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The Swimsuit That Took My Breath Away

I hate shopping for swimsuits. I especially hate trying them on in front of a fitting-room mirror, while every flaw is highlighted by the same number of kilowatts used to illuminate the average baseball stadium.

So I didn't even think about getting a new swimsuit when, at the first sign of summer, my daughter asked, "Mom, can we go swimming?" Instead, I dug through the bottom of my closet, looking for my old one.

Unfortunately, when I found it, it looked pathetic - even BEFORE I put it on. It was limp and lifeless, with fraying seams and faded shades of brown and gray (I seem to remember they were once green and blue). Frankly, I've seen perkier-looking road kill.

"Dang," I thought. "I've GOT to buy a new swimsuit."

I reluctantly drove to the mall, with Kelly in tow. Lining the aisle of the first swimwear department were racks of brightly colored, two-piece swimsuits – the kind I used to wear, right through the year 1992 BC (Before Children). In those days, I thought one-piece suits were boring.

Boring is exactly what I looked for now.

Sure enough, buried behind the racks of two-piece suits were the more conservative, one-piece suits. I scanned the assortment without enthusiasm, looking for something that would be moderately flattering. At first, nothing looked promising enough to justify the mental anguish of a trip to the fitting room. Then, something caught my eye...something that gave me hope! Dangling from one of the suits was a tag that read: "Miracle Suit - Lose 10 Pounds Instantly!"

"HMMMM???" I leaned closer.

"You'll look leaner and trimmer," it boasted. "Patented tummy panel firms and slims!"

From behind me, Kelly asked sarcastically, "Who would fall for THAT?"

“Me!” I answered, grabbing several and heading to the fitting room. At the entrance, a saleswoman let me in. “So,” I asked her, pointing to the swimsuits, “what’s the secret?”

“Basically,” she replied, “ really strong elastic.”

Okay...red flag. It’s taken years to develop, but I now have my own unique clothing style. I call this style, “comfortable.” This means I no longer squeeze myself into clothing. In fact, the only tight thing I attempt to fit into anymore is a parking space. But there I was, holding swimsuits that promised not to let my stomach leave the premises without my permission! I couldn’t resist – I quickly stripped down to my “undergarments.”

I stepped into the first suit and gave it a tug. I got it as far as my knees, and...it stopped. Something was wrong. I checked the label – it said it was my size, but there had to be some mistake. I called out to the saleswoman, “This suit is way too small!”

“Actually,” she answered, “that’s the way it’s supposed to fit.”

“You’ve got to be kidding,” I thought. “Getting this suit ON will be a miracle.” With renewed commitment, I wrestled it to my thighs. Then, panting, I forced it over my hips... fought it past my waist...pulled it above my chest. With a final burst of adrenaline-fueled strength, I stuck my arms through the armholes, and...victory!

I slumped against the wall, exhausted. My red blood cells screamed for oxygen. I desperately tried to provide it, but I could only take teeny tiny breaths, as my lungs were being severely compressed by the large tourniquet I was wearing. “Who designed this suit,” I wondered, as my vital organs started to shut down, “Jimmy Dean?” From far away, I heard Kelly ask, “Mom, are you okay? Mom, how come you’re not answering? Mom?????”

Right before I passed out, I looked in the mirror. Gee, my stomach DID look flatter!

I might be exaggerating - a little. Trying on the Miracle Swimsuit didn’t actually cause me lose consciousness. However, it DID cause me to lose the desire to look 10 pounds thinner.

Maybe I can get one more summer out of that old swimsuit after all.