

# Miss america – an outdated tv show?

Business



I am mixed in my opinion of Miss America and sit on the fence with my views, possibly leaning more towards against than for.

On one hand the pageant is entertainment and it gives people something to talk about and something easy to watch. The competition can also provide the contestants with opportunities which may not have arose if they hadn't entered the competition, for example 2004 winner Ericka Dunlap is now a singer, 2000 winner Heather French is now a designer, artist, and public speaker. Without the experience which they gained in the competition they may not have taken the paths that they did. On the other hand, I think that the women should not have to gain approval from the judges by their appearance. In 1968 there was a feminist group called the New York Radical Women who targeted the pageant with the view that, " to win approval, we must be both sexy and wholesome, delicate but able to cope, demure yet titillating bitchy..." The women who take part in the pageant are entered based on their looks; there is not one woman in the competition that is not symmetrical, clear skinned, with shiny hair and straight teeth. Just because someone isn't traditionally " beautiful" it should not mean that they are unable to take part in such a show, after all beauty is subjective.

The pageant bosses insist that the contestants must have talent and are no longer allowed to have professional hairdressers and makeup artists on set. Women's ideals have changed greatly since the show began in 1927. Women in real life are no longer required to walk in high heels, wear a bathing suit, and have a perfectly made face in order to be respected and accepted by others. However, Miss America still carries the stereotyped notion of what it means to be beautiful for a woman. They are required to string just a few

sentences together and hold just one single, so called, talent. Young girls watching the show will see these girls acting as they do, being judged on their appearance, and think this is the way of the world.

My idea to improve the show would be to do blind applications. The women should send in their applications with absolutely no photos, and simply be entered from what they have written down on the pages, their values, and personality. In the twenty first century it seems wrong to see women as objects when they have the right to education, careers, voting, and more than just bringing up children and looking after husbands. It would be good to see the women win for what they can do and what they will bring to the world after the competition. On the surface Miss America seems like mind numbing television to watch how the woman representing your country performs, however what is the effect on a young girl watching the show, does she feel that she must act like her, be made up, thin, and tall in order to be chosen by the judges and “ win”?