

## The Effect of Body Image Awareness Month by Megan Burpo

(http://vtprssa.weebly.com/blog/the-effect-of-body-image-awareness-month-by-megan-burpo)

2/23/2015

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Body image is everywhere: it's the chiseled celebrity; it's the criticism of models; it's a publicized weight loss; it's a clean eating Instagram; it's #20beautifulwomen. It is the good and the bad and it surrounds us whether we ask to see it or not. With all of the coverage of this ever-popular historical issue, it brings me to wonder what do we focus on and, more importantly, why do we care?

Among other causes, February is the month dedicated to the celebration of body awareness. When scanning through articles about month's celebration I found many carried a similar message: media is the problem, society is hurting, people are shaming,

and they all end with the novel idea to simply not care about what others think and just self-love. At one point or another, everyone has felt insecure about his or her body. Whether it be weight, shape, or hair color, we have been bread to compare ourselves to others. We look at the trends of stereotypical beauty and comment on how they are ever fluctuating, but we fail to realize that we remain constant in letting society dictate our self-worth. We write and read articles about the problems of body issue – much like this post – and walk away noticing only the bad. Whether we let the negativity defeat us or inspire us to change, in the end we still let the bad drive us.

The purpose isn't to avoid the problem or float around the issue. The purpose is to be the change. February 12 marked the beginning to fashion week and the beginning of the yearly controversy over weight on the runway. In this instance I ask the papers to reach beyond the obvious example of body image and give light to something new. For example, designer Antonio Urzi partnered with Fondazione Vertical – an Italian research foundation for spinal cord injuries – and only used models with physical disabilities. Amputee and wheelchair-bound models rocked his designs down the prestigious runway long thought to be owned by the 90lb-and-under club.



With the recent spotlight on body image our world has made leaps and bounds towards creating healthier mindsets toward how we perceive and display bodies. Sports Illustrated had a beautiful model in their swimsuit spread who fell under the category of “plus-size.” Looking at the ad all I saw a gorgeous, confident woman selling the hell out of that swimsuit. What the magazine wanted me to see was the tagline “#curvesinbikinis” that she stood next to. By doing this Sports Illustrated let me know to give them a pat on the back for the good work they did promoting all body types. By not letting the reader process the photo as another body, Sports Illustrated took away from their message that a body is a body and centered my focus on her difference.

Our words are true and our messages are clear. Our enthusiasm shows hope and our actions show promise. Now is the time to make healthy body image a reality instead of a topic to write about. By promoting the good and integrating the normal into all forms of media and life itself, we will build a world where every boy and girl will grow up without having to be reminded to love themselves.

No Body Image: <http://www.arttherapyblog.com/uimages/2013/02/eating-disorder-awareness-300x214.jpg>

Curves in Bikinis: [http://www.theupcoming.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/ashleyG\\_2.jpeg](http://www.theupcoming.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/ashleyG_2.jpeg)

*Edited by Katharina Elberti, Webmaster and Editor-in-Chief 2014-2015*



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