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[Anorexic Figures, Big Breasts and Highly Tanned Skin](#)

Beauty patterns set up by celebrities are not that healthy for the ones who aim to fit them

Hey, guys! Wazzup? A new topic stroke on me last evening while watching hit TV show "Desperate Housewives": Are celebrities role models for today's youth? Well, actually, I believe they are. And by the way, I don't know about you, but I personally really enjoy watching this sitcom, and not necessarily for taking role models from its characters, but for relaxing in its "Stepford"-ish world that's always shaken by mysterious and unexpected events. For the ones who are not aware of the show I'm talking about and that inspired my today editorial, here's a short description. "Desperate Housewives" is a US television ABC's series that presents a succession of secrets and truths unfold through the lives of female friends in one suburban neighborhood, after the mysterious suicide of a neighbor. Out of nowhere, suburban housewife Mary Alice Young takes her own life, then narrates the events that follow for us. The focus is on her four friends: there's man-hungry single mother Susan Mayer, ex-career woman and now mother of four Lynette Scarvo, Martha Stewart-on-steroids Bree Van De Kamp, and Gabrielle Solis, who has everything she's ever wanted but still can't find happiness. From her heavenly perch, Mary Alice sees them all and offers her own twisted take on the weekly goings-on. The suburbs where everything is happening are positioned in an absolutely perfect and almost surreal scenery, with pretty stylish houses, green trees and colored flowers, white fences, well-arranged house yards, lighted by sweet warmish sun rays. As for the four female main characters, they also look like fallen from an ideal world, with their magazine outfits, natural make-up and perfect hair. So, why wouldn't I love to watch such charming images, especially when the plot leads the characters' lives in a contrasting direction comparing to their perfect aspect? It's quite amusing when the beautiful ladies with their beautiful houses, cars and clothes get involved in silly life situations and sometimes in even more complicated trouble... It's obvious that entertainment business icons like the ladies in "Desperate Housewives" sitcom are examples that young people look up to. But they are not only looking up to movies and soap operas' characters, but also to the real persons that play those parts, to the actors and actresses, to music and TV icons, to all entertainment celebrities. And do they learn good or bad things from this adulation? Hmm... that's a double way subject: some may say that the role models are wrong and some that they are stimulating and productive. I believe the truth is somewhere in between. I'm not going to refer to all aspects of what role models offered by celebrities involve, as the subject is way too vast, so I'll stick only to what people adopt from the celebrities' looks. What does a young girl see at a movie star like Pamela Anderson, for example? She looks up to a famous film star, with platinum blonde dyed hair, huge breast implants, anorexic figure, exaggerated solarium tanned skin, less-clothing-more-skin outfits and trivial behavior. Hmm... what a good role model! So it's not surprising when the not yet mature teenager opts for dyeing her hair, spending money on extra tanning sessions and adopts pink as the favorite color for her tiny skirt. After all, that's what she saw at the adored celebrity, so it should be right... On the other hand, looking up to any celebrity may be a productive impulse to become more and more ambitious, to gain a desperate urge to succeed, so Pamela Anderson might as well be a right model for someone who identifies with her. The problem is that celebrities offer a whole range of models and it's difficult for young people to choose the right ones. Of course, this is just a matter of individual ability of selecting what's worth being fixed upon. But there's another problem that celebrities created (in fact not celebrities, but their endeavors to get to the top, to make a difference and to be remarked and labeled as unique icons): the pattern of "ideal

beauty". Today, this means as skinny as a woman can get, huge breasts, dark tanned skin and blonde hair. Well, I exaggerated a little with the blonde hair; brown will do just fine as well! But as for a slim figure, big breasts and dark skin, this wasn't an exaggeration at all. Body image is greatly affected by the mass media's portrayal of the thin ideal body type. Today the goal to be thin is displayed in media images on television, magazines, and billboards. More ads in women's magazines than in men's magazines deal with diet and other figure enhancing products. What's even worse is that celebrities that should have served as good role models are facing the same problems concerning eating disorder, obsession for plastic surgery and all kind of artificial methods of "becoming more and more beautiful". Who's most affected of these promoted patterns? Girls, as they are usually more concerned with appearance than boys, because they have been socialized to overemphasize appearance. A negative perception of body image results mainly from social conditioning and when women cannot attain the cultural ideal beauty standard, negative self-image may occur since self-esteem in women is positively related to attractiveness. The increase in eating disorders is linked to western values of thinness in the female body shape, first promoted by the entertainment icons. In fact, thinness has come to symbolize certain cherished notions within the culture, such as self-discipline, control, sexual liberation, assertiveness and competitiveness, as well as affiliation with higher socioeconomic classes. Images of thin models, actresses and role models are becoming more and more recurrent in the media, as "beauty" sells, but the results of promoting such values are seriously affecting ordinary people, who lose their self-esteem and start wishing to be like someone on the cover of "Vogue". As for tanning, well that's another issue. We can see that almost all celebrities have such a perfect brown tan that matches perfectly with their expensive clothing. But is it healthy to use solarium just for the sake of being like some artificial actress? Is it really worth it? Here's some tips about solariums for the ones who do not know the risks of using such a device. Solariums or "sunbeds" are not "safe tanning" devices or a "controlled" way to tan safely. Research has shown that they increase the risk of skin cancer and contribute to skin ageing. Solariums use concentrated doses of ultraviolet (UV) radiation. This type of radiation is also produced by the sun and is directly responsible for skin cancer. The only difference between solariums and the sun is the specific type and quantity of UV radiation they produce. In general, solariums predominantly emit UVA radiation, which is thought to be the least damaging of the UV radiation spectrum. However, in recent years, they have been manufactured to produce higher levels of UVB to mimic the sun's UV radiation spectrum and speed the tanning process. Until recently it was believed that only UVB radiation was responsible for skin cancer. It is now known that both UVA and UVB radiation play a part. UVA radiation actually penetrates the top layer of skin and causes damage to the lower layer. This causes skin to age prematurely. Other side effects of too much UVA radiation include roughening, blotchiness, wrinkling and general looseness. High doses of UVA radiation can also cause sunburn and ultimately contribute to skin cancer. The link between skin cancer and UV radiation exposure is quite simple: the more exposure to UV radiation, the greater the chance of developing skin cancer and the more quickly skin will age. The most important thing that we must understand is that celebrities submit themselves to all these unhealthy treatments for they HAVE TO! They sell not only their acting, musical, entertaining skills, but also their looks, so they are legitimized to try making the impossible possible. If they traumatize their hair by changing its color every week, or sunbathe/go to the solarium more than recommended, or choose plastic surgery as an alternative, they only desperately try to do their job well. But if we let ourselves guided into such superficial obsessions, we do not only jeopardize our health, but also lose that natural touch that makes us different from the entertainment icons. Unfortunately, as much as we all try not to submit to the beauty patterns enforced by the movie/music/television stars, we seem to give in sometimes and line up to the "stereotypic Hollywoodian beauty".