

Self-esteem campaigns focus too much on beauty

by Rachel Salisbury
Opinion Editor



Not everyone is beautiful. Despite the recent self-esteem campaigns that assure women that their flaws are figments of their imaginations, not all women are conventionally pretty in reality. So it is important to acknowledge that outer appearance is not as important as these campaigns would lead us to believe.

One of the better known self-esteem campaigns is The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, which aims to “challenge beauty stereotypes” by encouraging women to realize and appreciate their natural beauty. Research done by Dove reveals the generally negative attitude women have towards their own appearance. The statistics they found include that only two percent of all women would describe themselves as beautiful. The campaign was originally launched in 2004, and their more recent videos, Dove Real Beauty Sketches, focus on how women tend to find themselves less attractive than how others perceive them.

Although Dove’s ambition to heighten women’s self esteem is a valid cause, their method does the opposite by reducing women to their physical appearance. The campaign identifies this insecurity

Dove

due to a negative physical self-image as a problem, but the solution is not to place even more importance on external characteristics. By going to such lengths to assure all women that they are beautiful, Dove makes beauty seem like both a necessity and a virtue.

Freshman Skills Day, a peer advice program at LGHS, has started shifting away from a focus on physical appearance for this reason. The self-image branch previously concentrated on how to maintain a healthy body and body image, but it has now begun to restructure the program in order to focus on having a generally healthy self-esteem that is not focused on appearances.

Junior **Adam O’Reagan**, the liaison for the self-image branch of Freshman Skills Day, says, “We’re trying to move away from focusing on the body part of self image. Instead, we’re focusing on how you perceive yourself throughout high school and how to set goals for yourself. We realized that talking about managing your body, like how to weight lift or eat right or look good, could potentially make freshmen feel self-conscious about how they look.”

Instead of reassuring women that they are universally beautiful, it is important to remind all people, not just women, that appearances should not control confidence. As most people, especially high school students, balance a significant part of their self-esteem precariously on top of their physical appearance, we must remind ourselves that we can say about ourselves what our appearances cannot. (Sources: Dove)

Embrace your skin tone

by Quincey Klein
Editor-in-Chief



Today, people are heavily focused on changing society’s perception of body image. It is all too common for teenagers to battle with eating disorders, struggling to see beauty within their natural self when they look at the number on the scale or their reflection in the mirror. Schools and corporations, such as Dove and Fruit of the Loom, widely campaign to promote the appreciation of the whole spectrum of healthy body types through commercials. However, there is little work being done to convince the public, especially women, to embrace natural skin tone. Even though there have been laws banning minors from using tanning salons in California, there is virtually no progress in changing

America’s tan-obsessed culture.

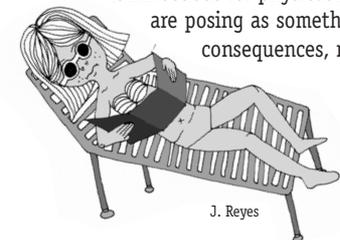
Images of perfectly bronzed bodies are plastered on Victoria Secret advertisements and tabloid magazines. Reality TV stars as young as the contestants from *Toddlers and Tiaras* are pressured to maintain a bronze glow. During Coronation and Prom season, girls at LGHS sport layers of fake tan, which are just as important as their makeup and hair. Spray tans and tanning beds are ubiquitous in the beauty industry, promoting unhealthy life choices that can lead to negative consequences, both in acceptance of self and physical well-being. Our culture must move away from praising unnaturally tanned skin.

Expectations imposed by society regarding skin tone are just as damaging to self esteem as expectations of Barbie-like dimensions. Social media outlets such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook feature post after post of girls tanning during the summer or on vacation. If one girl sees another girl tanning, she is forced to evaluate her own complexion.

Not all people tan equally. Some may tan slower and more unevenly than others. Some freckle and some just sunburn. It is impossible to copy the even tone seen in photos posted through forgiving filters. Society needs to shift to embracing all shades, from pale to dark skinned.

Tanness is seen as having a “healthy glow,” while paleness is seen as looking “sickly.” However the reality is just the opposite. Vitamin D is essential; however, enough for one day can be absorbed in ten minutes in the sun. Extended periods of exposure to UV rays while tanning without sunscreen in both the sun and tanning beds can cause melanoma, an aggressive form of skin cancer. Even though spray tanning is innocuous for physical health, it further damages the psyches of individuals because people are posing as something they are not. Although most people know of the sun’s harmful consequences, men and women are still immersed in the tan-obsessed culture.

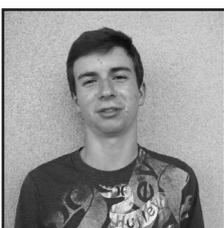
Suntanning can be rewarding, but only in small amounts. The sun radiance can feel soothing, but it can be the devil in disguise. Being pale is beautiful, but then again so is being browned. Neither one is better than the other, and the most important thing is staying true to your body’s natural state. (Sources: WebMD.com)



J. Reyes

AP scores determine salary

by Jonathan Friedland
National Editor/Business Mananager



Have you ever taken an advanced placement class in which you wish the teacher would spend more time preparing you for the exam and less time talking about his or her personal life and other extraneous material? The superfluous little facts and tidbits about material unrelated to the course are beneficial if delivered in moderation, but when they begin to take up the majority of class time, they only hurt students in the future. In order to encourage teachers to remain focused on teaching specifically for the Advanced Placement exam, instructors’ salaries should be based on how well their students perform on the test. This change would provide teachers with a financial incentive to teach

students material that will help them receive college credit and a better standing on their college application. Passing numerous AP tests throughout high school could lead to a significant reduction in college education expenses and a greater chance of gaining acceptance to your dream school.

Due to the tests’ similarity, comparing results between teachers from similar school districts is fairly simple. To ensure fairness, schools in similar areas and districts would be grouped together to determine which teachers had more students pass. Thereby, allocating financial rewards encourages teachers to give in-class tests similar to the AP exam, emulate college curriculum, and prevent the extensive discussion of material not related to the exam.

A widespread increase in preparation for the AP test due to a financial motivation for teachers would not only improve students’ scores, but also prepare them for exams in college. For example, repeated practice for historical and analytical essays that appear on AP exams prepares a writer for the type of college-style writing that is expected of college students.

Lastly, giving pay raises to accomplished teachers helps retain them in the public education system, discouraging them from acquiring more lucrative jobs. For instance, gaining a “highly effective” rating in a Washington public school can earn a teacher bonuses of up to \$15,000 per year. One of the “highly effective” teachers, Ms. Johnson, received this considerable amount of money because according to her school’s assistant principal, “she’ll get a class full of kids who are below basic, who can’t read, and by the time they leave, they’ll be scoring well above basic or proficient.” When asked about her opinion regarding bonuses, Johnson said “lots of teachers leave the profession, but this has kept me invested to stay. I know they value me.” Thereby, demonstrating that successful teachers become content and willing to keep teaching as a result of financial bonuses. The same principle applies to AP classes as accomplished instructors will keep teaching, not seek out higher paying professions, and increase the overall quality of teachers.

Overall, a system that rewards teachers based on their students’ success on the AP exam will broaden the test-taker’s knowledge in addition to augmenting scores on the annual tests. (Source: New York Times)

Comedy neglects females

by Anna Esslinger
Culture Editor



I am an avid fan of Saturday Night Live. I started secretly watching it when I was six, even though I didn’t understand any of the innuendos or adult jokes. SNL introduced me to three of my idols: Tina Fey, Amy Poehler, and Kristen Wiig. Amongst the flood of untalented pop and reality TV stars, these women showed me that it is possible for women to be smart, funny, respected, and adored by millions. As a long-time devoted fan of SNL, I was disappointed to find out that SNL has hired six new cast members, but only one woman.

There is no doubt that Saturday Night Live is a male-dominated show. Out of the sixteen cast members, only six are women, and there is only one woman writer out of twelve writers on the show. The men-to-women ratio on SNL accurately represents how male-dominated the humor industry is. Female comedians—not just from SNL—aren’t given nearly as many liberties with their material as male comedians. Their writing and jokes are typically criticized more than men’s, and society expects these women to fit a certain mold.

Fey, Poehler, and Wiig are the poster-children for women in the humor industry, having reached a level success that most women in their field do not. However, even the most famous female comedians have faced scrutiny that most men do not have to endure. For example, many people credit Fey’s thirty-pound weight loss to her overnight success on SNL. Sadly, this holds some validity. Before her weight loss, she worked as a writer on the show and only appeared as an extra. Later, she began performing in sketches and co-hosted Weekend Update, making her one of the most-loved cast members on the show. It is a shame that people only started to appreciate her talent and utter comedic genius when she lost weight. This connection of weight loss to success is not seen with male comedians. America loves “big, funny guys” like John Belushi, Chris Farley, Seth Rogen, and Jonah Hill, but are often very unwelcoming to the female counterparts.



About a year ago when *The Mindy Project* first came out, I was appalled when I read an article regarding the T.V. show’s writer, creator, and star, Mindy Kaling. The journalist basically said that he or she “didn’t want another T.V. show about an annoying, fat Indian girl complaining about how hard it is to be single.” I seriously had to question this writer’s sanity. It appears as though the writer ignored the fact that Kaling is a Dartmouth alum, began writing for *The Office* when she was twenty-four, and has won and been nominated for countless awards. He or she simply grouped Kaling as “whiny girl” and then refused to accept Kaling as a serious writer.

Another female comedian who is constantly insulted by the media is Lena Dunham. Regardless of what I think about her writing style, it is unfair that many critics do not give her proper credit for her work. Dunham is incredibly successful for her age; by age twenty-three she had already produced the immensely popular indie-film *Tiny Furniture* and by the age of twenty-five she had her own show, *Girls*, on HBO. I heard many people say that the only reason she was so successful at such a young age was because of her famous parents. If you are also wondering who her parents are, you are not alone. Her parents are successful visual artists who are well-known in the art world. Do these critics really think that mildly-famous artists have a say in who gets a show on HBO?

Women are not given nearly as much freedom and opportunity as men in the humor industry. Whenever there is a breakout female comedian she is scrutinized and criticized way more than any man would be. Whenever a woman becomes a successful comedian, her credentials and natural talent are ignored and she is pressured into the mold of what society think that female comics should only be. Women deserve as much comedic freedom as men whether it be over their weight, content, or success. (Sources: IMBD, Vanity Fair, New York Magazine)



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