

Tuesday 29th March 2016

Today's young women are losing out in the self-confidence generation game, Weight Watchers research reveals

- *Over half of women aged 18-30 do not currently consider themselves to be confident*
- *Older generation of women are a third more positive about themselves than the younger generation*
 - *58% of women feel their body is the area they are least confident about*
 - *Less than 10% of 18-30 year olds feel confident in their bodies*

Whilst young women today enjoy more freedoms and equality in both their careers and relationships than previous generations, new research reveals they are more lacking in confidence and self-esteem compared to older women when they were the same age.

In a cross generational study conducted by Weight Watchers, younger women, on average, have 50% less positive thoughts about themselves a day compared to their mothers' generation and a third more negative thoughts per day.

For UK women, there is a strong correlation between body confidence and overall happiness, with 20% of women aged 50-65 reporting having body confidence in their 30s and 74% of the same group agreeing they were happy in themselves. Less than 10% of today's 30 year olds felt they were happy in their appearance, with only 66% feeling happy overall.

This was further supported by the result that young women place more than four times more emphasis on physical improvement by working on their health and fitness (59%). Furthermore, only 5% of these women answered they were happy about their body and nearly half (47%) stated that their body was the area of their life they were most unhappy about.

However, young women reported higher degrees of confidence in their relationships and professional capabilities than their mother's generation did at their age and the older women surveyed agreed that today's young women are much more empowered (58%) than they were.

Commenting on the findings, Dr Katy Tapper, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at City University London, said:

"It is unsurprising that these findings indicate young women today are feeling far less confident in their bodies than the older generation did at the same age. The UK is seeing rising rates of obesity in young women which can contribute to decreased body confidence and lead to lower mood levels."

Over half of the older generation concurred that the pressure to look good is more prevalent today (55%) – potentially a consequence of the rise of the selfie. This is likely due to the perceived confidence that results from the current social media climate of confidence building through curated photographic representations of self.

The older generation of those surveyed was more likely to be pleased with how they look in the mirror (38%), be proud of something they had accomplished during the day (21%), or walk down the street feeling good about themselves when they were the same age (75%).

Commenting on the findings, Zoe Griffiths, Head of Public Health and Programme at Weight Watchers, said:

“It is clear that women today are far harder on themselves in all aspects of life than their mothers’ generation was. From careers and relationships to the way they look, women today are pushing themselves to exceed in every way.

“This is a trend can have a huge impact on young women’s confidence which is why at Weight Watchers, we believe it is incredibly important for women to build a strong and positive relationship with body and mind. We want to empower women to focus on building greater self-belief to achieve positive change.”

This Weight Watchers research has been conducted as part of **#WomanKind**, a nationwide campaign that explores why modern women are unkind to themselves and how they can counter this cultural habit, to make healthier choices by focusing on building greater self belief to build better relationships with themselves.

For the full report or more information visit <https://www.weightwatchers.com/uk/womankind>

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Weight Watchers’ Positivity research surveyed 1,000 women aged 18-30 and 1,000 women aged 50-65 across the UK with OnePoll.

AREAS A WOMAN IS LEAST CONFIDENT

1. Body
2. Overall appearance
3. Fitness
4. Career
5. Health

AREAS A WOMAN IS MOST CONFIDENT

1. Relationship
2. Intelligence
3. Sense of humour
4. Friendships
5. Outlook on life

TOP 10 AREAS A WOMAN WOULD IMPROVE TO BOOST CONFIDENCE

1. I’d like to improve my health and fitness
2. I’d like to lose weight
3. I want to work my way up the career ladder
4. I’d like to replace half my wardrobe for more complimentary outfits
5. I’d like to learn how to apply my make up better
6. I want to be more spontaneous
7. I want to laugh more
8. I want to read more
9. I want to make more time for my friends
10. I want more time to myself

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	WOMEN AGED 18-30	WOMEN AGED 50-65
Positive thoughts about self per day	3	6
Negative thoughts about self per day	9	6
Consider themselves "confident"	45%	48%
Consider themselves "happy"	66%	74%
Areas of confidence	Relationship (35%) Intelligence (31%)	Health (31%)
Least confident areas	Body (56%) Overall appearance (38%)	Body (35%) Career (24%)
Biggest aims to improve	Improve health/fitness (59%) Lose weight (56%)	Force myself to do things (26%)
Moments of pride at work	2	3

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About Weight Watchers International, Inc.

Weight Watchers International, Inc. is the world's leading commercial provider of weight management services, operating globally through a network of Company-owned and franchise operations. Weight Watchers holds more than 32,000 meetings each week where members receive group support and learn about healthy eating patterns, behavior modification and physical activity. Weight Watchers provides innovative, digital weight management products through its websites, mobile sites and apps. Weight Watchers is the leading provider of paid digital subscription weight management products in the world. Weight Watchers offers a wide range of food products, publications and programmes for those interested in a healthier lifestyle.