

The models who have spoken out hit more on the ‘body positive’ issue in these alterations than the fact that the editor never ask them for consent before completely transforming their bodies. This is the case because when these models allow the photographer to take their picture and submit it to the magazine publishing it, the magazine has all rights to the photos through contracts with the model and photographer. Even so, the model could receive (and most have) backlash from fans and the public questioning their ethics. How ethical is putting a celebrities’ character into question? Short answer: not ethical. The SPJ (Society of Professional Journalists) Code of Ethics states, “Never deliberately distort facts or context, including visual information” (The Editors of the SPJ, 2014). This SPJ code clearly states that photos should not be distorted intentionally; this includes “Photoshoping” or falsifying an image.

In this article, I argue that the manipulation of human bodies for advertising is unethical and should be either stopped completely or changed. In supporting this argument, I discuss the code of ethics and the ways the manipulation of human bodies violates the code. I then define the ‘line.’ Freedom is important for photographers and editors to have to be artistic with their work but they must know when to stop.

As stated above, Photoshop is an app, not an action. So, the first mistake that journalists have made is referring to the manipulation of human bodies as Photoshop. The second mistake is allowing the manipulation to happen period. In the past several years, women have undergone scrutiny of their bodies and their size. The manipulation has called for a ‘body positive’ campaign. This campaign protests manipulating photos for magazines and encourages women of all shapes and sizes to love themselves for who they are. Typically, this is advertised by

celebrates who have fallen victim to the excessive editing. Social media movements have also taken flight. These trends include ‘#fatkini’, ‘#fatshion’, ‘Lose Hate, Not Weight’, and many more.

These social media trends bring to light another issue that ‘Photoshoping’ has created. Health. As you can see, these trends are all about not being ashamed of your size, regardless of how big. The ‘Love Your Body’ campaign is much different than the others mentioned because it just encourages people to love who they are. However, several have taken that one step too far—similar to the photo manipulators—by telling people being over-weight is okay. This is concerning, specifically in the United States, because obesity is a serious issue. This is just one more dilemma that unethical manipulation of human bodies has brought to us. Seeing two extremes is upsetting once again, unhealthy body standards or unhealthy bodies. If the practice of falsifying photos of human bodies is changed then maybe the encouragement of unhealthy bodies would also change. Due to the extreme editing, people are fighting back with the opposite extreme, which happens to be just as unhealthy.

The Love Your Body campaign is an amazing trend that has been getting a lot of attention. Companies need to respect the human body and to advertise their company and/or product truthfully. Ads are extremely influential and should never be falsified to increase a sale. Jean Kilbourne, who studies social media and body advertising agrees. She says

‘It’s not just that we see these images once, or twice, or even a hundred times. They stay with us and we process them mostly subconsciously... [They create] an environment that surround us with unhealthy images and that constantly sacrifices our health and our sense of well-

being for the sake of profit. Ads sell more than products. They sell values, they sell images, they sell concepts of love and sexuality, of success, and perhaps most important, of normalcy. To a great extent, they tell us who we are and who we should be' (Jean Kilbourne)



Figure 2. Dove Loves All Bodies, Dove is taking a stand against the fashion companies who believe you must be thin to be beautiful, taken from Andrea Stephens

This phrase — “who we should be” — is the most important part of the sentence. Major companies like Victoria’s Secret are typically at fault for advertising women with unnaturally thin bodies. Women who look at the ads think that in order for them to be ‘sexy’ or ‘desirable’ or even be able to wear the clothes in the ad, they must be thinner. The National Organization for Women initiated the Love Your Body campaign. They encourage women not only of all sizes but specifically of all shapes, meaning women who might have prosthetics or in wheelchairs who are never represented in beauty ads. Not only do they combat the unrealistic standards put out by the fashion industry, but they also have a support system for women who are suffering from health issues. While the fashion industry is the main culprit, other industries are also at fault. The tobacco industry also targets young women and girls. All of this encouraged by the fashion companies. All of this blamed on Photoshop.

