



HOLLYWOOD

A negative influence

The glamorous lives of celebrities influence young self-esteem

Different influences in society lead people to develop different opinions about the way things should be. Two major influences on society are Hollywood and the media. The influences of Hollywood cause people to change the way that they think, look, or act.

Teenagers in this society are influenced by the way that Hollywood celebrities live their lives, and how the media portrays them.

Every time the television is turned on, the radio is listened to, or a magazine is flipped open, teenagers are exposed to the world of Hollywood. From the glitz and glamour of the lives of celebrities, to their perfect bodies and flawless faces, teenagers are being exposed to a society driven by appearance.

But what happens when someone doesn't have the perfect body, or the gorgeous face and hair? As teenagers are constantly being exposed to what society portrays as perfect people, they view themselves as not achieving the standards set by Hollywood.

Christine Kasbohm, Antioch Community High School psychologist, indicated that the media sometimes sends the wrong messages to teenagers.

"I think a lot of things they do [in the media] are not realistic and people do not realize that because they are portrayed as real," said Kasbohm. "Sometimes we get a bad picture of what things should be like, and we strive to be it."

When a child becomes a teenager, they are often forced to deal with different issues, and at times, their self-esteem may suffer. Kaitie Turner, ACHS senior, indicated that Hollywood highly influences teenagers.

"Young teenage girls look up to people in Hollywood a lot and usually teenagers don't

have very high self-esteem to begin with," said Turner.

Teenagers relate themselves to different figures in the media, and develop negative feelings and perspectives about the way they look, dress or act.

"The media influence is very significant," said Linda Brown, counselor at the Solution Center in Antioch. "Girls get the wrong perspectives because they see too many influences in the media that make them feel bad about themselves."

Kasbohm said that the celebrity culture influences the everyday life of not only teenagers, but adults.

"Everything comes from Hollywood, and I think there is that strive to be what is cool," said Kasbohm. "The issues are the unrealistic expectations of what you should look like."

Brown works with teenagers that base their looks off of the appearances that surround them, including different celebrities.

"Generally, I begin to look at the real reasons they don't like themselves to get to the bottom of the problem, then I work with them from there," said Brown. "Changing their outside appearance will not change the way they feel about themselves on the inside."

According to Kasbohm, when teenagers surround themselves with positive influences and their friends, they can escape the pressure of feeling that they have to obtain a perfect appearance.

"Remember that not everything [in Hollywood] is real," said Kasbohm. "There are plastic surgeons, airbrushing in pictures, and we do not have the luxury of hairstylists and makeup artists. It is hard to base your image off of that."

Relationships

Hollywood films impact adolescent relationships

Whether we realize it or not, Hollywood has a deep impact on our lives. The movies and the television shows that are released gives us examples of how we should look, act, and what our relationships should be like.

In movies like *She's All That*, and *The Princess Diaries*, you can easily distinguish the "popular" kids from the "nerds."

"Movies tend to show people in stereotypical ways," said Dee Andershock, Antioch Community High School English teacher. "In almost every teen movie

you have your snobby cheerleader, dumb jock, and the brainiacs."

Although now it is harder to distinguish who belongs with what group, in the 80's and 90's it was much easier.

"Certainly there are groups of friends, but nowadays it's not as cut and dry. You all pretty much look the same," said Andershock.

For people with poor role models, the influence of Hollywood could be more powerful than one would think. Portrayals of teen sex and romance, have skewed people's ideas of how dating relationships should be.

"Hollywood tends to romanticize romance," continued Andershock. "What

movies show is just a snapshot of what [the characters'] relationship is like. TV has made romance less popular and taken the creativity out of it."

In many movies, characters are shown having brief sexual encounters on dates and first meetings.

"Teenagers think that sex is very informal and that it is something that you do on a date," said Debbie Rummel, ACHS Physical Education Department head. "And it's no wonder, everywhere you turn in pop culture drips of sex."

Dating relationships aren't the only things that are being distorted by the

media. Shows like *Dawson's Creek* show friends hooking up and switching partners suggesting that boys and girls are not able to be just friends.

"It's rare for boys and girls to be just friends. It's unfortunate that [teen's] can't enjoy that," said Andershock.

From the TV to the silver screen, people are influenced by what they see.

"[The type of people easily influenced by the media] don't have healthy role models to look to," said Christy Kasbohm, ACHS school psychologist. "The TV and video games influence their ideas of how relationships should be."

Don't look to the media for a role model