

Body Positive: A Guide to Loving Your Body

Emily Lauren Dick

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Emily Lauren Dick's radiant handbook *Body Positive* celebrates a wide definition of beauty through photographs, intriguing journal prompts, and an overview of common issues that women face.

Focused on the "normal girl who has felt mediocre," this collection encourages young women to examine unhealthy messages, whether they come from advertisements, the "thinspiration" trend, or bullying and negative self-talk. Its topical chapters blend helpful insights with facts. Mentions of feminist pioneers, including Naomi Wolf and Dr. Jean Kilbourne, point toward classics on related topics, while "Getting to Know You" sections encourage reflection, and bullet lists summarize concepts for easy reference.

This refreshing introduction to body positivity includes just enough material to be provocative without overwhelming its audience. Some examples, including of Barbie's measurements, are familiar; others, as with gestures to Victoria's Secret campaigns, are more dated. But its salient, gentle, and challenging reflection questions invite brainstorming about life goals that aren't tied to one's body. The outlook is sensible: neither cosmetics use nor the consumption of media are shunned. Instead, Dick advises being aware about how such activities influence emotions, and knowing when to refrain if they cause insecurity.

Tasteful, bright portraits uplift diverse bodies, revealing amputees, postpartum bellies, mastectomy scars, tattoos, and disabilities, too. Because media often equate beauty with fertility, however, and the relative youthfulness of the models included still fit within that mold, the upbeat, welcoming effect is somewhat muted. Pages of roundtable-style quotes are a touching sampler of what many women experience and believe about themselves, including both self-deprecating candor and sage advice. Their voices comprise a safe forum. The catchy layout and soft color palette suit the topic, too.

Body Positive is an educational, affirming visual compendium that invites deeper consideration of one's self.

KAREN RIGBY (January / February 2021)

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