



Shedding

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While you may know that animals shed, we humans shed too as we adapt to different seasons.

In 2019, I lost a part of myself that I have since been trying to get back, but then it hit me: What if I just... shed? What if I'm trying to bring back a part of myself that I've outgrown? So many of you are like me. We lose ourselves to the world, to the pressures of our existence and we try to get it back. I'm here to tell you that it's okay. This lesson took me five years to learn; I'll try to explain it to you in five minutes using my imaginary friend Em. Join me as Em sits on the edge of a mountain reminiscing the different skins she has shed as she grew – in age and in soul. Do you see yourself in her?

8-year-old Em hates school. It takes time away from her cartoons and her pretend games of being a hero loved and admired by everyone. Her biggest worries are the obstacles Superhero Em has to face.

13-year-old Em has developed a crush, but she is worried what he thinks of her. She's not the prettiest in the grade or the most athletic. She does not have any unique traits. She thinks very lowly of herself.

19-year-old Em has just finished high school and is waiting for her exam results. She has numerous expectations to fulfill – hers and her parents. She hasn't met her friends for almost a year now. She doesn't remember the last time she slept more than four hours. She has graduated but she still sits at her desk and studies. Working hard is all she can do. That's all she is. If she stops studying, what does her life become?

25-year-old Em's achievements are plenty: two excellency awards and first-in-the-world prize for psychology in school; top 5% once and top 15% twice throughout her nursing degree. Everyone thinks she has done well, but she just cannot seem to agree. She is so scared. Everyone says she'll be a good nurse, but nursing is not where her heart lies.

32-year-old Em has just enrolled into medical school. She is finally one step closer to her dream, but she's scared. Working hard is all she has but she is so tired all the time balancing her life, marriage and her studies.

45-year-old Em has finally become a doctor. It's been tough. Lots of blood and tears shed from her soul. But every day she wakes up, it's a life saved. She is still scared, but she is always there to support herself and her children.

70-year-old Em is watching her grandchildren play in the garden, giggling and full of energy. She sees herself in them. She hopes that she can teach them about shedding and that at the end of the day, if you have at least one good reason to smile, that's a great life to live despite the worries. She is content. And she has realised that Superhero Em was never pretend. She has always been by Em's side as she shed through the different seasons.

