you. Think of your health too. Is that extra weight hurting more than your social life? Like your actual life, maybe? It probably is, so work at it for a better health. Looking better is simply a bonus.

And of course, sometimes it's not enough to just look presentable. You, as a person, have to be presentable. Are you sick and tired of people treating

TAKING ON LIFE BY TAKING CARE

CHARLOTTE ARDELLE FELIX

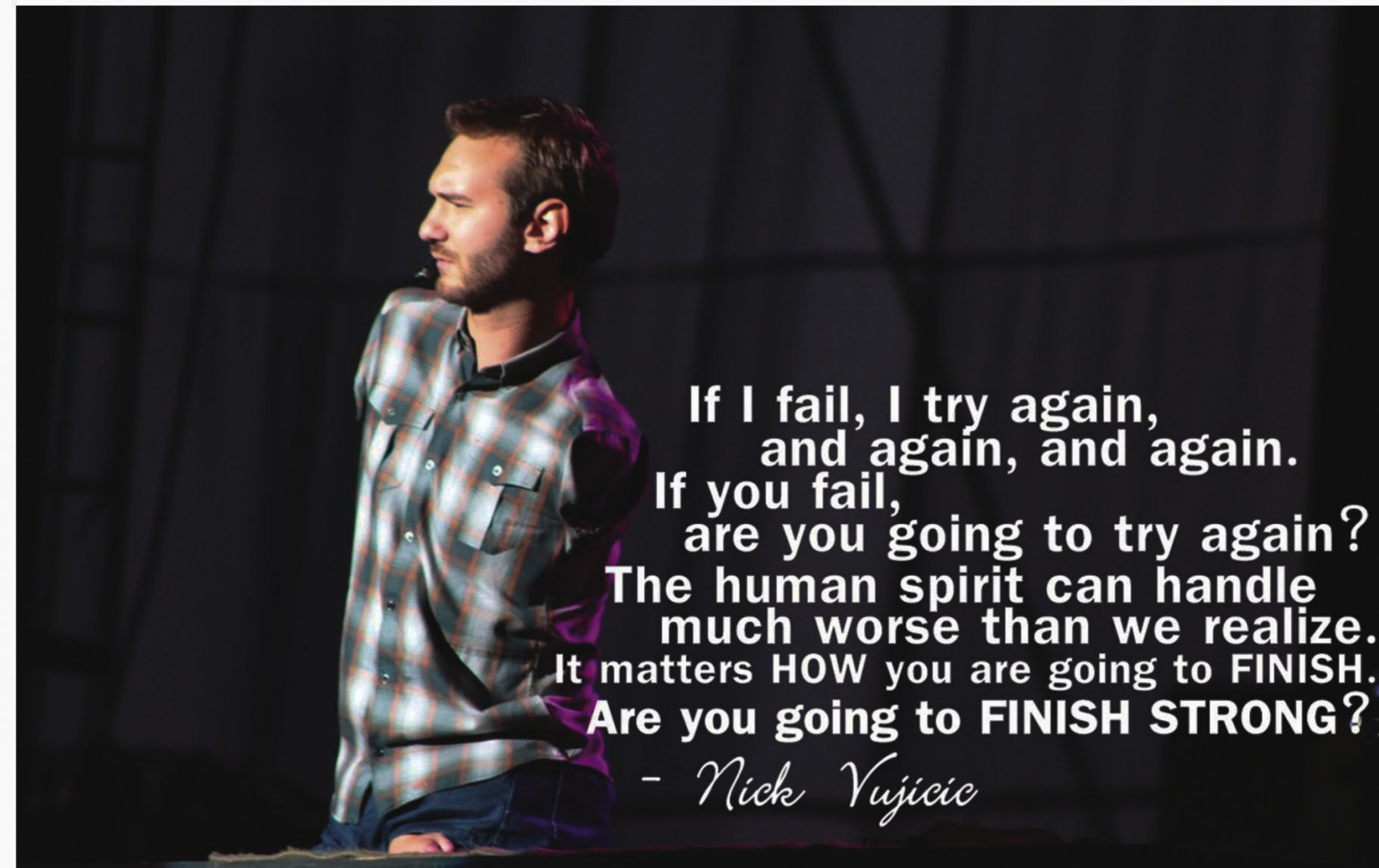
you differently because of the way you look at first glance? Do you feel that if people just took the time to even talk to you for a few minutes, they'd like you? Well, they don't have the time. So be confident in yourself! Walk into the room like you've got nothing to be afraid of - because you don't; unless you're afraid of rooms, - like you know what you're doing and like you belong. Oh, and be nice. When people see that you are confident in your own competence and are approachable, they won't look at you like fresh meat to devour, and once you've hooked them, reel them in with a positive personality.

Nick Vujicic, is a man who was born without arms and legs, and he has grown to become a happily

married father who travels the world giving inspirational talks to those in need. He always says that "Attitude is Altitude," and he couldn't be more right. The way you carry yourself in the presence of others is something I cannot possibly stress more. This doesn't mean flaunting whatever you have to the world, it means that despite your short-comings and flaws, you choose not to neglect or pity yourself. You don't have to keep up with silly trends, but it's important to keep up with the times. You must develop yourself constantly, as it's a sure-fire way to let people know that you've got some control over

lives feel unworthy of kindness and acceptance, in a childish attempt to make themselves feel better. Life isn't about having, it's about being. This is another quote from Nick Vujicic, taken from his book *Life Without Limits*. It isn't about having the best things or the best looks, it's about being the best person you can be. If this article isn't enough to convince you of your worth, please do give his book a read. It will change the way you see life for sure.

It's not easy making it in this enormous world when you're just one person, but if you truly want it, it's yours. All you need to do is remember that change



yourself. Self-development shows that you have the drive to be better, that you care to make better contributions to the world. It's another form of taking care of yourself and it shows that you're not going to be stuck at a dead-end in life, and don't you want the world to know that just as much as you do?

It's sad to see teens these days who resort to the most preposterous things to 'fit in'. They spend thousands to turn themselves into plastic, silicone filled shells of themselves, desperate to meet ridiculous standards of an objective beauty. They treat their bodies like pin cushions, shooting themselves up with drugs, and drown their minds with alcohol to fit in with the 'in' crowd or because they feel unloved. They make others who have even less clarity in their

begins with you. Take care of yourself, develop yourself, build your passions, chase your dreams, keep balance in your life; that's how you beat the superficial world. Of course, we can't forget that the world can't be categorised into one big intelligent, compassionate mass of human beings. Every person has their own preferences, expectations and, sometimes, prejudices. It is impossible to please everyone no matter what you do or how far you've come, simple as that. Luckily, pleasing everyone isn't what we were made to for that. What matters is that you work hard for your own good, which in turn will make the bigger difference.

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