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East Africa

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SHELINA MEDIRATTA

AMANI

On the health scare that almost crippled her music

Recharge

- DECODE YOUR BODY'S SIGNALS
- LEARN THE TRICKS OF SUPER ACHIEVERS
- LIVE WITH CHILDLIKE ENTHUSIASM
- GIVE UP BAD RELATIONSHIP HABITS




MUTHONI KIMANI was on the cusp of her 40th birthday with a battered body and a bruised self-esteem. Entering and winning a body makeover competition – which included surgery, a diet and fitness plan – through Capital FM and the Karen Hospital, changed her life forever.

"You'd never believe it looking at me now, but I was big for a very long time. I must have weighed in at about 95kg. I felt like an albatross. I was tired all the time and my back gave me serious problems. Buying clothes was a nightmare – always having to settle for less stylish, plus-sized garments, and having to try and hide my tummy. I had tried to improve my life before and failed dismally. The process was painfully slow, but I now know that everything changed because I chose to change my thinking. In the past, I would eat to console myself, but now I confront whatever it is that is bothering me without the help of food.

I'd seen the *Extreme Makeover* reality show, and longed to have a body just like one of the featured guests, but I knew the cost of looking that way was quite astronomical. Then one day in August, about two months before I turned 40, my daughters Nadia, 19, and Natalie, 17, told me about a contest that would 'put the bounce back in my step'. I jumped at the chance when I discovered that the prize was a full body makeover. I just about made it in time to enter the competition. The preparation entailed a thorough medical examination, as the entrants were required to be healthy enough to withstand surgery. By the time I entered the contest, my weight had dropped to 84kg. I'm 5'2" and because I had been big for so long, the weight loss left me with unsightly folds of loose skin. I did not expect to win, and only after I was notified did it dawn on me that I would once again be able to look at myself in a mirror without cringing. The surgery was relatively painless. I had a tummy tuck, a breast lift and liposuction. I had done some research prior to the surgery, and the operating surgeon managed to allay any fears I had. Remarkably, I was on my feet again in two days. What I hated most, however, was the uncomfortable lumbar corset and the extremely tight undergarments I had to wear continuously for two weeks. The nursing staff, my family, and the other contestants were very supportive, but this did not stop me from wanting to pull out my hair during the first week of recovery!

The healing process included an intense workout session of at least three hours per day, monitored by a merciless gym instructor. In retrospect, however, I can truly say it was worth every minute. During this time, I learnt the science behind food and weight, restructured my thinking, improved on etiquette, and became a newer, slimmer more confident woman. The results have more than made up for the six-week programme that kept me and other winners away from our families and our daily routines.

I might have a fading tummy-tuck scar running from hip to hip, barely-visible scarring around nipples from the breast lift, and a small incision through which all the fat was sucked, but I have never felt more exhilarated – especially by being able to see right down to my feet again! Admittedly, it took a while for me to get used to heads turning, and comments about how young I look! Now I wear pretty much what I please as a size 10/12, and no longer experience aches or pains as a result of my weight. I am a great deal more confident, and my self-esteem is at an all-time high. I am in a new job and, as for my husband – well, let's just say that he is very pleased."



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