

Media Must Cease to Glorify the “Perfect” Body Image

Nobody looks alike, we’re all a different shape and size. Although this is true, media is persistently presenting skinny, flawless and tanned human beings, making us question whether or not we are attractive. Studies have shown that 97% of women and 80% of men are unhappy with their bodies and overall appearance. As a twelve year old girl, I find the media portrayal of the ideal body image unacceptable. Media must stop glorifying the “perfect” body image. My aspiration is for people to be aware that our figures and physical attributes are all beautiful. “You are imperfect, permanently and inevitable flawed. And you are beautiful.” –Amy Bloom.

Magazines, movies, television, social media and the internet are all forms of media that define beauty. These forms of media are profiting by diminishing our self-esteem, social media specifically. Social media advertising revenue has already reached \$81 billion dollars this year. Through advertising unnecessary beauty products and weight loss aids , Instagram has made over \$10 billion this year. Kim Kardashian has made up to \$500,000 for a single sponsored post. That’s more than the president of America’s annual salary, who earns \$400,000 per annum. She made more than a leader of a country does in one day by promoting the perfect body image. We are inadvertently buying and spending money on products and media that are subconsciously attacking our perception of attractiveness.

The celebrities we follow on social media have an immense effect on the approach that we take when regarding our physique and semblance. Currently, 2.46 billion people use at least one social media platform. 111 million of those users follow Kim Kardashian on Instagram. She is the preeminent personality that embodies men’s quintessential figure. Her flat and toned stomach, dark tan and broad hips are proved to be women’s ultimate bodies. Scroll through her Instagram page and you will find picture after picture displaying all of the previous. Both men and women view these and unintentionally portray that as what the female body should resemble. Not only does that become what all female forms should mirror, but it also becomes the definition of beauty. The exclusive and individual interpretation of beauty.

Have you ever gazed longingly at that glossy magazine, wishing that was you, with the perfect hair, teeth and body? Unfortunately, we all have at some point in our lives. Although doing so may not seem detrimental, it can cause serious eating disorders such as bulimia, anorexia and binge eating. 70 million people worldwide suffer from eating disorders. Shockingly, this number has increased by 400% since the year 1970. Establishing your self-worth based on your appearance can also cause mental health issues. Over 180 million people globally are depressed, experience anxiety and self-consciousness on a daily basis. These horrific statistics are sourced from people ranging from the ages of 10-60. The media indicating that there is only one ideal way for men and women to look is the only reason this data exists.

Witnessing these tall, young and flawless models and actors incessantly, produce the belief that it's typical to look perfect. When in actuality only 5% of people worldwide are born with these ludicrous expectations. To be accepted by society, millions of people undergo costly procedures to alter their bodies. Many celebrities also feel the immense pressure to uphold the beauty standards set by many before them. They do this in order to maintain their fame and remain relevant. In 2014 over \$24 billion US dollars was spent on plastic surgery globally. As plastic surgery becomes more accessible, the quantity of procedures escalates to an unimaginable number. Last year 1.9 million procedures were performed. No one should have to feel so insecure that they need to surgically adjust their bodies to be valued.

Elle Magazine reaches 69 million readers every year. The company has been accused of making their models and celebrities skinnier using Photoshop. This is absolutely true but all media distorts the reality of people's bodies. "I have been asked to slim down a waist, stomach or limbs. I make models taller and their limbs longer. We make them tanned and their hair glossier. We completely remove veins, freckles, moles and bags under the eyes frequently. We remove body hair, subdue wrinkles, whiten teeth, pop the eyes." – an anonymous re-toucher's confession. With everything photo-shopped, it provides us with an unattainable goal.

Media is so very present and will never disappear, we use it to express ourselves. Though that doesn't mean it should continue to glorify the "perfect" body image. Media affects far too many individuals, produces hazardous consequences, is an unfair way of profiting and especially deceitful.

It concludes whether we will be accepted or rejected. We must remember one thing, we are all perfect, all "flaws" included and no picture can tell us otherwise.