

Good morning, class.

So, today's woman lives in a time when ultra-thin bodies re in style. When you look at any women's magazine, for example, you see photos of unrealistically thin fashion models. And also, there are numerous articles about diet and exercise tips to help ordinary women achieve the same body type as the models. Our subject today is female1 and the difficulty of growing up female at a time when society has adopted an impossible ideal. The female ideal has changed significantly in the last century, hasn't it?

If you look at fashion magazines from the past, you immediately notice that the fashion models you see in them would be considered2 by today's standard. For the last 50 years, models have been getting3 until finally people have become concerned that models have actually been starving themselves to achieve the4 look demanded by fashion designers. This is a frightening trend, and this look has now become the standard female body image that girls and women aspire to. Some recent studies have found that a majority of girls and women wish they could look like the models and actresses they see in the media. According to recent studies in the US, approximately5 of women think they are too fat. Girls between ages eleven to seventeen say if they had only one wish, it would be to be thinner. Between the ages of ten and fourteen, the percentage of girls who say they are happy with the way they look drops6 And one study of adult women reported that 80% of women are highly7 and are dissatisfied with their bodies. 80% of ten-year-olds are on diets.

The result of all these negative feelings is that between 5 and 10 million teenaged girls and young women have an8—extreme dieting, or anorexia—that can be dangerous to their health. What can we do to help prevent the negative9 so many girls and women have of themselves? And what, if anything, can we do to reduce the high frequency of eating disorders among young women?

Well, if you are a woman, it's important to increase your awareness that you are being targeted as a consumer group . . . and that advertisers believe that if you can be made to feel10 about your body, they can successfully promote weight loss and exercise products to you. If you are the parent of a young girl, be aware that as she grows up, your daughter will be bombarded with the same messages over and over again. Implanting a positive message about your daughter's value and attractiveness when she's young will help build her11 and12. This will make her less likely to accept the messages that are being promoted by the media. And be sure to let your daughter hear you comment on the beauty of women who don't conform to the destructive and unrealistic image of beauty so widely depicted.

In next week's class, we'll discuss the impact of media on

males, who also have to cope with a similar impossible ideal.

Until then.