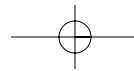
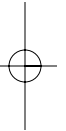
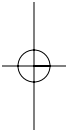


Brandi Chastain

HERE'S LOOKIN' AT YOU



Brandi Chastain

SOCCER, TWO-TIME OLYMPIC MEDALIST

I've known that I was a good athlete ever since I was a little girl. I've always loved the way my body feels playing sports. Even when I was a kid, I was confident about that. But when I was 14, I started losing that confidence in myself as my body image changed.

My dad had a cute nickname for me — “Chubby Cheeks.” It never really bothered me. That was, until my freshman year in high school. I knew that Dad loved me. And Mom would try to get him to quit teasing me. I would just blow it off — but inside it began to hurt. On top of that, I had a high school soccer coach who emphasized weight. She would have us do team weigh-ins. And then, in front of everyone, she would criticize the girls who were heavier and make us run laps after practice. Can you imagine?

**BE HAPPY
WITH WHO YOU ARE.
CELEBRATE
YOURSELF!**

Okay, I was chunky. But sports had always been the place where I felt accepted. On this soccer team, we had to wear these small uniforms that weren't exactly flattering to my teenage body. The coach would tell me that I was too fat for soccer. I started to become totally uncomfortable about my body. I thought that something was wrong with me. For the first time, I didn't like myself. So, did I go on some crazy diet? Nope. I just ate more junk.

I began to think about being big all the time. I didn't go out with friends as much. It was an awful feeling. It was so stressful to always be worrying about my weight. In my mind, it was such a huge problem.

At college, I had teammates who were super healthy. I learned about nutrition and started to understand how the body works. I started to feel good about myself and eating healthier. Sure, it was hard at first— I love fatty foods. But I got stronger as an athlete. And best of all, my self-image improved along with my health and fitness. I found the ideal me. I stopped listening to everyone else and learned to give myself a break. Now, my philosophy is “Be happy with who you are. Celebrate yourself!” and every once in a while, get down with a big ice cream cone!

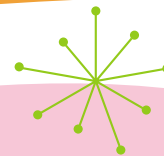
HERE'S LOOKIN' AT YOU ...

When you are born, you love your body. Babies lie on their chubby backs, looking up at their mad roly ankles, giggling and smiling. But something happens. By the time girls are creeping up on puberty, most start obsessing about their bodies. "My boobs are mosquito bites." "My butt looks like junk in the trunk." "I hate my nappy hair."

The world we live in teaches girls that anything other than thin, blonde and perky isn't good enough. Everywhere you look, magazines, movies and TV are all trying to sucker us into believing that flat bellies and puckered lips equal beauty. Girls diet, pluck, tuck, untuck and tuck again to try their best to look like supermodels. More often than boys, girls compare their bodies to each other and freak out trying to look perfectly the same.

Know what is so messed up? Even with this psycho weight obsession, American kids are getting fatter! Yup. Sitting on our lazy tails, bonding with PlayStation and Biggie Fries is making us Biggie people. Plumping up because you eat junk and don't exercise enough is bad for you just like dieting and not eating enough.

Red Flags



Do You...

- ◆ Have weird eating habits? Do your friends or family comment on your eating habits?
- ◆ Obsess about food and your body image?
- ◆ Feel sensitive about your body size, shape or parts?
- ◆ Have low self-esteem or feel like you aren't good or pretty enough?
- ◆ Eat because you're upset or eat privately?
- ◆ Exercise too much or not enough?
- ◆ Throw up after you eat?
- ◆ Think you're fat, no matter how thin you get?

YOU'RE HEADED FOR ...

- ◆ Dehydration
- ◆ Low energy
- ◆ Yellow skin, bloodshot eyes and brown teeth
- ◆ Difficulty breathing
- ◆ Health Issues (heart, brain and joint problems)
- ◆ Messed up menstrual cycle
- ◆ Death

So, what's a girl to do? First, make sure you have a healthy relationship with food. Don't be too extreme. Don't inhale a bag of chips after school...but don't eat only grapefruits with Sweet 'n Low trying to stick to a dangerous fad diet. Eat stuff that's good for you regularly and splurge every once and awhile and eat the stuff you crave.

Secondly, get that booty in motion. You'll appreciate your body so much more if you see the amazing things it can do when you're active. Next, look at a family picture. Body shapes and features often run in the family. Do all the women in your family have flat butts? If that's why yours looks the way it does, then celebrate those flat buns. There is nothing you can do to change your roots. Get over it. Lastly, love your beautiful and unique self! There is no one perfect form when it comes to humans. The hair on your toe knuckles, the shape of your eyes and your scars are all yours and yours only. You've got a whole life to live with them. Give nicknames to those quirky parts of your body. Have parties for your freckles. Love what you've got.

*Sometimes, I forget that being the biggest girl in my class is a **GOOD** thing - but I never forget it on the basketball court!*



RESOURCES

- ◆ National Eating Disorders Association (800) 931-2237
- ✿ www.NationalEatingDisorders.org
- ✿ www.anred.com
- ✿ www.eatright.org
- ✿ www.edreferral.com
- ✿ www.newmoon.org\TBIOD