

Campus Women



The Beauty Myth by Naomi Wolf, tells about the different areas of life where women are controlled by the beauty myth. She talks about work, culture, religion, sex, hunger and violence, and how these areas of our lives are connected to the Beauty myth. What is the Beauty Myth? The Beauty Myth is what tells us what is beautiful, how we should look, dress and weigh. It tells us what guys find sexy, and how we should act. The Beauty Myth is used to control us.

The response Naomi Wolf received to comments like this were, "nobody tells me what to wear"; "I wear make-up because I want to"; "I don't have to dress a certain way at work"; "my boss doesn't make me wear make-up." Is that so! Well, I don't know about anyone else, but I don't particularly like to spend \$5.00 for a tube of lipstick. Make-up costs roughly between 3-5 dollars for each item. So make-up your face, you would use (this is not every woman) foundation, eyeshadow, eye liner, mascara, blush, lipstick, lip-liner. If all these items were rounded off to \$4.00 a piece, it would cost \$28.00. This does not include hair care, facial cleansers (that "dissolves oil without over drying" to take off all the make-up you put on this morning) or perfumes. So why do we spend all this money for these "essentials?" Who tells us what to look like, how to dress, that the best way to apply make-up. One of these sources is magazines. What is the first magazine you ever read faithfully? I used to read Teen magazine.

The February issue has on the front cover "Boys, boys and more Boys"; "Show your beauty colours: right hues for you"; "Does he love you? Find out for sure"; "Passion for fashion? Switch on the style," and saving the best for last, "Best friend frustrationas, she's hot...you're not." This last article is a common practice of the Beauty Myth -- competition with every other woman, even your best friend.

In this particular issue, there was only one advertisement that wasn't beauty related. What about the models, these magazines do not portray a typical teenager. Some of these teenagers look like they are at least 20 years old. They are extremely beautiful and we should look like them, or try our best to look like them. This brings us to the "teen model search".

If you look like these models, then you can enter and win a trip to N.Y. If you became a semi-finalist, you win some make-up (this is cheaper than buying it). Where do you go from Teen magazine? You then graduate to Seventeen Magazine, "Right looks for Spring"; "Free make-up lessons" and "Tres Chic Style"; YM; "100 hair looks: how to get top model cuts and colour." Sassy's "23 celebs. not to dress like "beggar" Mind Spas "think thin, lose pounds"; "skin and sun guide: Tan all year long" (endanger your health with skin cancer to look good).

When people say nobody tells me what to wear, or how to dress, I disagree. Sure you don't have to buy the magazines, but will that help? Should we also stop watching T.V. movies? What about these same ideals of beauty portrayed in books? We may consciously choose to put on our make up, but we are subconsciously being told to wear make-up, what perfume attracts men and what jeans are sexier.

To change these attitudes, we could stop buying these magazines. We choose our movies and T.V. shows more carefully. We have to stop reading romance books, we could try this approach, you could also write to advertisers if an advertisement offends you. We can also start to feel better about ourselves and to stop seeing other women as rivals instead of friends.

Some examples of advertisements that reinforce the Beauty Myth

Noxema: "I wish it were darker in here so he couldn't see my skin, pitch black would be nice...For healthy looking skin your face belongs to noxema!"

Maidenform Lingerie: "Isn't it nice to live in a time when women aren't being pushed around so much anymore. Women have spent the last ten centuries to their lingerie. Fortunately, lingerie has finally gotten around to conforming to women"

This ad shows four pictures of womens' busts.

Virginia Slims "You've come a long way baby." Come from being arrested on the beach to being beautiful, slim and smoking.