Fashion Photos Should Tell the Truth

by Jamie Aguilar

Celebrities don’t look like real people anymore. They don’t even look like themselves! Celebrity and fashion photos have been digitally fixed to make people look prettier and their bodies more perfect. Thanks to digital editing software, people always have six-pack abs, bulging muscles, and tiny waists. Everyone’s hair is always perfect. This is not a good thing. It is time for magazines and websites to stop fixing photos and start showing what celebrities and models really look like.

These photos are giving us the wrong idea about beauty. We all know that real people don’t look like this. It’s easy to get swept up in these glamour shots, but if you take a step back you’ll realize that some of these photos are ridiculous. In one example, the model’s waist had been made to look even smaller than her head! She looked more like a Barbie doll than a human being.

Americans are bigger than ever, and they are definitely bigger than these ideal, imaginary people. Look at the statistics: in 2002, the average 15-year-old boy weighed almost 15 pounds more than in 1960. The average 15-year-old girl weighed ten pounds more. Today, the average American woman wears a size 14, while female fashion models wear a size 0–4. Why make the ideal person so different from the real one? Is it just to make people feel worse?

Some people might argue that celebrity and fashion photos were never meant to be realistic. They are supposed to look perfect; people go to the movies and read entertainment magazines to escape reality. It has always been this way. You can look at pictures of movie stars from any decade. The men have always been muscular and handsome, and the women have been either stick-thin or full of curves, depending on the decade.
This is all true. Everyone likes to look at beautiful people. However, the situation has gotten out of hand. Seeing so many insanely perfect photos is bad for our health, especially for teenagers. Young people are obsessed with the way they look, especially their weight. Eating disorders are a big problem: anorexia is the third most common chronic illness among adolescents. Over one-half of teenage girls and one-third of teenage boys use unhealthy techniques to try to lose weight.

Yes, there is a connection: Dr. Lana Minto is an expert on eating disorders and a lecturer at colleges and hospitals throughout the United States. “Numerous studies have provided us with overwhelming evidence,” she says. “The endless parade of incredibly thin women in the media has an adverse effect on the body-related self-esteem of women who feel the pressure to be thin, most especially adolescents. They have the worst self-body image of any age group.”

We all know people who feel this pressure. Just yesterday my sister Elena was looking online at pictures of her favorite singer, who was able to wrap her hands completely around her own waist. I could never do that!” my sister said, “I am so fat!” I tried to tell her that in real life nobody could actually do that. She wouldn't listen. She only pointed at the screen and said “Pictures don’t lie.” That’s what she thinks, but actually, pictures lie all the time. It’s time for them to start telling the truth.