

# Pressure on teens



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Media's Pressure on Teens Millions of boys and girls all over the U. S. get up every morning and step in front of their mirror to ask one question. The question crossing minds at that moment is " Does this look cool? " Oddly enough, to most teens in America, they are not meeting the standard set by their peers and the press. Teens base their styles, attitudes and ideas of what they see, hear and read which creates huge problems elsewhere. These problems can occur in the way teens treat others and the way they treat themselves.

American teens and adults have yet to look past all the flashy clothing and make-up to understand what is actually being sold and how it can affect people in a terribly negative way. From my experience as a teen, I have seen my peers change to fit the latest fads and understand the weak points of teenagers. I have therefore concluded, the four strongest influences on teens from the media are the correlations from fashion and music to " self-identity", showing teens how to think, talk, and feel, the selling of images not products, and body and physical issues.

For most people, adolescence was a time of truth and realization or " finding yourself". Well, it is good to know things have not changed, because young adults these days feel the same way. But for teens today, they only find out what and who the media wants them to be. The interests of teenagers are derived from music and television. If someone hears a band on the radio and people around them say the band is " sick" and " way cool" the person will believe it despite whether or not the music is trash. It all begins here.

The links between music and finding your place at school or in a community are so incredibly strong teens base their outlook toward life and others on them. The connection between music and finding “ who you are” is only the tip on the huge, esteem-eating, merciless iceberg of the media. Teens find ways to deal with life’s challenges by talking, thinking and feeling like the TV, music and modeling stars that they hear and see everyday. The shows and programs the majority of young adults watch are based on teenagers as well. Therefore, the viewers intentionally, or unintentionally, pick up habits their star has.

For example, if a boy was suddenly introduced to the “ wonderful and inspiring” music of the guitar thrashing band Metallica, he might begin to wear dark colors such as red and black that are often featured in the band’s music videos Most importantly, as it usually plays out, he would consider anyone who doesn’t listen to Metallica to be a brainless idiot with no taste in music. At this point in the youth’s life, prejudice and dislike of others based on style preferences rears its head and breaks loose from its confinements.

Cliques are formed and members are selected and rejected. This leads to problems for those who are rejected and once again they feel they can never be as good as had been expected. Suppose someone was channel surfing and stumbled upon a car add. The model of car that is being sold is irrelevant, but what is going on around the car is what the company is trying to sell. The person who is watching believes the advertisement is for a product when in fact it is an image that is being sold. Confusing right? Explanations are close at hand.

In the car add mentioned before (perhaps the car is a small Toyota Corolla) the colors are bright and vibrant; a young couple is sitting in the front seats of the car with their windows down, enjoying the fresh autumn air. Notice that when the voiceover is speaking of low APR financing until 2004, the young couple is smiling like there is no tomorrow. They glance each other lovingly as shadows whisk playfully over the windshield of the glittering car. This appeals to almost anyone, but for a girl who is looking for a cheap and comfortable car, this is the perfect sales pitch. Or perhaps the car is a Ford truck.

Already the name sticks in the viewers mind but the video clips of buff men and rugged trips to the desert to rock climb convince them they need the truck. If the viewer can't have the product, whether it be lip-gloss, a new car, a prom dress or even a new hairstyle, their self-esteem plummets. They begin to feel they are not capable of being so cool. One must keep in mind that the companies that are advertising are not selling a product, but an image that you will get when you go for this great, once-in-a-life-time offer. The last and most dangerous result of influence by the media is bulimia and anorexia nervosa.

A simple stereotype must be cleared up before this essay goes any further. If a common businessman were asked about anorexia nervosa or bulimia, it is almost certain that he would say that it occurs only in women. What this common businessman doesn't know, along with most of America's public, is these diseases do occur in boys and men. When striving to meet that ideal weight to height ratio men will fast. They will continue to use that exercise plan they were been told was used by Arnold Schwarzenegger and

eventually their body begins to feed of its own muscle because it has no nutrients.

Once someone gets stuck in a routine of that sort they will have trouble quitting. For women, the cases are different but still maintain the idea of starving themselves to reach that slim and elegant look that so many stars and models seen in magazines have. For someone who has anorexia nervosa, every time they look in the mirror they see a huge and grotesque figure staring back. They are most certainly not over weight but their brain believes what it sees. Once again, people should be taught to look past all the fraud that is flashing in front of them and make good decisions based on reality.

So next time an ad flashes onto the TV screen think of all the things really being sold and how to approach them correctly. To stand out in a crowd and be individual one must have a crowd and telling people they are idiots because they do not listen to Metallica is no way to attract a group. The diseases anorexia nervosa and bulimia are triggered by people wanting to be like those skinny, spindly women who strut around on cat walks showing off pieces of iridescent cloth draped about them. " Why? Why would someone want to be like that? one may ask, well, the truth is that these teenagers do not know who to follow or what to do. They see the media; they see companies telling them " This is hot! You need this to be cool! " and the viewers do not see what is happening to their own bodies, what is happening to others around them, what the consequences of their decision will be. If one fails to see behind the razzle and dazzle of the media they will be

trapped in a cage of false faces and feelings; trapped in the mad “ fun-house of fashion and fraud. ”