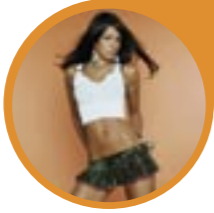


Image Vs Reality...

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Mixed messages

The girl on the front of the magazine is 6 feet tall, with perfect hair, and a stunning dress that shows off her long, slender legs and skinny frame to perfection.

Inside are shocking pictures of women who look like famine victims. Flat chests and lollipop heads balance on legs and arms that look like they might snap. "WAY TOO SKINNY!" screams the headline and you pity the celebs who have gone too far in their quest for perfection. Yet on the next page is an article telling you how you could lose two stone in days. You're imagining how you could have the perfect body at last, the pictures on the page before already forgotten.

The world you live in is full of images; images that constantly send mixed messages. Magazines will tell you it's bad to be too skinny, but why the stick-thin models and pages of fad-diets? Images seek to exploit and use us all, so you need to be ready to handle what messages they throw at you.



the power of advertising

You can't move without seeing, hearing or experiencing an advert.

It doesn't matter what you're doing: whether you're at home or school, walking down a road or in town. We even help spread adverts – how many clothes do you own with advertising on them? The trouble is... adverts lie.



Lie: "this product will change your life!"

Guys, use the right deodorant and women will throw themselves at you. Honest.

Get this phone, and you will be inundated with calls. Even the beautiful people from the advert will phone you, and maybe even David Beckham will too!

Adverts create an image. They tell you that if you buy what they're selling, you will immediately be more successful, more beautiful and more popular. I know I've been taken in by it. "Want to kiss goodbye to spots?" the TV asks me. "Yes!" I cry and then race to Superdrug to buy the moisturiser that will change my life forever. But what happens? My spots fade for a few weeks, but I don't magically get funnier, or more popular. No one product is going to make a lasting change to your life. So make a choice – either spend your life looking for the next miracle product, or make a real change and don't buy into the image. Now that really will make you feel better!



Lie: "people in adverts look normal"

I am only five feet tall. Buying clothes is a nightmare!

Tops that should be held up by boobs or shoulders slip right off! Mini-skirts turn into sensible work-clothes. I look in the mirror and don't see someone elegant and well-dressed, but someone who looks like a child dressing up in their mother's clothes! Why is it that shopping for clothes often leaves us feeling depressed? Because in adverts, clothes always look amazing. It's another image, telling us that people in adverts are normal and we should look like them. If we don't, it's our fault. The truth is different. The average model weighs 25% less than a normal person. Adverts create images which put us under PRESSURE! Don't let them!



the power of television

By the time you are 70, you will have spent eight years of your life watching television!

Eight years! The problem is that TV creates images, images that have a lot of influence on our thoughts and ideas. One of the big images TV creates is about sex. In films and on TV sex is often amazing! Now don't get us wrong – sex can be amazing – but there are also difficult times. Most people's first experience of sex is disappointing. Although you know where things go it's more difficult than you thought to get them there. Your first time can be painful, messy and pretty embarrassing not often what you see on screen. How often do you see silk sheets, warm rooms and hear a magical orchestra playing (they must be in a cupboard). One word to remember: IMAGE!



the power of peer pressure

Paul remembers the day that his best mate John told him that he'd had sex for the first time – he was 15.

John told Paul what he'd done, and Paul's mouth fell open! He could not believe the extraordinary things John was telling him. Paul is now married and knows that his mate was lying. He would have needed two heads, ten arms and six legs to do all he had said. He made it up, created an IMAGE. Trouble is, back then, Paul knew nothing else and believed him. You and your mates do it all the time. Imagine: a mate tells you about the pill he took last night, and all the fun he had. A lot of it is true but he's not giving you the full picture. He offers you one. You don't want it but you don't want to say no, because of an image. To say no means you are not cool. That is the power of peer pressure – those are the images we face every day.

