



Amanda Latham, 31, was in a serious car accident when she was 20 years old. The scar on her throat is from her tracheostomy. Amongst many other injuries, she broke two vertebrae in her neck and could have been paralyzed.

What Makes Them Whole

"SCARS are not injuries... A scar is a healing. After injury, a scar is what makes you whole," writes China Miéville in his book, *The Scar*.

Everyone has scars, but some are more telling of the individual than others. Some are inside, others out. Some are accidental, others on purpose.

All the people shown here have learned to embrace their scars as a part of their body, which serves as a reminder of their past. Some are at different stages of this acceptance, but these stories are examples of how flaws can be more beautiful than perfection.

Holly Mosienko had a scarification artist etch a star into her bicep, sort of like a tattoo.

Mosienko says, "The majority of people like it, think it's kind of different and unusual. The odd person doesn't like it at all. My mother was very upset at me.

"The one on my shoulder, I was going through an awful lot at the time. It would definitely be kind of like a midlife crisis, but it meant a lot to me at the same time."

The current popular literature at the time influence her design.

"I was reading the Da Vinci Code at the time and I read a lot about how powerful the star symbol was and how ancient it is and how it's been interpreted in different ways. And that it has strong feminine background to it."

Taylor Weaver's scars were also on purpose. Weaver resorted to self-harm as a way to deal with her emotions. She has since stopped, and begun to heal.

"It's not something I'm proud of, but it's a landmark in my life, something I got over. It's not something I'm ashamed of," Weaver explains.

The heart shown on her hand (below right) is not a mark of self-harm; it's a reminder to love herself.

"I got it on my left palm because it used to be the first thing I'd see when I'd go to cut myself."

Someone who has accepted her life changing scars is Amanda Latham. Eleven years ago, Latham was in a major car accident. The driver of the other vehicle was drunk and had dementia. Amanda defied doctor's expectations; she was able to breathe and walk on her own.

Despite the pain she is still in, she says, "In the end I'm very comfortable with my scars now, because they're a part of who I am. Yeah, people gawk and stare and point and whisper; okay, you can gawk and stare and point and whisper after you've survived what I did, then we'll talk."

Emily Vissers' scars were also caused by someone else, and they are very hard to see: they effect her from the inside.

In the summer of 2013, she was attacked by an opponent during a soccer game. The attack left her with two vertebrae out of alignment in her neck, a rotated shoulder, a concussion and level two whiplash. It also effected her emotionally, creating a lot of anxiety, especially when the school year started up again.

She says it helps her to talk about the incident and that people sympathize with her, but charging her attacker brings her the most empowerment.

"The fact it happened gets a lot of people, I think. Whenever they hear how it happened, they always get kind of worried and understand that it's more emotional. The physical stuff too always makes it worse. All together it adds up. Either one without the other would still be bad, but together they make it worse."

In all cases, emotions are tied heavily with the marks left on the body. Whether it stems from divorce or assault, that part of someone's life will be carried with them forever to serve as a reminder of life gone by.

Story and photos by Sarah Vissers



Emily Vissers, 19, was attacked by an opponent during a soccer game. The attack left her with physical and emotional injuries.



Holly Mosienko, 51, who owns Body Piercing by Holly in Peterborough, has multiple scarifications done.



Taylor Weaver, 18, a photojournalism student at Loyalist College, has her personal history displayed on her arm. Weaver used to resort to self-harm to help deal with her emotions.