

[00:00:00.170] - Matt

Are you struggling to look for work after finishing your education? Or maybe you're in a relationship you're unsure about? Are you having a quarterlife existential crisis? Are you in your twenties and don't know what the heck to do with your life? You've come to the right place. Hi, you're listening to A Cup of Growth, the drink for trying-to-be-adults. This podcast is brought to you by Mags and Cass, where the girls talk about how to confidently navigate your twenties. Let's ride the struggle together.

[00:00:24.820] - Mags

Hello!

[00:00:30.370] - Cass

Hallo! How are you, Maga?

[00:00:33.870] - Mags

I'm good. How are you?

[00:00:35.560] - Cass

Not too bad, not too bad.

[00:00:36.870] - Mags

You sound really out of breath, are you good?

[00:00:38.720] - Cass

Probably me vaping. Welcome everyone to another episode of A Cup of Growth. I don't know why I'm talking so high.

[00:00:49.030] - Mags

Oh, my God.

[00:00:49.530] - Cass

Oh my God!

[00:00:49.530] - Mags

Stormi!

[00:00:54.010] - Cass

Stop it! No, but seriously, welcome back to another episode. We're on episode-

[00:00:59.770] - Mags

Seven! No, six. This is six.

[00:01:02.190] - Cass

Oh my God.

[00:01:03.470] - Mags

This is six.

[00:01:04.520] - Cass

Yes.

[00:01:05.790] - Mags

We're losing count already.

[00:01:09.630] - Cass

But yeah, welcome back to our newest episode. We're going- if you couldn't tell by the title already, we have a new topic today, as per usual, obviously.

[00:01:22.790] - Mags

No, we're going to recycle the same topic over and over again. You get five episodes and then we're going to keep going back.

[00:01:29.910] - Cass

Broken record. No, honestly. We have a body image to talk about. Now, before we start the episode, just a heads up. I would like to say trigger warning, but I don't think we go into very deep stuff, but obviously I'm not one to tell anyone what's triggering and what's not. So, if this episode is too much for you, please feel free to not listen and just wait for the next one. That's completely fine. We

understand completely, and your support doesn't go unnoticed, so it's fine. The reason why we wanted to address body image, apart that it connects with the whole conversation we are having about social media and stuff, it's also because I think that's something that you- that we all deal with at some point in our lives, especially when you get to your twenties, the point of being healthy and stuff. It's very like put upon you, as if it wasn't enough while you were in school and you had to do PE and stuff like that. But I feel like when you leave, especially when you leave high school, you are not like made to have a routine to exercise and be healthy and stuff like that.

[00:02:55.720] - Mags

Yeah.

[00:02:55.810] - Cass

And then when you get to uni, you know, you might- there are people that go to the gym, and that's their jam, and that's great, but there are other people that forget about it, and they're more worried about going partying or eating and not talking about me. But, you know, a lot of people will probably relate to this, and we kind of lose sight of our health and the health of our bodies and stuff. And obviously, that can impact our confidence and our self-esteem, which we will also address in this episode. So apart from all of that, it also, I think, affects the point of view of you have to be healthy in your twenties, because, especially for women, you have to have a healthy body if you want to have a baby. You have to have a healthy body to you know seem healthy, and you're active, and like you're doing things, and your image is such a big thing because that's how people find you attractive. And you get a partner, and you get a family, and your image is like-physicality is a lot of things, whether you want to get a job or find a partner or friends or you know- it's a lot. And not to mention social media puts a lot of these thought in our heads and stuff. So, we're going to be talking basically about body image, how it affects our confidence and our self-esteem. But again, like I mentioned in you know- a couple of minutes ago, if this episode feels like too much for you, feel free to skip this episode, that's fine. I also wanted to raise, I'm sorry Mags, I'm talking loads-

[00:04:49.500] - Mags

That's alright!

[00:04:49.500] - Cass

But I also wanted to raise that we're not going to dwell with eating disorders or anything of the sort just because we're not experts. We don't want to talk about stuff that's not factual, we don't want to spread wrong information, we don't want to put an opinion that's you know misleading or wrong out there for other people to listen to or learn from. If you have an eating disorder or you think you're struggling in that area, please find help. Get help, ask for help from your friends and family and loved ones, and take care of yourself. Your body's a temple, and that's the only thing that stays with you for the rest of your life. So, you know it's your vessel, take care of it and be gentle with yourself. But yeah, that's about me for the intro. But, I just wanted to make it very very clear because obviously we know that this is a very hard topic for a lot of people. It was a bit of a difficult conversation for me

and Maga to have, but obviously we know it's very relevant, and it's something to raise awareness about. And obviously, if you know someone that's having issues with their body image and stuff, please be gentle with them. Please be gentle with the words you use because words are a big thing you know. You might forget what you said, but the people that was targeted at, they will find it very very hard to forget about it, and they will cling to the words because they come from either someone they care about or just even a stranger's words can impact your mood and your mentality in a very big way. So, please be gentle with the people around you and also with yourself. But with that being said, Maga, you talk because you haven't talked in like seven minutes.

[00:07:01.150] - Mags

I think I'm just going to add a few bits to the introduction, and then we can get into the nitty gritty. But, all I was going to say is I will- we will put in the description some resources. If you do think you are suffering from an eating disorder or you have any concerns that you want to talk about and that you feel maybe you need some help. So we'll do that, so you have an easy place to go to, or if you think as well someone you know might be struggling with these issues, and you want to get some help and advice, then that's there for you as well.

[00:07:38.600] - Cass

But yeah, I think that's enough mumbling from the both of us. The juicy bit of this episode is what Jess is going to bring to the table. Jess is one of our most beloved friends who we met at university. She studied English, actually. English for-

[00:08:01.090] - Mags

Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Is that what it is?

[00:08:03.460] - Cass

Yes, that's it. I hope Jess is not rolling her eyes trying to give her a proper intro. But yeah, Jess is just absolutely amazing, and we thought that it would be a nice- she would be a nice guest to introduce to you for this episode, just because of the simple reason that these are topics that Jess and I would talk a lot about. And I think that me confiding in Jess these types of insecurities and her confiding back to me and stuff made our relationship so much of what it is today, which is a great friendship. And I learned a lot from her when I was at uni, and I continue to do so, and I hope that you guys get to learn and get a bit of her wisdom for your own you know habits and you know knowledge, I guess. So, without further ado-

[00:09:05.850] - Mags

Here's, Jess!

[00:09:07.659] - Cass

Ya!

[00:09:07.830] - Jess

Part of the reason I think is quite good for us to be in more of a collaborative effort with this is because body positivity and body confidence changes for every single person individually. So, things that I may be insecure about and worry about and panic about in my head or have hyper focus on could be very different things that you two feel about yourselves. And there might be something that due to our experiences in life, like I was always sort of the bigger, the bigger girl or the sort of- the fat one, however you want to sort of spin it. You guys have probably had experience where people have taken the mick out of you for being too small and telling you to eat a burger, and then it's like no matter which side you're on, there is always a flaw that people will pick out. So, I could have gone from like a size 26 to a size 8, and there will be an issue along every single part of that thing. I will either be still too large, I will then be too skinny, I will be too- I won't be trying hard enough, I'll be trying too hard. There's always going to be an issue, and one of the things I think that personally helped me with my own confidence is something that I've applied to every other part of my life except how I viewed myself, which is, you are never going to be able to please everybody. It's just impossible. So, in the end, as long as you please yourself, and you are comfortable in yourself, and you are making strides to get yourself to that point, I see no issue with it.

[00:10:48.470] - Cass

Yeah. In terms of you struggling with your body image and stuff, did it start since you were younger and stuff? And how did it change when you went to university and other cities, other jobs, being in relationships and stuff?

[00:11:06.030] - Jess

I think, I mean- my general self-image has always been a bit peculiar. I've always had a slight abnormality. So, when I was born, I was just this long baby. I was so tall, like for my age. Everyone thought I was already like a toddler, and I was like a week old because I was just long boy.

[00:11:27.010] - Mags

Long boy!

[00:11:27.010] - Jess

You know? I was I was trying not to say that! But yeah, exactly. So, I was just a long baby. And then I did, like, ballet when I was a kid. And because my legs were longer than I kind of knew they were, I would accidentally kick some of the people behind me because everyone else is like tiny legs. And then I was, like kicking, and I was clumsy because I was tripping over them all the time. So, I've always had something a bit off with how I look. And then I remember being at school, and I don't

know if you two had this, but I remember being at school, and they, I think I was probably about- I might have been about ten or eleven, and they weighed us every single girl, boy in my year. Every single person in my year got weighed. And it was for this massive census to basically work out the health of the UK children. And they sent you a letter home and basically they said, you're underweight, a normal weight or overweight. And for my age, I was overweight because I was like five foot tall at the age of seven. I've always been tall for my age, and I grew to five foot- I grew to five foot seven when I was about nine, and then I stayed the same height. So, I've always been very tall, and now I'm average. But at the time, I was always really tall. So, this came back and my dad was like "I don't understand how you're heavy. You are just a tall person". Because I wasn't like a particularly chubby kid, I was just a normal weight but really tall. And because the BMI and everything, it classed me as overweight. And I remember the absolute embarrassment being told as a ten year old, and people were going "oh, I am this, I am that". And although we didn't really understand what was good or bad and what was desirable, there was definitely this kind of if you were overweight, you've gone too far kind of a feeling, I guess. And I think that was when the sort of first introduction of "it is bad that you are over a particular number" was introduced to me properly. And then, as I grew up, there was a bunch of women in my life who had dietary issues and were either always on a diet or always exercising or talking about diet tips and things and always complaining about something to do with themselves. And then, I kind of felt like, "yeah okay, I have this wrong with me". And there would be things that I wouldn't even think about could be wrong with somebody until it was either pointed out to me or somebody else was talking about it. And then my grandfather, as he got older, became a little bit more honest with the things that he said. So my cousin, I love her to pieces. She is two years older than me, and she has always been like pencil thin. Just always has been, and she's tried loads of stuff to gain weight, but she just can't. But she has always been a very slender person. And then, when I was stood next to her, especially when I was like sort of thirteen to fifteen, I looked much larger than I was, although I also wasn't actually that big. I was a little bit chubby, but I wasn't like a ballooned- you know the character in Harry Potter where she- Aunt Petunia or something, as she floats away. I didn't look like that. But in comparison, that's how it was almost made that I did look again compared to her because my grandfather would constantly make jokes about like thunder thighs, and "I have to hide the chocolates from you" and would offer things to my cousin and wouldn't offer it to me because I didn't need it, and I think that was where my attitude and sort of relationship with food started to be a bit skewy. I was then introduced to the wonderful world of the internet that had a lot of forums, and I don't want to go into too much detail because I don't want anybody getting any ideas, but there were places that would talk about very unhealthy mechanisms to handle things. And as somebody who was also going through some sort of disordered eating issues, I very quickly fell into that because it was a place where everybody understood me, and they would help me. And it then led to fainting spells and being really quiet unwell for some time. And then I started uni and- well, that's not true. I then went to Germany for a year, and then I was like "I'm going to university", and I went to uni, and I met a range of different people. But because my personality by this point was quite a commanding, confident, 'I can hold the room', 'I can introduce stranger to a stranger' and 'I will find something to talk about', I felt almost as if my value and my worth wasn't based on what I looked like, but the asset that I could bring to a conversation which, in comparison to other people, like I had a girl in my class called Darya who her entire thing was about how she looked. And it's a very sort of Russian thing to do. It's sort of like 'I need to look the best'. 'I need to be prim proper to get the right sort of-' it's that kind of upbringing. And speaking to her, she would be doing ridiculous things in order to maintain her figure, and I was sort of like, "wow do you think less of me because I don't fit that mould?" And she didn't. She thought that I was intelligent, and there was other points, but I think it gets to a point where you think nobody can get to that part of your personality. No one can understand that you are smart or that you're funny or you have

hobbies or anything until they make that conversation. And people aren't going to make conversations with things they don't like. And I know for a fact that there were some people that I've spoken to since, but some people, especially in second year, who said, "oh I didn't really want to talk to you because I didn't think you'd be my type" which I fully understand in terms of a first impression. And then, afterwards when they got to know me, the personality part kicked in. And I think one thing that I've accepted, which is arguably the wrong thing to do, is to sort of just accept the fact that I will not be the initial choice. I may be an after choice because they have to get to know me before making that connection. And other people are like, "you're ridiculous. That's not true." But if I compare- which you should never compare anything to anybody. But if I compare my experiences of like going out clubbing with other people's experience of going out clubbing, they may get constantly pestered and hounded by people like wanting to buy them a drink or wanting to dance with them. My only major thing where that happened to me was when I won a box of Krispy Kreme donuts at a nightclub.

[00:18:57.370] - Cass

I remember that!

[00:18:57.370] - Jess

And this guy was trying to like smooth, and I'm like "you're not getting these donuts". They're not going to you. And he got really aggro at me and he was like, "oh well, 'course". And he said some horrible things like "of course, you're a fat bitch. You're keeping the donuts to yourself". And I went "no, I am sharing them". And I was giving them to the staff because I worked at Krispy Kreme at the time, I didn't need these donuts. I helped them set up. They collected the things from my work. And I said, I'll see you later, because I was going to the thing. So, it wasn't like I needed them, but it was just that initial, 'oh okay, you'll get attention because you look a certain way', and I'll get attention out of those environments when somebody knows me, and I'm okay with that personally. If somebody's just going to judge you by how you look, great. People- it's human nature to do so. But what I have noticed since losing weight is that I have got more attention at that like initial glance, if you will. And I think that's one of the biggest struggles to kind of really come to grips with is that you were right, and you weren't just being paranoid and thinking bad of yourself. But now, I mean I'm in a position where I'm happy with who I am as a person, and I am happy with the way that I act and the thoughts that I have and my attitudes towards certain things. The outside shell is a work in progress, but it's not a priority for me personally. But it's taken a very long time to get here, and it took a lot of isolation, honestly because it stopped me comparing myself and started making me sort of reflect inwardly before going, 'yeah but I can't go here because I look this way'. And I don't know if you guys felt the same at all during like if you guys have ever sort of said, 'oh I can't go to this because I look this', or we can't- 'if I looked this way, this would be different'. Did you guys ever?

[00:21:08.430] - Mags

No, because I guess I've always been like I guess the sort of 'standard' in terms of beauty because I am just like your typical slim girl. And I've never had any problem, like you said, Jess where it's like in certain contexts you'd be like, 'I don't want to go to that because I feel like I wouldn't be able to meet people because just by the way I look, people wouldn't approach me anyways'. I've never had that

sort of problem or experience. But what I've struggled with is like because I am slim, and I have a fast metabolism, so I eat like little, but I'll eat often because I get full quick, but I get hungry quick. But what my struggle has been is muscle building because I've always felt too skinny, almost. Like I feel like my arms are not fat enough. I guess they're not muscly enough, and so they look really lanky and awkward. Or like having curves, like in terms of hips and bum and stuff like that. And I know that that also stems from being with boyfriends and stuff that would look at that sort of body type and then I would feel like, oh' well, that's what interests them, so how am I going to keep them interested if I don't look like that?' So then, I would work to look like that, but then I wouldn't see results. But then I learned throughout the years that sometimes it's just genetics, and these things aren't malleable, and you can't change them because that's just how your body is. And some people are naturally going to be skinny or maybe a bit more like curvy or whatever, but it doesn't matter. But it just means that it might make it harder for you to look like a certain ideal. But then it doesn't matter if you don't look like that ideal because you still look good as you do. I don't know. I think a lot of my self-esteem issues have been like- have been like put on me because of other people. Because when I was a child, I was very skinny because I had- I'm a very big picky eater, as you would know. And so I would eat like, for example, when I was a kid, I'd only eat fish fingers and smiley faces, smiley potato faces. And that's all I would eat. And then like apples. That was the only thing I'd eat a very nutritional meal.

[00:23:57.890] - Jess

Balanced!

[00:23:57.890] - Mags

Don't eat like this! And so I was always very skinny to the point where you know, there was family members and stuff that say, 'are you sure you're not anorexic or anything?' But I was like, no because I don't struggle to eat. I'm just picky with what I eat. But then obviously, because it was not very nutritional, I didn't look as healthy as you know- but then my mom said to me, she was like, 'well I was just glad that at least you were putting food down your mouth, and you were feeding your body no matter what it was', even if it was the same thing every day. And she was like you know 'fish is not the most unhealthy thing ever. It's actually quite good for you', and all that. And as a kid, I didn't care that I was skinny because you know you don't really think about these things. But it's not until I started having boyfriends and relationships and stuff. And a lot of them would look at other women, especially like on social media. The big culprit. And I'd be like, 'oh well, it seems like they're spending more time looking at these women and stuff. But I don't look like that, so how am I going to keep them interested if I don't look like that?' Yeah, that's me.

[00:25:14.640] - Cass

Yeah, I guess for me because obviously I'm half Asian, so my mom would always try to make me fit in the white person mould because I'm half Asian, half white. And especially with me being from Spain, it was a lot of try to get that privilege as much as you can. But how could I when I was the only looking Asian in my class and like the one that was from another ethnicity and stuff. And I remember growing up, like I wouldn't have- I had problems eating when I was a kid. You wouldn't notice that now because I eat anything and everything at this point. Like there's nothing I won't eat except bananas because I'm allergic. I'm definitely allergic to bananas. But before, it was like when I was a

kid, I think I've told you this anecdote, but I would hide food around the house, like behind shelves and behind the sofa, like throwing them out the window because I just wouldn't want to eat. Not because I felt big or anything. I just didn't like food. And then, who would have thought? But then I hit puberty, and then that's when it kicked in that like 'oh, I'm a girl, and I'm supposed to look a certain way'. And my- the thing that got me the most was that I grew up without having big boobs. And my mom has big boobs, my sister had huge boobs, and I was the first girl in my class, in my course that started getting into puberty. And then it just- I got stuck there like nothing else developed from there. And my mom would always make the joke of "oh, your sister got all the boob genes, and you didn't get any". And I was like, "yeah clearly, because I'm flat as a board". But it would always be kind of like the template that I had of 'that's what makes a woman desirable. It's having the curves, having boobs, having a big ass'. And then when I was a teenager, I remember like wearing three bras at a time and stuffing my bras and stuff because I wanted to look more desirable and stuff. Like with girls, it wasn't that big of a deal because girls, unless they're like really bitchy, they won't say anything. They would just get you.

[00:27:44.250] - Jess

The girls don't tend to care.

[00:27:46.110] - Cass

No!

[00:27:46.560] - Jess

Unless they're insecure themselves.

[00:27:53.630] - Cass

You start growing up, and then it's like this thought of relationships and being attractive to someone and stuff. And I was very lucky to not be in a relationship with a man until I was like late in my teenage years or when I was at uni. But even then, I was always conscious of 'oh, if I'm intimate with a man, like they will see I have no boobs'. And it will be like 'where do I grab?', do you know what I mean? Which hasn't been a problem, but it was always a template of and then I started working out with my brother, and then I was like I tried to have a mentality of I want to be slim, because not like I want to be slim, but I want my body to be strong. And I wanted to have longevity more than I want to feel desired because I have curves and stuff. And- and then for some reason, I stopped working out, but then I was like 'oh, I'm not eating loads that are more from my metabolism'. But then during uni, which you guys know, there was loads of things happening where I would stop eating, and I would be sick for ages, and then I would get really thin. And then after that happened, I would just start eating and eating. And at the beginning, it was like, 'oh I'm gaining all that weight that I lost'. But then it just wouldn't stop. And it would have been hormones or whatever label to put on it, but it was like that became default, just eating to soothe emotionally, mentally, anything. And then it's come to a point where I gained like ten extra kilos, and I look the same, but I don't feel the same. And whether I say that to like my partner or anything, it was like, 'oh you look the same, you're fine'. But it's the inside,

like you know you're not fine. Do you know what I mean? So, that's why I would struggle more with my body and confidence and self-esteem.

[00:29:55.020] - Mags

Yeah it's like it doesn't matter what other people tell you. If you yourself don't feel good and confident in your body, it doesn't matter what people tell you. Like you're still going to want to make a change. And it could be like, as you said, it could be like a weight thing where you feel like you've not like other people telling you, 'well I can't see the difference', but then you know you've got this weight inside of you that's just like 'well, maybe I'm not fit as I was before', maybe I don't know. Or it could be like it was with me, like with muscle, it's like 'well, I feel like skinnier and lankier than before', or you know 'I don't have enough curves' or whatever. So, I think if you yourself, within yourself, you don't feel good, it doesn't matter what other people tell you, you're still going to do what's best for you. And I think that's better than doing it because other people tell you to do it. You do it for yourself, not for others kind of thing.

[00:30:51.340] - Jess

But that's one of the things as well, I think. And I know you guys touched on it with your social media episode before, but the fact that the fact there is now legislation being put in place to make sure that if you're using a filter, you have to now disclose it because people-

[00:31:09.290] - Mags

I didn't know that.

[00:31:09.290] - Jess

Legislation is- I don't know whether it's in the UK or not, but there is legislation being put in place that if you are on social media- I think it is the UK. Definitely in the news at some point. Where basically, if you're using a filter that alters your appearance, you have to disclaim it. And it has to be on the video, not like in the caption somewhere. It has to be like a little thing that says 'using a filter' because loads of kids, and I mean, like children are watching things on TikTok, on YouTube, on everywhere, on so many different platforms, and they have filters on. Like when I was first watching YouTube, and I was watching all these makeup influencers do like a smoky eye or whatever, or how to apply foundation without it going oily or contouring or whatever, I'd be watching it, and I'd go 'why doesn't my skin look that way? And I used to think the same things when I would see magazine covers. Like, I would look at a magazine cover, and I would see like a Clinique foundation, and I would go and buy that foundation because I wanted the porcelain skin. I didn't want the skin that had like holes in it. Now I know that, of course it has holes in it. It has to breathe. It is a living organ. It is your skin. And it's one of the things that was sold to me that if you did the right foundation, the right powder, you will look like a mannequin. And now I know that's not true. And texture is part of the human body. You have texture in everything. It's Mother Nature. There's texture all over the place. But the fact that I would be watching, and I would know that these magazines were airbrushed or photoshopped, and I would just be like 'okay, that's fine. That's how it is'. But then you watch these

YouTube videos, especially ones that look like it's just been made by people like you and I sat in a room somewhere, like oh, it's a really lovely, low budget thing, and it's not it's like a huge almost like studio production with filtering, blur effects, all this sort of thing to sell a product. And I used to be so confused why I would have texture and other people wouldn't. And luckily, now you've got the rise of some people on social media who show texture. I can't remember what her name is, but she does like a video where she zooms in, and you can see like- I think she's from India or sort of from that.

[00:33:28.970] - Mags

I know who you're on about.

[00:33:28.970] - Jess

And it zooms in, and you can see like the hair on her skin, and it's like dark hairs, and she's got like acne and scarring, and she zooms- and you can see the makeup apply on her face. And I'm like 'that's brilliant because I have skin that has hair on it and spots and markings from when I scratch myself off a bike at one point'. That's human- When you live as a human, you get marks. It's just how you are. And the worry I've got is if you aren't aware that there are filters on filters, there are blur- I mean like even on zoom, you can add a blur effect or a beautify effect, and it changes how you look. And if you don't know that that technology can do that, you will constantly question yourself as to how you look. And there was somebody I saw on I think it must have been on TikTok, where she used one of these slimming filters that make you look like you have the most itty bitty waist. But the shadow behind her showed that she was a much heavier person, and people were like 'oh, my God, look at the shadow. It's clearly a fake'. And I think that's the point. She's trying to show you that this filter can make you look like perfect hourglass image, but that's actually not what you look like. And on the same token, there are people that similar size to you two and do have the slender, ideal figure but even they feel like they need to edit it and change it because it's not enough, and it isn't curvy enough, or their boobs aren't big enough, or their hips aren't wide enough. There's always something that isn't enough. And my viewpoint on it all is it never will be. There will never be enough weight lost. There will never be enough weight gained. There'll never be enough slimming tablets, face lifts, Botox, lip filler, anything. There's always going to be something that needs to change until you sort of change your viewpoint and you change your own attitude because as I said before, you will never please everybody. You just can't. And if somebody decides to make a horrific comment about yourself, whether it's to do with your race or to do with your appearance or anything like the clothing you wear, even. It's a reflection on them and the fact that they aren't happy, that they are so unhappy with themselves, they feel the need to comment on other people.

[00:35:58.940] - Mags

Yeah, absolutely.

[00:36:01.440] - Cass

But there's also a societal issue as well because that's what we've been brought up, and the beauty standard that there is universal at this point. And it's more Western, I think than it is Eastern. But

even people who come from the Eastern stuff, it's this whole- there was this whole thing about like Korean skin products that made you whiter and stuff just to be a certain box of what beauty is, and it's like nobody will get to that without harming themselves on the way. Do you know what I mean? It's an impossible mission to achieve that beauty standard that only celebrities get to do because of-

[00:36:46.330] - Jess

100%.

[00:36:47.080] - Cass

The money that they used to change their bodies and stuff. Like fucking the Kardashians are proof of that. Like the whole butt lifting and lip fillers and all of that shit.

[00:36:59.200] - Mags

Now that you mentioned the Kardashians, it reminds me. I think the Kardashians also represent and show how beauty comes in trends. So, like how they had a BBL and then they reversed it, and now they're going full slender, no curves-

[00:37:15.100] - Jess

Almost Heroin Chic.

[00:37:16.350] - Mags

Almost Heroin Chic, 90s model-type aesthetic. And it just-

[00:37:21.860] - Jess

The same token that- so begin with that is they put on more fake tan and more bronzer to look darker, and now they are taking it all off, and they're looking considerably more pale again because that's the aesthetic thereafter. Because it's what's popular.

[00:37:38.690] - Mags

Yeah, exactly that I think it just shows that like, as you said Jess, there will- it will never be enough. Because things come in trends, and then they change so quickly, and then you can't keep up. It's just not realistic. And I think people need to realise that what you see on social media is obviously a lot of it is edited or manipulated in some way to make you think that that's how you should look when in reality, beauty is not a trend and how you look is not a trend because it's such an unhealthy way to portray like body image and things like that really.

[00:38:27.720] - Jess

It's the same sort of thing with these influences, and people are saying, "oh well, influencing is dying out". But it isn't in the way that people think it is. I mean, absolutely, the idea of having these perfect houses and photoshopped images and stuff that the curtains beginning to fall a bit on how staged it all is, I think people are clocking in on now is you can curate your Explore Page or whatever, your TikTok For You, whatever it is, you can curate that to show what you want to see. And if you put out positivity, if you put out acceptance, if you put out I don't know, it's almost like manifesting. And the reason I say that is because whether you believe in manifestation or not, it doesn't matter. Your algorithm will point to you what you are looking and searching for, full stop. That's literally what it's trained to do. So you can manifest it by looking up more body positivity accounts. If I look on, I don't know, weird memes on Instagram for like a day, my entire Explore Page becomes that. If I watch a video on, I don't know, somebody showing off their Snag Tight collection, my entire Instagram feed will all be about Tights and Snag Tights and that kind of a thing, and it's all about curating what it is you want to see and unfollowing the accounts that make you feel crap and following accounts that actually make you feel a bit better. And I know that's going more into the social media, but it's the same with like how you view yourself. If you're with somebody who's like "I used to fancy you a lot more when you were a certain size or you looked a certain way or you had blonde hair rather than this hair", then just get rid of them. If they are making you feel that they will leave you because you don't look a certain way anymore. If they have preference, and they're like "I really like your red hair, but you do what you want, as long as you're happy", that's fine, you can keep them, that's okay. But it's the people that are like "oh, have this hair colour, or I'm going" and then you just let them leave because for Christ's sake, it's too fickle, it's too stupid. You are not your hair colour, you are not your weight, you are not your height, you are not the colour of your skin. I mean if you want to be, by all means go ahead, there's nothing stopping you. But we shouldn't be based on those things and our value shouldn't be based on that, quite frankly, we shouldn't have any value put on us at all because we are not commodities. But that's a different thing, that's a different rant for a very different day. That's like a couple of glasses of wine rant, I think, to be fair.

[00:41:00.090] - Cass

Yeah!

[00:41:00.090] - Jess

But I personally think that in terms of body positivity and even looking at the whole fat acceptance movement and body positivity, the toxic parts of it. It should never be a comparison game, it shouldn't be a "oh, you can't have insecurities because like-" Mags, you fit the mould. So what? Because you fit the mould, it actually means that you have more pressure to continue fitting the mould because what happens if you stop? What happens if you, I don't know, you have an injury and you can't move as much or your metabolism slows down or whatever reason. Suddenly everything that was natural to you is gone, and you might then feel bad about yourself for that and your insecurity for that might actually again stem from the external of 'well, what will people think?' And it shouldn't. So if you surround yourself by good vibes, positivity, but people that are also going to help you better yourself in the way that you want to better yourself, then that's in my opinion the best way to handle your confidence issues because you will get confident being around confidence and people who have confidence in you.

[00:42:09.170] - Cass

Yeah, definitely. And I guess as well, the first step to confidence is also acceptance. Like you said before, like nothing will start unless you believe it first because you cannot make other people believe in you if you don't believe in you first. And if they don't believe in you, just kick them out the curb, basically.

[00:42:27.300] - Jess

Yeah, or prove them wrong! If you need to use spite as a bit of-

[00:42:30.520] - Cass

Oh yeah, definitely-

[00:42:31.340] - Jess

Motivation, by all means.

[00:42:32.620] - Cass

Yeah, spite is a good motivator sometimes.

[00:42:35.930] - Jess

Can be. Can be.

[00:42:39.210] - Cass

That's why I said sometimes. But yeah, no, definitely. I agree with what you said. Like we keep going back to social media, but I guess that's such the template, like the mould that people have put on themselves and stuff, especially for children now. Like I'm so scared of looking at my partner's nieces, and especially my niece when she grows up, and she's surrounded by all this technology and all of the things. Because before, when we were growing up, we only had magazines to look at and like maybe films and TV shows and stuff. But now, it's everywhere. It's not like-

[00:43:14.760] - Jess

You can't escape it at all. And I think that's also why we keep coming back to it because social media and the internet is now such a cornerstone. I mean, you can't go anywhere, you can't read anything without there being a reference, obviously, unless you read books that existed before the internet did, but that's not the point. In terms of modern media, it is very hard. Next time you read a

newspaper or you look on the Metro Online or whatever, try and find a page that doesn't reference either like the Internet or Instagram or social media or something to do with the World Wide Web. You can't because it's just now ingrained. It's all- we have little computers in our pockets, and there's absolutely joy and wonder about social media. I mean, I can stay in contact with you guys. I can see what you guys are doing, and I get to learn things, and I get to witness things that I would never normally see. Like, I can watch a guy fishing, like doing a TikTok live, fishing in the middle of the ocean and having a grand old time. And I'm like, this is brilliant, and I would never have been able to see that without it. But in the same vein, it shouldn't be used as a standard. Same with language. There's a standard English, there's a documented thing of how you are supposed to speak the English language. And there are people having arguments all the time of what's correct and what isn't and grammar rules to follow, grammar rules that no longer exist, all this sort of thing. And the reason the standard doesn't fit is because it doesn't take into account dialects, it doesn't take into account regional things. It doesn't take into account people who have learned different countries as thought, like second, 3rd, 4th, 5th, whatever language. But we won't say to them "no, you're doing English wrong". Or some people would unfortunately, but I wouldn't say to somebody "you're English-ing wrong, do better", "you need to English in this specific way". So why would we do that with people?

[00:45:11.850] - Cass

Yeah.

[00:45:11.850] - Jess

Why does everybody have to look the same? Why do we all have to conform to a specific ideal when not everybody likes the specific ideal. I've had partners that when I've said, "I'm losing weight, or I have lost weight", they've gone "I'm really happy you're doing it for you, but I missed the squish". And some people are really into that, and that's completely fine. Saying when I've had my hair long versus my hair short and blonde to green to whatever. People will be attracted to different things and we shouldn't live our life based on other people's attraction.

[00:45:47.590] - Mags

And that's- to bounce back on that, like that's something I think with social media that makes it easier is everyone feels like- like it's so much easier for people to give their opinion and give a judgement and because obviously you can be kind of anonymous as well, where you make a fake username and have whatever profile photo, where people basically can't recognise you. It's easier as well for people to post hate comments or criticism that is not constructive or just pure insults and stuff. And I feel like it is so much easier for people to give an opinion that's not wanted or asked of them or give advice that's not wanted. And it just gives the liberty to people to just say what they want about someone's body or appearance and stuff when you know that's not what it's for.

[00:46:48.010] - Cass

And that just triggers more into the whole body image and confidence and self-esteem and stuff, especially for people who are still trying so hard to find themselves and accept themselves and stuff.

It's just- you keep putting barriers and barriers upon them. And as if having people around you that judge you isn't enough, you also have this little thing on your hand that you just keep scrolling and scrolling, and you can see all bad comments from not only the people around you, but the people all over the world who just have the necessity to give an opinion that's not wanted. And then it just creates more pressure to become someone that you are not just to make you feel like you're part of something or that you can be wanted in that particular way, when in reality you don't need anyone to give you that. Obviously, it's good when you're accepted by friends, family and your partner or whatever, but it shouldn't cost you who you are and what you do to yourself to be accepted and be your own person.

[00:47:54.620] - Cass

Do you have any last tips of advice Jess that you want to give to our listeners about their body image and self-confidence and self-esteem?

[00:48:04.610] - Jess

The only thing I want to add, because I haven't said it at all, is just because you have an idea of what you want to look like at the minute, it does not mean it has to stay the same. You may think 'I want to be a muscle mommy with a billion tattoos and crush men's heads with my thighs'. That may be your current ideal, right? But then you may go 'actually no, I kind of want to be a slightly more softer femme and have like ringlets and my hair tied up in bows all the time'. You can change that. Obviously, you can't take off the tattoos, so maybe chill on-

[00:48:43.090] - Mags

Think twice.

[00:48:44.270] - Jess

Yeah. But in the same token, if you're like 'I want to be this, and then you go 'actually no, I really like this', you're allowed to change that. You don't have to be this one mould. Just do what is good for you and the right people will follow.

[00:48:59.570] - Cass

Definitely.

[00:49:02.450] - Mags

I like that.

[00:49:03.910] - Cass

Yeah, her final piece! Yeah, hair flick! Mic drop! This is where we leave it.

[00:49:11.210] - Jess

Yeah.

[00:49:13.530] - Cass

Hope that you enjoyed that. We absolutely had a blast having Jess here. I had a bit of trouble saying haven't, had and whatever. I speak English, but yeah I hope you loved well, you loved yes. Not even like, love this episode-

[00:49:32.670] - Mags

Because we loved making it and recording it and having the discussion.

[00:49:36.070] - Cass

And having Jess in it.

[00:49:37.500] - Mags

Yes!

[00:49:38.430] - Cass

So yeah, hope that you enjoyed that. Do look forward to Mags's blog post, although I think we'll probably have Jess write a little something for the blog as well. So, stay tuned for that. Until next time, you can find us on socials, on Instagram is @acupofgrowthpodcast, and Twitter and TikTok is @acupofgrowth. For our blog, you can find us on www.acupofgrowth.co.uk. And while you're there, do sign up to our newsletter because you'll get to know what episodes are coming next and what blogs are coming next, what else we have planned for the podcast, and just all the exclusiveness of knowing first before it goes public. So, do sign up. Do leave us a review as well, or send us a comment on socials, or if you're very, very posh and you roll like that-

[00:50:45.020] - Mags

Posh!

[00:50:45.020] - Cass

Do send us an email at inquiries at enquiries@acupofgrowth.co.uk, and just leave us a review, some feedback, anything you'd like us to discuss, or anything you think we could work on to improve this podcast because obviously, as you guys know, we just started, and we're babies at this, but we love doing this, and we enjoy recording and sharing our little bits of wisdom and existential crisis with you. But, yeah. Anything to add, Maga?

[00:51:17.170] - Mags

Yeah, just obviously this is a two way discussion, so we always like to hear from you guys, you know either if that's through DMs and comments or, as you said, as Cass said, if you're posh by email. We do love constructive feedback, and we just like to hear your opinions, so do not hesitate.

[00:51:38.470] - Cass

And of course, before we sign off for this episode, if you are struggling in any way with any eating disorders or anything related to your body, Maga and probably Jess as well, will put some help resources in our blog, and you'll probably find some as well in the description for this episode. So, please do yourself a favour and help yourself and love yourself because we cannot do it just through the podcast, okay?

[00:52:14.610] - Mags

We wish we had magical healing powers or something, but unfortunately, yeah.

[00:52:20.930] - Cass

Yeah, but until then, until the next episode, take care of yourself. Love yourself and spread the love and yeah, we'll see you next time.

[00:52:30.560] - Both [Mags and Cass]

Bye!