



LET'S TALK

beauty • confidence • self-esteem

by Jess Weiner, Dove Global Self-Esteem Ambassador



Six out of 10 girls will stop doing the things they love because they feel bad about their looks. Fortunately, WE have the power to change this because everyone has the opportunity to make a difference in a young girl's self-esteem.

As a mom or mentor, you have the ability to help a girl develop a positive relationship with beauty – it all starts with a conversation, a talk.” These inspiring conversations take place daily. They happen while moms and daughters are walking to school, listening to their favorite songs in the car, or watching TV together. You may not realize that each of these moments of shared laughter and bonding can inspire a girl in your life to reach her full potential.

Take a moment to talk to a girl in your life about beauty, confidence and self-esteem. The key to doing this is to make the talk easy and honest, and *whew* such a relief. If we frame this talk with some easy to take steps -- we are 1/2 way there (first half of course, is to find your “Let’s Talk” partner).

1

Ask

The first step is to just ask a girl in your life about her relationship with beauty - don't simply assume you know or understand because you have experienced it too. Everyone comes to their belief about their own beauty values differently. Some questions could be:

- What makes you feel most beautiful?
- Do you feel beauty is a big source of pressure for your friends?
- Has your belief in yourself or your beauty stopped you from doing what you love?
- What else do you want to ask/know/share about beauty?

2

Share

Rather than give her advice or tell her what to do - pick up on her answers and share some of your own experiences. It's always helpful to speak openly and honestly - you don't have to be an 'expert' and you don't have to know all the answers - just share from your heart. For instance you may start with “What you said reminded me about something that happened in my life” or “I'd love to share with you a similar story”...

Overcome a conversation roadblock - Try to refrain from saying “when I was your age” - girls typically turn off at that comment - instead connect to her emotion and intellect and let her know if you had any solutions that worked for you.

3

Listen

Allow yourself to take in her responses to what you shared. See what else your comments may bring up for her. If you need to ask her more questions, that's perfectly fine, just be sure to not bombard her and allow her the space to talk about possible solutions. Sometimes she will just need to talk it out. And feeling safe, listened to and connected with will help her accomplish this.

4

Act

Follow your conversations with some actions. At the end of your talk - put together 1 - 3 follow up ideas that were sparked from your discussion.

- Does she want to talk to her mom, mentor or friends about their relationship with beauty?
- Does she want to choose to look at images in the media differently?
- Does she want to write an e mail or blog post about her feelings?

Encourage her to think of ways (that together, even) you could take this talk into the action realm.





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WHAT IF...

Talking to a girl in your life isn't always easy.
Review the scenarios below for advice on how to handle the conversation.

She just looks blankly at you, not saying anything?

Yikes, who wouldn't want to squirm in this scenario, but hold tight! Sometimes girls need a minute to process the conversation. She could be shy and unclear of what to say. She may even need to feel out whether she can trust you. Or, she may just be sitting on a whole heap of unexplored feelings around this topic and needs you to break it down for her in more bite size ways. For instance, if the question "What makes you feel beautiful" stumps her try this game "on a scale of 1-10 rate these moments based on how beautiful they make you feel: "Hanging out with friends, playing a sport you love, going on a hike, hearing a compliment from someone you respect, etc."

She asks you something you don't know the answer to?

No problem - just be honest. Best to say "You know, I'm not sure how to answer that." or "Honestly, I don't know the answer to that but let's find it out together". Girls can smell insincerity a mile away and if you feel you are in over your head - it's perfectly OK to say so. Just circle back the conversation to something you do know which is "I care so much about you (or girls) reaching their full potential and feeling beautiful inside and out." Sometimes a statement like that can get the conversation back on track.

She doesn't seem phased by "Let's Talk"?

Remember, it's every tween and teens rite of passage to pretend they know everything - so even though she may be checking her phone (although we encourage you to take a technology break during this convo) she is still listening. Don't push it - just go through the steps: ask, share, listen, and act. Make sure you tell her that this is just one version of a conversation about beauty that you hope to have with her many times. That it's important to face our feelings about beauty anxiety because it frees us up to live a life where we reach for our dreams and do it with the support of our 'esteem team' helping us get there. Plus teen tip 101: every moment you spend with them really does register. Girls tell us this all the time when their moms and mentors aren't looking. So have faith, trust, and believe in a world where beauty is a source of confidence, not anxiety.

