ALL ABOUT ME!

This program is about discovering your own unique beauty and the inner light that shines from only you. You’ll learn how to love and nurture yourself, take care of your body and mind, and to connect with others about what is truly important. You will learn to encourage friends and family to appreciate their bodies and you will learn how to take action against beliefs and standards with which you disagree. You will hear a new message about beauty, and hopefully fall in love with your own special self. You might even discover just how perfect you truly are.

Let’s get one thing straight from the get go...You are not your hair-frizzy, smooth, or limp. You are not your feet-giant size, average or tiny. You are not your thighs-scrawny, flabby, and muscular or dimpled. You are not your looks. What you are is far more than the eye can see. You are your culture. You are your culture, your heritage, your history. You are your quirks. You are your talents, your goals and your accomplishments. You are your relationships. You are your spirit.

And absolutely none of these things can be judged by a photograph or the media!

Ladies, grab a notebook or a journal because most of the things we will do in this program will be private and you don’t have to share them with anyone. But you do want to keep track of what you do and your feelings because it will help you to realize how you change over time.
Section 1

Mirror Image

When you look in the mirror what do you see? Find a place to be alone and look long and hard into the mirror. Let’s answer a few questions.

What do you like about what you see?

What do you tell yourself you don’t like about what you see?

In your opinion, what does it mean to be beautiful?

Look deeper...

What physical attributes do you feel are most important?

What formed this opinion? Who or where are you getting these messages from?

Who are you comparing yourself to and why?
LOVE YOUR BODY!

Take Action!

Create an advertisement for a specific product, you might choose perfume; clothing, face makeup etc. show YOUR idea of true beauty. Use your creativity to demonstrate the beauty of diversity. Show how beauty is not limited by the size, shape, age or color of a person. Either by yourself or with friends, grab some popular magazines and glue or tape. Cut out words and images that you think represent beauty. Make a collage of your idea of beauty. When you are finished, answer these questions.

Does your art fully reflect what YOU consider to be beauty? If so how?

Is it missing anything? Different body types, styles, skin colors? Anything else?

Compare your art with that of your friends. How are they different? How are they similar?

Is your art based on how you feel beauty looks or how the media and everyone else feels it should look?

What is your true definition of beauty?

Try to have your work displayed publicly, in a library, your school, a community center. Make sure you have a comment box for other people’s opinions and an index card stating the purpose of your display.

When you think about displaying your work consider this: March 8th is International Women’s Day, May 6th is International No Diet Day, and October 18 is Love your Body day.

You will be VERY surprised as to how people are different. The idea of beauty is different to each person, and is usually based on their culture, the media, and their personal preferences.
**Letter to a Friend**

Pick someone you admire, a friend, a family member, a classmate. What makes her special? What defines her beyond her looks? Fill in the blanks of this sample letter. Shine the spotlight on what makes this person unique.

Dear ____________,

I think you are...

If you believe one thing about yourself, know this...

Without you I could never...

I hope you love this about yourself...

Your inner beauty shines through when you......

It’s up to you if you want to share this with this person. How would it make her feel to share it?

Now let’s turn the tables. Fill in the letter to yourself. Be honest. Don’t write what you think you should, write what you truly feel. Don’t worry, no one will see it unless you let them.
Beauty Over Time

Let’s discover how the world’s definition of beauty has changed over time.

1600’s

Peter Paul Rubens becomes famous for his beautiful paintings that glorify women with more ample figures. The term “Rubenesque” is coined for ladies who possessed the preferred pleasingly plump body type.

1890’s

Thin is definitely not in! Ritter & company of San Francisco sells “Professor Williams’ Fat-Ten-U Food” for $1 a bottle; “Guaranteed to Make Thin women Plump and Rosy with Honest Fleshiness of Form”

1920’s

Flapper style suddenly becomes all the rage for American women, with its emphasis on short, bobbed hair and a thin, boyish body. Some women even bind their breasts to achieve a flat chest.

1950’s

The new body idea is achieved by Marilyn Monroe who says, “I’m very definitely a woman and I enjoy it.” The voluptuous Monroe was said to have worn at least a size 12-14.

1960’s

Seventeen-year old model Leslie Hornby becomes “the face” of the high fashion British “Mod” look. At 5’7” and only 91 pounds, she earns the nickname “Twiggy” and suddenly, Thin is in.

1983’s

Actress Jane Fonda introduces the first workout video, kicking off a fitness craze among spandex-clad women whose motto is, “no pain no gain.”

1990’s

TV’s Baywatch popularizes the super-skinny, Big Breasted Beach Babe while extremely thin models like Christy Turlington and Kate Moss strut down the catwalk.

Today

Look at your collage. What defines beauty today?

What is your ideal of a perfect world definition of beautiful?

Think about all you have done; Take a moment to write in a private journal. What are your thoughts? What is one thing you have discovered about yourself? How can you Take Action to make a difference?
Beauty Around the World

The USA is not the only country obsessed with appearance. Women around the world are influenced by different standards of beauty that they struggle to meet. And, they often harm themselves trying to achieve someone else’s idea of beauty.

In some parts of the world...

**Taller is better**

This has led to an increasing popularity in extremely painful and risky leg-lengthening surgery. The operation involves breaking the patient’s legs and then stretching them on a rack.

**Lighter is better**

Skin bleaching is booming. But, the active ingredient is skin bleaching creams, hydroquinone, destroys the outer layer of skin and is actually banned in a number of countries.

**Bigger is better**

If you’re a size 10 or smaller, you may be judged as poor and not of high social class. As a way to appear more prosperous, some women take fowl pills, a hormone tablet farmers use to fatten up chickens. This “better body in a pill” can be fatal. The tablets contain sex hormones that have been linked to breast cancer.

**A little help here and there...**

Major surgeries to alter a person’s body appearance to fit into the medias idea of what is beautiful, botched surgeries, repeat surgeries and extreme surgeries as well as over tanning has put thousands of women’s health at risk each year.

**Truth in Advertising**

Flip through a magazine and find an advertisement that catches your eye.

What is it selling? Did you have to hunt to find what they were selling?
What message is the ad trying to convey?
Is the message accurate?
What types of bodies are represented?
Is there diversity?
How does the representation of what you see make you feel?
Let’s hear what a few famous women have to say about the subject.

Kate Winslet, star of Titanic, said that the size of her body was cut by 1/3 for the cover of GQ magazine. She was so upset she made a public statement. She said, “The retouching is excessive, I do not look like that and more importantly, I don’t want to look like that!”

T.V. and Movie Star, **Jennifer Aniston**, stated, “The media crate this wonderful illusion, but the amount of airbrushing that goes into those beauty magazines, the hours and hours of hair and makeup!!! It’s impossible to live up to that because it’s not real!”

**America Ferrera**, a beautiful full figured, Latina actress, made her mark in Hollywood with wonderful REAL LIFE movies such as “Real Women Have Curves,” in 2002, “The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants” in 2005 and “Ulgy Betty” in 2006. This is a strong woman who has taken a stand for REAL BEAUTY.
This woman has made her mark as a director, actress, singer and all around woman to be reckoned with in Hollywood. And guess what girls? She did not let other people’s ideas of beauty and worth stop her! She is truly a strong individual. She is opening doors for women everywhere she goes!

**Gina Davis** - Woman Extraordinar! Did you know that Gina was a semi-finalist for the 1999 U.S. Women’s Olympic Archery Team? Gina has been a T.V. and Movie actress, an advocate for women’s rights, not to mention a wife and mother. Gina has formed “The Gina Davis Institute on Gender in Media.”

For this activity, Google “The Gina Davis Institute” and answer the following:

- What did you learn that you didn’t know?
- Why is it important?

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**Section 2**

Quite often a person basis their idea of beauty on what their friends, family and the media feel is beautiful. True beauty is truly in the eye of the beholder. Your image of beauty should be based on what YOU feel is beautiful. Have you ever sat in a public place and just watched people? Do you ever wonder why certain people end up together? Do you ever ask yourself “How did that couple end up with each other...they just don’t seem to match”. Well, it’s because they, as individuals, are attracted to what they feel is beautiful. It doesn’t have to make sense to anyone but them.
Self esteem is confidence and satisfaction in oneself. This is the truest form of beauty. It comes from within. You cannot truly be happy with someone else until you are happy with yourself. Studies show that often, perception of your own body goes hand-in-hand with self-esteem. This plays a powerful role in how you see yourself as a whole.

True beauty is both mental and physical. A day of beauty doesn’t have to cost a lot of money. You can feel beautiful just by taking care of yourself. Here are ten things you can do to make yourself feel beautiful and healthy.

**Do a Full Body Stretch**

Get your blood pumping with gentle stretches like neck rolls, side bends and arm circles. Take a walk and concentrate on the beauty around you and how strong you feel.

**Moisturize from Head to Toe**

Soap removes dirt and makeup, but can also strip away the skin’s natural moisture. Even if your skin is acne prone, you can use a light oil free lotion to quench it after cleaning.

**Floss**

So annoying, but so important. After all, your real teeth are far more beautiful than any fake choppers could ever be.

**Brush Your Teeth**

At least twice a day. Give your whites a good polishing in a circular motion for two minutes. A healthy mouth equals a beautiful smile and great breath.

**Do a Sun Salutation**

Center your mind and body before you head to school with a simple yoga pose. Stand with feet together and hands in a prayer position in the center of your chest. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Exhale. Repeat.

**Hydrate Yourself**

Drink water. It sounds simple, but it’s so easy to forget. Drinking water is a great and cheap way to keep your weight stable, your skin clear and your body flushed of toxins. The USDA recommends 8 glasses per day.

**Take a Breather**

Right before you eat lunch, find a quiet corner (maybe the library) where you can take 10 deep breaths. If you want, close your eyes and meditate for five minutes.
Spread the Love

Compliment a friend. Instead of basing the compliment on how she looks, point out something you appreciate about her inner beauty. Pause. Wait for a huge smile to cross her face. How does that make you feel?

Pay Attention to Your Body

Be aware of how your arms, legs, feet and hands move and feel throughout the day. How do certain foods make you feel? Do a few minutes of meditation make you feel refreshed? Count to 10 before you make any comments when you’re upset about something. Do you feel less stressed?

Relax

Before going to bed, tense all our muscles in your body and then relax them. Repeat five times to get your body prepared for a good restful sleep.

Try this routine everyday for a week, about the time it takes to make a new routine into a habit. Record in your journal how these little acts make a big difference?
Food is your Friend

Food is a compliment to good health not something to turn to when you’re feeling down or lonely. A good meal should be savored and enjoyed. The USDA has presented us with a food pyramid for good health. Below is a standard USDA American Food Pyramid, a vegetarian and a vegan food pyramid.

The 2013 USDA American Food Pyramid
****Let’s stop here and learn something fun. Based on the food pyramid, whichever one you prefer, standard, vegan or vegetarian, prepare a menu for one week. Choose your favorite meal and learn to cook it. In a Girl Scout Journey, you can stop anywhere along the way to learn something new and fun. Stop here and explore the world of nutrition and cooking. There is another patch program called “Food is your Friend” that you may find interesting. If you choose to complete this patch program, just pick things up from here when you’re finished.

Wise food choices can make all the difference, but sometimes it can become your enemy. The three most common types of eating disorders are anorexia Nervosa, bulimia, and binge eating disorder.

An anorexic starves herself by not eating enough; a bulimic eats too much food at one time and then vomits, exercises compulsively or uses laxatives; a person binge eating disorder eats an excessive amount of food at one time and then feels guilty afterward. Girls with anorexia and bulimia are not getting the nutrients they desperately need and can suffer from a variety of health problems ranging from anemia or low iron to cardiac failure. Girls with binge eating disorders run the risk of becoming obese, which can lead to medical problems like high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes.

**Related disorders:**

Do you know there are other, lesser known disorders that impact girls physical and emotional health?

**Anorexia Athletica:** A person with this disorder repeatedly exercises beyond the requirements of good health. She is often fanatical about weight and diet, and defines self-worth in terms of athletic performance.

**Body Dismorphic Disorder:** People with BDD are excessively concerned about appearance in particular, perceived flaws of face, hair, and skin. They are convinced these flaws exist in spite or reassurances from friends and family who usually see nothing to justify such intense worry and anxiety. While people with eating disorders say, “I am so fat,” those with BDD say “I am so ugly.”

**Muscle Dysmorphia:** Sometimes called “bigorexia,” muscle dysmorphia is the opposite of anorexia nervosa. People with this disorder obsess about being too small and underdeveloped. They worry that they are too little and too frail. Even if they have good muscle mass, they believe their muscles are inadequate.
Pay attention to your friends...Do they show signs of an eating disorder? Look for...

- Do they put everything they eat into two categories—good and bad?
- When they slip and eat something that is “off limits” do they feel terrible about themselves?
- Is she a walking a nutrition encyclopedia? Can she tell you the calorie count and fat content of any food without having to look it up?
- Does she lose weight in a very short period of time?
- Is she wearing loose-fitting clothes that hide her body from head to toe even if it’s not appropriate for the weather?
- Does she pretend to eat by pushing food around on her plate and telling you, “oh I ate right before we met,” or another excuse when you ask why she isn’t finishing her food?
- Does she work out excessively, to the point where she’s spending upwards of two or more hours per day exercising?
- Has she ever passed out or felt faint for no reason?
- Is she using diet pills, laxatives or supplements that weren’t prescribed by her doctor to lose weight?

Be a true friend and tell an adult if you notice these things about someone you care about. Take Action to make a difference in your friends life.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Make a difference in your community.

- Hold a body care workshop or spa day for kids in your community. Make homemade lotions and things for girls to take home.
- Have an education class on proper nutrition, exercise and skin/hair care.
- Teach young women how to properly apply make-up. Teach them to accentuate their natural beauty not cover what they feel is a flaw. Teach them how to properly work with acne and problem skin.
- Learn about the harmful effects of plastic surgery and educate others.
Hold a “cultural heritage day.” Research your culture and what is considered beautiful. Teach others about your culture and encourage them to share theirs. Remember that real women have curves and celebrate the uniqueness and your individuality. Celebrate the beauty and the diversity of the world around you.

Brainstorm and execute your own action plan to make a difference. Write in your journal the answers to these questions;

1) Write at least two things you discovered about yourself in this section.
2) How will you connect and involve friends or family in your take action project?

Are you passionate about this topic? Is it important to you? Can this somehow become a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award project.

Section 3

A mantra is an empowering “I” statement. A mantra helps boost self-esteem and body image by making you feel good about yourself. Everyone needs a personal mantra. I will help you feel good about yourself just by repeating the words over and over in your head. Let’s look at Laura-age 14, personal mantra.

I accept myself completely.

I accept my strengths and weaknesses.

I accept good points and faults.

I accept the personality I’ve developed,

And I accept my power to change.

I accept my own individual beauty,

And that I need to cherish it.

I accept myself completely,
And in this acceptance I find my inner strength.

There will be times when I feel down about myself,

But my inner strength will pick me up.

I accept my own beauty as a blessing and a gift.

The power of words can be amazing. Do you know what your mantra should be? Describe your positive attributes, who and what you love, and what you enjoy. You can also use your mantra to make statements of affirmation or self-acceptance. When Jenny, age 13 feels down, she repeats her mantra, “I love every part of me” as a reminder that she is special and unique. Once you come up with your power words, repeat them out loud when you look in the mirror in the morning and silently throughout the day when you need a pick me up.

**Clear Mind, Clear Skin**

Did you know that when you feel anxious, sometimes felt by a racing pulse or tense muscles, that anxiety can actually make your skin less than perfect? Your body’s natural reaction to stress is to produce cortisol, a hormone that makes your hair follicles thicker. If bacteria get trapped there they can cause blackheads or whiteheads. When stressed, you may not have your normal healthy glow. Blood vessels constrict abnormally when you’re stressed, so your skin may get too much or not enough blood flow. Add the fact that stress makes you more prone to hives and eczema, and it’s clear why managing stress is an important way to get clear skin.
WOMEN WHO DARED TO SHINE

True beauty comes from within. It is acceptance of who you are. Beauty is in the confidence to stand up for what you believe. Beauty is the ability to make a difference. Here are women who believed what was inside themselves. And, they helped others see women differently on the outside. Check out these three totally amazing women who believe in themselves and helped others do the same. What beauties!

SHAKIRA MEBARAK RIPOLL, (AKA Shakira) pop singer and philanthropist.

Her full-time gig may put her in the limelight as a hip-shaking song writer-performer-producer who’s sold over 30 million albums, but she’s also the honorary president of Fundicion Pies Desclazos. Shakira helped found this organization to provide services to over 2,500 children in schools in war-torn Columbia.

BETSY McLAUGHLIN, Fashion Industry Executive

As the CEO of clothing chain Hot Topic, Inc. Betsy noticed many of the customer services comments were from plus-size girls frustrated at not having anywhere cool to shop. So, in 2001, Hot Topic spun off a new store catering to women ages 15-29 who wear size 12 and up. The store is filled with cloths that are designed for real girls’ curves.

EVE ENSTER, Playwright, actress, and women’s rights activist.

This award-winning playwright of “The Vagina Monologues” not only made it safe to say the “v-word” in public, but also helped create V-Day, a global violence-prevention organization that aims to stop violence toward women and girls worldwide. To date, the organization has raised almost $35 million through performances, lectures, and films. Funds are used to develop anti-violence groups that protect women globally in the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Time to write in your journal again. Let’s shine the spotlight on the ones who make a difference in your life. Think about the people in your life, who are your role models? How do they help you to feel good about yourself? How do they express their own beauty and help you bring out yours? What makes them unique? What have these people taught you about developing your own characteristics? How have they encouraged you to express yourself?
Ever notice how a good song can affect the way you feel? Music can make you feel good, bad, happy or sad. It is sometimes hard to find music that you can really believe in. Can you find a few songs that reflect realistic and positive messages? Explore different types of music and see what you can find.

**Make an inspiration wall**

Get together with family and friends and have everyone bring a list of the “women who dare to shine.” These women can be friends, family or people from TV, movies, music or the media. Have each person talk about the women they have chosen. Then, create a collage, a scrapbook, a web page that reflects aspects of the women you admire. Include photos, quotes, and sayings to illustrate the “wall of fame.” Share your wall with friends.

**Stop the body bashing!**

“I will never be skinny enough.” “Do I look fat?” “Uggh, my face looks horrible today.” “I’m having a bad hair day.” Whether you say it in disgust or as a reflex, it’s emotionally expensive to beat yourself up like this. If you don’t see how harmful our negative self-talk is, put a price on it. Pay attention to your negative thoughts about appearance. Every time you think something negative about our body, even if you don’t really mean it, put a quarter in a jar. If you think badly about someone else’s body, up it to 50 cents. By the end of one week, spend the money on something you enjoy. Maybe you should rent the movie, Real Women Have Curves.

Time for that journal again...Answer the following questions. What did you discover about yourself during the above section of activities? How can you make a change to something that is currently bothering you? Don’t forget to finish your mantra and post it up on your mirror.
REFLECT AND REDEFINE

Make another collage, this time only use pictures of you and your friends. How is this different from the first one you made at the beginning of this program. What does it say about you? How would you define the images in terms of looks, shape and color. Has your concept of beauty changed?

Now...Take 30 index cards and a pen or some markers. On the first card, write our first name and the words “...is beautiful because...” Then, on each of the other 29 cards, write one thing that makes you beautiful that has nothing to do with your appearance. “I dream big” and “I set goals and exceed them” are two great things to start with. “I am unique because...” “I’m great at...” iDecorate every card as much as you like. Punch a hole in the upper left corner of each card and fasten with a ring or ribbon. Flip through your book whenever you want a reminder about your special inner beauty.

CONGRATULATIONS

ON MOVING BEYOND THE MIRROR!!!

CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU!!!!!

“For beautiful eyes, look for the good in others; for beautiful lips, speak only words of kindness; and for poise, walk with the knowledge that you are never alone.”

audrey hepburn