



How do you define Real Beauty?

by Leanne Gluck

She thinks her feet are too big, her nose is too small, and her eyes too close together. Maybe you've met a girl like this who thinks she doesn't measure up to someone else's definition of beauty. She has yet to realize all the unique qualities she has to offer the world. To help girls redefine beauty, look to **uniquely ME!** the Girl Scout/Dove Self-Esteem program developed for girls 8 to 17.



Bringing **uniquely ME!** to Your Troop

Low self Esteem not only contributes to negative behavior, but creates a reluctance to participate in positive behaviors. According to the 2005 Dove Global Study "Beyond Stereotypes: Rebuilding the Foundation of Beauty Beliefs," when girls have low self-esteem and feel bad about their looks, seventy percent, ages 15-17 avoid normal daily activities such as attending school, going to the doctor, or even giving their opinions. Research conducted by the Girl Scout Research Institute and other organizations demonstrates that risky behavior such as smoking, drinking and eating disorders are often associated with low self-esteem.

To address these issues and help girls build acceptance and appreciation of self, the **uniquely ME!** program is comprised of

three activity booklets, based on research from The Girl Scout Research Institute, and available in English and bilingual English/Spanish. The booklets guide girls through simple exercises for recognizing one's strengths and attributes, handling peer pressure, encouraging healthy eating, and identifying values and personal interests.

Girls who have participated in **uniquely ME!** indicated that not only do they have a lot of fun but they learn teamwork, respect for themselves and others, and healthy ways to handle their feelings. "**uniquely ME!** means everything to me!" said one Girl Scout from New Jersey. "I learned about who I really am on the inside. I wish **uniquely ME!** could go on forever for girls just like me."

Troops 1064 and 7010 from Pines of Carolina Girl Scout Council



Tips for incorporating *uniquely ME!* into troop activities:

- 1 Let Them Lead!** Bring the *uniquely ME!* booklets to your next troop meeting. Encourage girls to browse through the materials and ask them which activities interest them. Giving choices and fostering decision-making skills are key to helping young people build self-confidence.
- 2 Uncover and Explore.** Girls like to express themselves in a variety of ways. Help them explore their interests and tap into their creativity. For example, inspire them to turn an activity on “discovering your style” into an all-out clothes swap or a girl-led fashion show. Or bring “discovering your talents and strengths” to life by inviting an expert, such as a yoga instructor or artist, to teach the girls a skill they want to learn.
- 3 Create “Me Time.”** Designate a portion of each meeting to “Me Time” where girls can talk about who they are, what they like, and what is important to them. Girls want their voices to be heard, especially about issues that matter. Actively listening to their opinions and ideas is another way to help boost their self-confidence. Have younger girls create a *uniquely ME!* pact, stating that they will be true to themselves and discover things that make them special. Have everyone sign the pact and post it in a prominent location.
- 4 Set the Mood.** Play inspiring music at the beginning or end of meetings to set a tone of celebration and self-acceptance. Ask girls to share their favorite songs; those that represent their style, inspire them, or for them have special meaning. Girls can work together to create their own troop CD. They can give them as presents to friends and family.
- 5 Redefine Beauty.** The media’s narrow definition of beauty can fuel girls’ anxiety. It may be hard for them to feel beautiful when confronted with an ideal of beauty. Change the definition of beauty by talking about it as something broader than physical appearance. Do an activity with your troop where they brainstorm and share revised definitions. Girls can write poems, songs, or stories to describe what beauty means to them. Discuss how new definitions of beauty can change how a person feels about herself.
- 6 Create a “Beauty Timeline.”** Choose a time period. Then challenge girls to bring in one interesting “beauty fact” related to that era. For example, in the 1860s, fuller figures were revered. Have girls write their facts (with the date) on post-it notes. Then place the timeline on the wall or the floor. Have everyone walk through the beauty timeline and at the end have a conversation about how ideas of what makes a person beautiful have changed.
- 7 Invite College Students or Young Professionals.** Offering girls the opportunity to connect with college students and young professionals, either to share their stories or teach them something new, is another way to build confidence in girls. Invite Girl Scouts alumnae or young women from a local college to talk about overcoming challenges and handling the issues they currently face.

Created by Unilever and GSUSA in 2002, and currently sponsored by Dove and the Dove Self Esteem Fund, *uniquely ME!* addresses the nationwide problem of low self-esteem exhibited by a surprising number of girls in the United States and Puerto Rico, with a focus on those in underprivileged communities. By 2005, *uniquely ME!* resources reached over 70,000 girls.

Currently, there are eleven councils receiving funds to participate in a three-year program grant, sponsored by Dove from 2005 to 2008. In addition, more than 120 councils are integrating *uniquely ME!* resources into their troop and group activities and council programs to explore and celebrate individual beauty and uniqueness.

**Need more information?
Have ideas to share?**

**Send your questions, comments or tips
about defining real beauty to Leanne Gluck**

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Resources

uniquely ME! The Way to Be/Nadie Como yo! Una manera de ser (UPC #26020 \$6.95)

Activities for girls 8-10 help them discover their unique qualities, the importance of challenging themselves; coping skills, and what makes for a good friend. They can also learn how to evaluate media influences and find ways to make a difference.

STUDIO 2B Focus: *uniquely ME! Inside and Out* (UPC #20536 \$5.95)

Girls 11 and older learn to love the skin their in! Topics include the power of body language, eating healthfully, physical activity, and discovering one’s unique style.

STUDIO 2B Focus: *The Real Deal* (UPC #20538 \$5.95)

The Real Deal includes activities designed to help girls 11 and older recognize what matters most to them, cope with feelings, deal with social pressures, and enjoy relationships with family and friends.

uniquely ME! Guide for Adults/Nadie Como Yo! Guía para Adultos (UPC #20540 \$6.95)

This resource contains research, information, and tips for implementing *uniquely ME!*