

Dear Ann Shoket,

For as long as I can remember I have been enraptured by the beautiful models in the media. I looked up to them as a child and wished that someday I would be just like them. I thought models were flawless creatures, I believed their lives were a fairy tale.

My world flipped over in my freshman year of high school when I was stick thin. I was fourteen years old, 5'7 and no more than 110 pounds. I had no butt, no curves- hell, I looked like a boy from behind. Yet, my skinny figure attracted an industry all about being slim: Modeling. I quickly appeared in a nationwide catalog and by the next school year I was signed with a modeling agency in Boston. For two years now I have been thrown into the world of fashion that so many girls look to and think of as "glamorous" and "wonderful". I have done jobs for companies such as Converse and Chevy Motors. I have made great money, met a few nice models and gained an experience I will never forget.

I stand now at 5'8, on the shorter side for modeling, I am seventeen and I weigh more than 110 pounds. I know that if I had stayed at 110 pounds instead of gaining the extra 20, I would be booking a lot more jobs. This is what I find disgusting. This is what I want to change. Models should not have to be skin and bone. Most of the models I meet are skeletons with creepy, sunken in faces. How I wish I worked with normal women who were fit and healthy. If I could change one thing it would be the way our society expects women to look and to stop advertising unattainable weights as something beautiful. I will be the first to say how completely fake almost all of those ads are. They can go back and retouch any image, their is even a tool in the editing process that can make a person appear skinnier.

I am a normal, healthy, fit girl that does enjoy being in front of the camera and modeling. Yet I am not 5'11 and I don't weigh 115 pounds, therefore most industry professionals would say I am inadequate for the job. I hate that I worry about my weight and if I will fit into the clothing at the shoots. I don't like the walk of shame back to the stylist to tell her that the 00's don't fit me. I shouldn't have to feel this way and I shouldn't have to do the things I do.

Some models are naturally skinny and they never have to deal with the side whispers about how they're not as skinny as expected. Yet, a lot of models I have worked with are what I would call naturally tortured. They are normal girls who push their bodies to the limit when it comes down to their overall appearance. We all know the saying, "Beauty is pain", and this is very true when it comes to modeling. It's sickening the things a female will put herself through to be magazine ready. Though most people have not seen or heard the things I have I need them to believe their are aspects of the industry that need to change.

I respect Seventeen Magazine for it's efforts in merging teenage girls of all body types into its magazine. We need to boost up the confidence of teenage girls- not tear them down. We need them to have realistic body goals and show them how to be healthy. When I look through Seventeen Magazine I see girls like me and girls that are different from me. It brings a smile to my face to know that some people agree with the motion to showcase women and girls of all body types and kinds. If we want girls to stop being bulimic, anorexic, doing drugs to stay skinny, binge eating or committing suicide - we need to send the right message. We create, as a human species, the hatred young girls have for their bodies.

It's time for the modeling industry to make a change and accept women of all kinds. A beautiful, healthy, well- rounded person is who I want to see on the billboards and in the magazines. I want my future daughter to grow up in a world where skinny isn't in but healthy is. Models- let us be healthy. Industry professionals- accept what our healthy looks like.

Charlotte Kennett