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OPINION

Ofelia Faz-Garza: Admitting shame can be a first step toward overcoming it

By [dallasnews Administrator](#)

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I have a secret to share; something that brings me great shame.

Maybe I'm being overly dramatic. Shame is a powerful word, after all. It implies there's a significant amount of humiliation and distress that I'm feeling; that I'm grappling with the pain of guilt and sadness over something. Maybe it's not that bad. Maybe I need a better word. I am just talking about my feet, my enormous feet.

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As a tall, large-framed woman, my feet are fairly proportionate to my size. A large tree needs a sturdy root system, right? It doesn't make it easier though.

I can sense eyes rolling and think I may be hearing some moans and the muttering of "It's feet, for God's sake!"



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If you take this all at face value, then yes, it is just a body part I'm complaining about. But for those of us endowed with big feet, it's deeper than that. From a practical and financial standpoint, it means not being able to just run into a store to buy sandals when the ones I'm wearing break. It means not having great stories about the shoes I snagged at the thrift store or at the sale or even online.

On a deeper level, it's simple: Big feet on a woman equals ugly, clumsy, unattractive. I'm perpetually one of Cinderella's evil stepsisters, squeezing my toes into shoes not meant for me. My feet feel like a defect, something to joke about. Being told you have Sasquatch feet never grows on you, and having to repeat your shoe size a couple of times because people assume you're joking never stings less.

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Ironically, this hangup has gotten more pronounced as I've aged. In high school, even though I was already wearing a size 9 shoe, it didn't bother me. I guess of all the imperfections I saw when I looked in the mirror, my foot size mattered the least back then. As I've gotten older, my feet slowly and unknowingly have spread. First into a size 10 shoe, then an 11. Then one day, as I slipped on my favorite pair of shoes, it hit me: My toes felt like they were going to punch a hole through the leather. Time to move up one more size to a 12.

I hate being embarrassed over something I have no control over; that should have no bearing on my concept of self-worth. I don't do body shaming; I love and accept who I am. I'm proud to call myself a Xicana, a feminist. So why does this bother me so much?

I can accept that the word shame is accurate for how I feel. I'm owning that here, by giving my insecurity some space to breathe out loud.

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