

Silent Screams

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One more smile, just one more, make sure you suck-in your stomach, just hold your breath, smile big, that's too big, relax your brow, are some of the thousands of thoughts that she heard screaming in her head, as she faced the critics. The critics couldn't hear her thoughts though, for she had forgotten that the screams were silent. All that the cameras captured was a classy celebrity holding a glass of alcohol in one hand and in the other hand, held tightly, sat the whole bottle. The words *Skinnygirl Cocktails* are plastered all-over in the background, reminding everyone that the only thing that matters is the way you look. I struggle to connect with the woman in the picture, to see any spark of life behind the 2 circular gray abysses that sit on both sides of her upper nose. She masks a dulled sadness in just enough botox to not give away her truth. When I first saw her mouth and the way it was positioned, I had to do a double-take, because I immediately thought to myself that she was screaming, but her teeth were clenched shut. I found myself leaning further into the picture without realizing that I was trying to find out if I could hear her screams. I'm not sure if you have ever experienced someone appearing as if they are silently screaming, but it is devastating to watch. It looks like the person is frozen in time, paralyzed in fear and pain. often their jaws are closed tight in fear that they may make a sound.



In March of 2009, Bethaney Frankel came out with a prepackaged margarita and ended up naming the drink *Skinnygirl Margarita*. This picture represents everything I advocate against; body shaming, using alcohol as a coping mechanism, not being true to oneself, promoting the superficial instead of promoting self-love, humility, and acceptance. The influential power that celebrities hold in American culture is something that should cause alarm. “The mass media play a critical role in people’s self-image by informing and reflecting what people consider to be beautiful or attractive” (Intech.) Word choice has the power to silently scream at the reader, when keeping that thought in mind, let's talk about *Skinnygirl*. Merriam-Webster defines skinny as 1: resembling skin: MEMBRANOUS 2 a : lacking sufficient flesh: very thin: EMACIATED. I wonder what would happen if the brand name was changed to *Emaciatedgirl*, I wonder if their sales would waiver? There are many different words in the English language that could have been used in place of skinny. The women of America have been through enough to perpetuate the idea that we are our worst enemy. “In the United States, alcohol consumption trends are moving in an unfavorable direction, particularly among women, minorities, and those living in rural areas” (Mellinger).

Celebrities hold such a valuable gift. They can reach people they have never and will never meet. One article states “An attractive/likable celebrity draws viewer attention, lowers the viewer’s defensive barriers, reduces his/her likelihood to counter-argue an ad message [47], and allows the endorsed brand to take on positive emotions [15]” (Zang, Hung). Celebrities can bring ease by association; it is disheartening to witness what some celebrities choose to endorse.

Alcohol has been terrorizing families for generations. I found it interesting that Alcoholics Anonymous was founded in 1935. The evidence that alcohol was destructive took place 85 years ago. We continue to watch people advertise it, trying to make it look sexy,

attractive, fun, and care-free. What the commercial or picture does not show are the nights of deep depression, the feelings of wanting to die followed by a morning full of guilt which you carefully turn into self-hatred. “These meta-analyses suggest that the odds of suicidal behavior are about three times higher among individuals with AUD compared to those without AUD.” When mapping the correlation between alcohol and suicide I read “This result suggests that women who receive AUD treatment have about a 16-fold risk for suicide compared with women in the general population, whereas men who have received AUD treatment have approximately a 9-fold risk for suicide compared with men in the general population” (Conner,). I often wonder if the people that are promoting products, such as *Skinnygirl* if they ever knew the amount of pain that Alcohol Use Disorder intrinsically woven with self-hatred could cause.

This photo was taken 11 years ago. While researching this subject I came across multiple stories about Bethenny having potential custody problems a couple of years back due to an on-again-off-again boyfriend who was found dead from an apparent overdose. Maybe she did understand the amount of pain that addiction can cause. Upon even further research, I found that Bethenny’s parents would heavily drink and get into violent fights. Her father left when she was 4, and her step-father continued to perpetuate the abuse that her biological father had started. Bethenny interviewed with *People Magazine* talking about how the celebrity struggled with eating disorders when she was in high school coupled with the trauma of excessive alcohol use by her mother and step-father.

A picture really is worth a thousand words.

References

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