

How do you choose your idols?

It's that time of year again. The anniversary of Elvis's passing. Yes. I'm an Elvis Freak. And I'm proud of it. What kind of a weirdo doesn't like Elvis?

Anyhoo, this year it's got me thinking about the people we idolise. Maybe idolise is too strong a word, how about the people we follow, are interested in, read about? I have several and in some cases it's pretty obvious why I like them. Elvis definitely fits into this group. But in other cases, it's not so obvious.

My husband and I were discussing it the other night. He's not interested in pop stars, or actors, his idols are war heroes. Very noble. But I think if he looked at it a little more closely he would discover that the reason his idols are war heroes aren't that much different from the reasons I choose my idols. It's about overcoming the odds. Standing up for what you believe in. And doing the right thing.

My idols tend to be people who turn their mental illnesses into strengths and art. People who write and celebrate their differences and show their vulnerability, and women who fight for fairness, in all of its forms. Doesn't sound much different from war heroes, does it?

There's a growing group of women making noise out there and these are my new idols. The likes of Helen Mirren, Ashley Graham, Jennifer Aniston. Hedy Lamarr, do you know about her? She was an actress, absolutely gorgeous. What a lot of people don't know about her, and should know about her, is that she was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2014. She and a dude called George Antheil invented a scientific thingamajig that was used for the Allied war effort and became the basis of our wifi and bluetooth. (No, I can't explain it any better than that because I simply do not understand it. Way over my head)

Hedy Lamarr was known for her acting, despite an amazing achievement in another field. Jennifer Aniston and Helen Mirren are known as actresses who are constantly having to publicly defend the fact that they don't have children but are, in fact, still actually women. Ashley Graham? Well, she's a "plus size model." Sigh. These women are doing something that women fought hard for the right to do. They're voicing their opinions. They're telling others to bugger off and mind their own business. They're showing, not just telling, the next generations of young girls that you don't have to do, or be, what society expects you to. Different is not "less than." There is no "one right way."

I don't know about you, but I think that should be celebrated. Loudly.