
Nobody is Born to Be Perfect

“ I want to look good for my first day of high school.” Every teenager goes through this awkward phase, where your body would drastically change. Body disproportions, cracky voice, and acne. All the wonderful things that life has to offer, right? Just when middle school ended, I started to experience massive weight gain. I went from size 2 to size 5. Every morning, my mom would constantly nag about how thick my thunder thighs were. She literally brought a mirror for our living room to remind me how fat I was. Every time, I saw my reflection, I would always felt this strong sense of guilt; knowing that I haven't attained my mom's expectations. Every time we would go out for family dinners, my mom would purposely mention my weight. “Sweetie, you shouldn't eat too much rice, it'll make you fat.” or “Stop eating or else you will turn into a pig.” Eventually, these non-stop daily reminders gradually became an addictive mindset; endless thoughts of food, calories, and exercise. My confidence started to plunge, becoming more self-conscious of my body. Surfing through my Instagram feed was a battle filled with jealousy; overflowing with beautiful, skinny models. “Ugh, why don't I look like her.” I would see thirteen-year-old girls all pampered up to look and act like twenty-year-olds. All of which are usually wearing teeny-weeny crop tops and shorts; revealing way too much skin. Nowadays, children are growing and maturing faster than ever. My mom told me that she didn't even start wearing makeup until she was eighteen. In contrast, I was only seven when I started begging my mom to buy me a Sephora lipstick set. “I would see thirteen-year-old girls all pampered up to look and act like twenty-year-olds.”

Constantly glancing in the mirror, grabbing the excess fat on my thighs and deliberately sucking in my tummy for a skinnier complexion, imagining what I would look like if I were just like them. The action of comparing myself to models eventually became an everyday routine that was slowly deteriorating my mental health. I felt like a prisoner trapped inside my own body; unable to fearlessly express my inner beauty and to accept myself for who I am. Inevitably attempting to strive for that 19-inch waist, thigh gap, and defined collarbone. I started to question about the society in terms of how we define beauty. It made wonder about my own identity and how people perceive me as. Why do people associate the word “Fat” as a negative connotation? And why do we often use it as an insult? I want to know why my mother was threatening me with harsh words even though there was nothing wrong with me. No matter if I have a perfectly healthy BMI, there will always be people there making judgments.

I now came to realize that for all this time, ever since I was a little girl; I have been exposed to these unrealistic body expectations. I remember being taught that in stories, women must be sweet, caring, skinny, dainty and petite to have a happy ending. If you don't meet the requirements, you will ever be able to find the Prince Charming of your dreams. In my favorite

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Disney Movie, The Little Mermaid, the villain of the movie, Ursula, who has the lower body of an octopus, is the opposite of Ariel, as she is old and fat and incredibly grotesque to look at. In the movie, Ursula says that a girl's voice is not as important as their physical appearance. This is giving kids the idea that boys will only appreciate women based on their looks. This creates unrealistic expectations of gender portrayal, resulting in the destructive impact of one's self-esteem.

I was 11 at the time when the new Disney Villains Designer Collection released a new Ursula barbie, in which the original character was shrunken down to a slimmer version. I would remember desperately begging my parents to get me this beautiful doll, even though in my mind I knew that she was the ugliest character in the movie. I guess the new Ursula is now avoiding her daily intake in sweets and giving up all of the foods she loved. It is obvious that the designer did this on purpose, but was it necessary to make her lose all that weight? The fact that Ursula was changed to fit in with the other dolls is the same idea as enforcing kids a "thin ideal" body shape to fit in with the social norm. Does this mean that the society shouldn't accept body diversity? Are we telling kids to go on a diet so that they can grow up to model for beauty advertisements?

Regardless of how self-conscious I am of my body, I still believe that the world is full of beautiful people and I see them all the time. Stretch marks, cellulite, excess skin, These are all features that make us human and we shouldn't be ashamed of it. Each body comes in different shapes and sizes. Many of the advertisements we see are edited and photoshopped to eliminate the distinct elements that make every human being unique. Plus, most of these attractive women may have had plastic surgery to manipulate their imperfections and flaws. So, we shouldn't trust our eyes. Therefore, it won't be much practical to achieve the "perfect body image". As a teenager, your ever-changing body can be weird and confusing. To truly love yourself, you have to embrace beauty - inside and outside. Stacy Stewart, 15, shares her personal struggles as being a teenage girl living under the influence of modern society. "Everyday, I would spend hours looking at myself in the mirror, staring at every imperfection." "You see that pimple on my forehead? Not a big deal, right? Nobody is born to be perfect."

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