

# Review of the "How I Look Journal"

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Nancy L. Brown, PhD



The [How I Look Journal](#) was designed for middle school girls in 2007 (revised in 2009), and has been used primarily in group settings, although girls can use it by themselves. Counselors and therapists tend to use the topics as a basis for discussions and teachers prefer using the journal in lesson formats. There is also a companion journal (2009) for mothers called "[How I Look at my Daughter, Her World, and Her Future.](#)"

Given I had the week off I decided to review the copies I was sent and am delighted to say that my teenage daughters and I thought the journals are a great idea. The journal prompts help girls identify and celebrate their inner strengths and attributes, manage stress, accept their bodies and dream!

I found myself thinking that the self-talk section was very important as parents cannot hear what teens are saying to themselves in their own heads. We would like to believe that our kids are affirming their healthy and positive decisions and characteristics, but the reality may be that they are using "bully talk" to themselves, saying things like "I am dumb, ugly inconsiderate, mean ...". These negative statements undermine their self-confidence, but are difficult to change, especially if they are reinforced by comments parents (inadvertently) make when annoyed..

Given that girls in the U.S. may see about 3 thousand advertisements a day and spend nearly twice as much time in a watching T.V. as in school, we have to do something to combat the pressure these girls feel to reach unattainable beauty goals. There are some great resources listed in the book, although I would have added Nancy Redd's book "Body Drama."

The book for moms is particularly important in that we are their role models. My favorite part of the journal for moms were the backstory sections - full of facts and concrete suggestions for how to encourage our children to be healthy! I was surprised the mom journal did not push a little harder for moms to stop commenting on the appearance (clothes, hair, make-up, weight) of people they see and especially greet. I have frequently challenged undergraduate classes to go 24-hours without mentioning anything positive or negative about another person's appearance - and it is HARD - and upsets those around us, who are dependent on our evaluation of their appearance, and assume if there are no comments that there is something wrong with their appearance.

There is a very strong correlation between mom's satisfaction with her own body and a daughter's satisfaction with her own body, so it is important that parents get a grip on what we say about our bodies as well as are non-verbal behavior toward our bodies. These books are a great conversation starter and provide great encouragement to moms to talk with their teens about role models and to bring extraordinary women into their lives!

Given the season, I would like to encourage a New Years Resolution for everyone with teenagers - be conscious of the comments and judgments you make about bodies - your own and other people's - find the beauty in everyone - and encourage your teens to dream, plan and choose a future full of affirming beliefs about their potential and characteristics!

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[http://www.healthline.com/blogs/teen\\_health/2009/12/review-of-how-i-look-journal.html](http://www.healthline.com/blogs/teen_health/2009/12/review-of-how-i-look-journal.html)