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beauty products she



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By: Ben Dover Bitch Perhaps no time in history have body image standards had such an enormous impact on society. With today's mass media people can be subjected to thousands of images and messages daily, portraying the ideal body image.

The people most often portrayed and effected by these messages are young women. Females can feel constant pressure to live up to these ideals which are most often unattainable. This pressure can cause detrimental physical and mental states.

To fully understand this problem we must first ask ourselves, Why? Why has the female body been pushed to the forefront of society and media? It is undeniable that it is merely a marketing ploy. The beauty sector is a multibillion dollar a year industry. Companies such as Revlon, Cover Girl, Maybelline, LOreal insist that girls must look a certain way if they want to be anything. These corporations are only concerned with the bottom line. They take no responsibility for the negative image that they portray, in fact, that is what they thrive on. The worse self-image a woman has, the more beauty products she will buy to try and improve her looks.

And there is no better way to make her think she is ugly than to subject her to thousands of unrealistic, airbrushed pictures of models to compare herself to. This way of thinking is further drilled into the female mind through womens magazines such as Cosmopolitan, Vogue and so on. Never do you find an article entitled Big is Beautiful.

More often you will find How to lose 20 lb.. so your man will love you! sprawled across the cover of the latest issue. Occasionally magazines will

run a heart touching article about an ex-models fight with bulimia. They will often forget to mention, however, that the same model was portrayed as the pinnacle of health and beauty on the cover of last years April issue. The beauty industry and magazines are not the sole cause of the problem though, there is plenty of blame to go around. And so we look to Hollywood. The cardinal rule in movies and television: sex sells.

When you tune into to watch Friends on Thursday night you will not see one leading lady (or any ladies for that matter) with a waist over size six. The only imperfect characters in the show are the fat ugly guy and fat ugly lady who live across the street and are the objects of constant ridicule. The same can be said for virtually all mainstream shows on television. It is a constant barrage of beautiful people that viewers are being exposed to. And, unfortunately, it is becoming accepted that society should look like TV. There is essentially no one in this medium saying that it is okay to be yourself, to look how you look and feel good about yourself at the same time.

What are the effects of all this? Major depressive disorder, schizophrenia, social phobia, body dysmorphic disorder, bulimia nervosa, and anorexia nervosa to name a few. The impact that today's body image standard is having on women is immeasurable. Eating disorders and low self esteem are at an all-time high. The problem isn't getting better either, in fact it's getting worse. Girls are now being reached by these messages earlier in life. The younger they are, the more susceptible to the image they are. Women are essentially growing up from birth with this unrealistic image of what they should look like embedded into their minds.

The evidence is in the fact that every year cases of anorexia and bulimia are occurring among in younger and younger girls. The number of women effected by these disorders may never be known. Most will never come forward and seek treatment, and many will die as a result. What society must do is tell the beauty industry, tell the magazines, and tell Hollywood that what they are doing is not acceptable. The image they portray is unrealistic, unhealthy, and irresponsible. There seems to be little hope though. It is unlikely that the beauty industry will loosen its grip on the minds of women and not try so hard to make them think theyre