

How Do I Look?

What a loaded question. Ask any husband. But what do you do about the answer to this question if it comes from your child; as we talk about it here, a girl child?

Moms and Dads, listen up. Here are some things to think about.

1. Moms and daughters have mixed feelings about how they look. Moms, start reviewing how you talk and feel about your own image. You are modeling to both your sons and daughters exterior and interior qualities used to measure female beauty. This may be a burden, but do you and your children a favor; what makes you beautiful to God and to your loved ones? Don't be shy in this review. Think positive about this...if not for yourself, do it for those you influence.
2. What Dads and other close males think about how a girl looks is important. Do NOT compare your girl children's looks with siblings or other girls. Stop it in your mind even if these things are in your head alone. Think about how beautiful this child is to you and relate to that part of her, not her exterior no matter what her exterior "looks" may or may not be. Why do you love her so much? What you think about this will come through to her no matter what you say.
3. Parents: Do NOT allow demeaning/contemptuous comments of any kind about how your or other children look to each other at any age. Stop it the MOMENT you hear these things. This will impress those in your charge that these remarks will not be tolerated. Contempt for how a person looks is not funny and has hurtful effects even for those delivering the demeaning remark.
4. Mom and Dad, talk to your girl about her talents. You may say how pretty she is from time to time, but make it secondary to how special she is to you as a person. Think about what you really appreciate about this child. Do this review away from any daily melodrama. Her challenges will influence how you think about how she "looks" to you. Then tell her at the right time, what you sincerely enjoy about her even if at times she is an adolescent pain. You will not be "spoiling" this child if the comments are true and given honestly without wanting a payback from her. She will not say: "Oh thank you very much for telling me this." That may come in twenty years, but don't count on it.
5. Have conversations about the impossibly thin people in advertising and the air brushing of models on magazine and in catalogue advertising, etc. Discuss these gimmicks and the effects on girls and boys. Kids are smart, discuss with them how money drives the images they are seeing.
6. Avoid at all costs dissecting how other people look. If a family has a habit of this, all of the other things mentioned here will not be worth a nickel. The reality is if you judge in a demeaning way how outsiders look, appearance is highly important in your family value system. Your children will believe that they are judged in this same way, and they will be right.

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