Dear Body,

Thank you for allowing me to achieve everything I have ever wanted in life. You let me get out of bed every morning before I even realize what is happening. Thank you, legs, for getting me to class - whether I arrive on time or not. Without you, I wouldn't be able to dance, play basketball, or hike. I would never know what it's like to run freely like a child.

Thank you, hands, for letting me paint, write, and now - type this letter. Without you, I wouldn't know what it feels like to hold a loved one's hand. Thank you, eyes, for allowing me to see the world and everything good and bad in it. Without you, I would never see the faces of my parents, siblings, and friends. I couldn't admire the sunrise, the rainbow, or any of the beautiful sights I've been lucky enough to witness.

Without my body, I wouldn't know what it feels like to stretch out on the bed after a long day or lie on the beach in the sun. I wouldn't experience my mother's embrace.

I apologize if I sometimes take you for granted - because you are truly amazing. I will do my best to take care of you and appreciate everything I can do because of you every day.

We can downplay the focus on appearance, but we shouldn't - we mustn't - ignore our bodies. It's worth thinking about them in a different way, a healthier way that doesn't foster an obsession with beauty. Viewing the body in terms of its capabilities is healing and empowering, helping to overcome body shame and dissatisfaction. If we can remember that our bodies are meant for various activities, our motivation to take care of them will increase regardless of their appearance.