

OPENING SPEECH FOR NBCD

I am so glad to be here today, on OCT.17, National Body Confidence Day. I happy to be here, to hear all these amazing voices, speaking out for body equality. I hope to educate you further on the harm that is coming to the girls of our nation. Hello everyone! I am Susanne Jacobs, I will be kicking off this gathering with a speech of my own.

(Pause.)

When I was younger, I had an older sister. She was in high school, her name was Alexa. She thought she was too fat, that she needed to be skinnier. On January 23, 1981, she was diagnosed with anorexia. I remember the fights, eating, which had once been a simple concept to us, now became a battle. She was soon sent to an institution, she was fed through tubes. Soon, she was one hundred and twenty pounds again, she came home, and relapsed. On September 19, 1982, my sisters kidneys gave out, she was rushed to the emergency room. Her last words, “ Don’t let this happen to Susie.” She died the next morning.

I was angry, angry at the society that had taken my sister from me. When I went to college, I studied psychology. I came out as a body activist, and that is how I got here today.

It turns out, my sisters condition is more common than I expected, 1% of young women develop anorexia nervosa.(Hoffman and Sargent) It may seem small, but that's at least a couple million people with anorexia. About three hundred thousand of them will die. Like Alexa. Studies have shown that media contributes to body negativity. And why shouldn't it? We see around one thousand five hundred ads every day,(Johnsen) these ads could contain supermodels, hair and beauty products, dieting pills and slimming techniques. We take all of this in as the world telling us that we weren't good enough. That we had to change to be what everyone wants. I say no, we shouldn't show these things to young girls. The teenage brain is still growing, its levels of understanding are adaptable and can take in a lot

of information. Including that it should be skinnier, or eat less, or work out more.

Even simple things, like a childrens toy, can teach girls that they have to be skinny. Let's take Barbie, she has blond hair, blue eyes, and a unattainable waistline. Not to mention the makeup, long lashes and wide hips. Girls love their Barbies, they dress them up in short shorts, tank tops and sparkly shoes. Give Barbie a joy ride in her hot pink limousine, take her to the beach, put on a bikini. Barbie will go home and gossip with her friends. Barbie is not what ANY girl should be striving for. Barbie's weight is anorexic to say the least.

Okay, another example, Disney. While Disney has improved with *Moana* and *Frozen*, they're body sizes are still pretty much the same. I'm sorry to say, but not everyone is that skinny Disney. Now, it may seem as if I'm nitpicking, ranting on all the bad things. But go watch some Disney movies, look at your kids Barbie dolls. Go look for yourself at the impressions being made on our girls.

As a mom, I would have been shocked if my twelve year old girl came up to me and said. " I'm going to be a model, I have an agent now, he told me we have to move to New York!" But, girls are being recruited for the modeling industry earlier and earlier. Girls as young as twelve are going into a place that encourages eating disorders and promotes beauty above education. I would hate that for my daughter. Models are told that they aren't skinny enough, and that they should never be happy with themselves. This is a bad fate for anyone.

I have touched upon the topics that irk me most about media's perception of beauty. I hope I have successfully kicked off this meeting and am proud to present the duo, Clem Harrison and Sarah Page!