



CAMPAIGNS 12 MAY 2022

# #DetoxYourFeed /

Dove

**Beauty brand conducts social experiment to educate parents on the toxic impact social media can have on young people**



Teenagers in the US are spending an increasing amount of time on social media. In fact, according to a [report](#) released by Unilever-owned **Dove**, almost two out of three girls in the country spend over an hour on social media every day.

The same survey of 1,000 girls (aged 10 to 17 years old) also revealed that one in two find that toxic beauty advice on social media causes them low self-esteem and that 90% follow at least one social media account that makes them feel less beautiful.

The research concluded that seven out of 10 girls feel better after unfollowing idealised beauty content on social media.

► <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKwfqcCprlw>

To draw parental attention to this issue and combat harmful advice on social media, Dove and creative agency **Ogilvy UK**, London, filmed a social experiment in April 2022 designed to encourage young people to **#DetoxYourFeed**.

The online film (above) titled **Toxic Influence**, begins with mothers and daughters being asked about the effect of influencers on each teenager's life. One girl says: 'Most of the influencers I have seen have definitely had a positive impact on me.'

The teen then scrolls through her phone, with the social media feed projected onto a screen. Various influencers appear, promoting flat stomachs, straight teeth and flawless skin. Deep fake technology then swaps in the mother's face, who then appears to deliver the harmful advice given to attain such beauty standards.



'Baby botox is amazing, you're never too young to start,' one mum seemingly says. 'You have to treat yourself to a chemical peel,' says another, 'they burn away the top layers of your skin and let new skin grow through.' Meanwhile, a third mother 'shares' advice about how to file down uneven teeth.

When the video ends, the girls admit that they have seen similar content on social media, with the emotional mothers registering the scale of the problem and then discussing how they can mitigate the impact of the content. The film ends with the message: 'A girl's greatest influence will always be her parents'.



Along with the ad, Dove has created an educational video available [online](#) and a digital [Confidence Kit](#), which includes a workbook for parents, caregivers and mentors on how to facilitate conversations with teenagers about the harmful effects of social media.

Dove is also holding a free, live-streamed event and Q&A session for parents on 12 May with cultural expert Jess Weiner and psychotherapist Nadia Addesi, which will provide tips on fighting toxic influence.

'We've identified a clear problem that is eroding the self-esteem of our girls and needs immediate attention and action,' Leandro Barreto, global vice president of Dove, stated in a press release. 'We created this #DetoxYourFeed campaign to not only raise awareness around the insidious nature of toxic beauty advice, but to help parents navigate tough conversations and empower teens to unfollow content that makes them feel bad about themselves.'

**Results** / According to the agency, in the first ten days after its launch the campaign received **13.6 million** organic views, **1.7 billion** impressions and was covered by over **300** media outlets in **60** countries.

## Contagious Insight /

**Reigniting its mission** / As we explore in our [Brand Spotlight](#) on Dove, the beauty and personal care brand has been consistently delivering on its purpose of redefining Real Beauty since 2004. Whether it's [spurring brands to be more inclusive](#) in their advertising, [lobbying to end hair-based race discrimination](#), or [championing the beauty](#) of exhausted healthcare workers during the pandemic, Dove has a track record of challenging unrealistic ideals and advocating for positive change. This is what we refer to at Contagious as an 'organising principle', ie, something a company stands for beyond flogging a product or service. By having a strong organising principle and imbuing it in all aspects of the business, Dove is able to move beyond the confines of its category and generate a wider impact.

Suitably armed, the challenge for Dove now is to find new ways to keep its mission fresh and alive in the minds of consumers. One such effort is through PR-able social experiments that confront people with their insecurities and false perceptions. In 2013, Dove asked women to describe themselves to a forensic artist, who drew a portrait of them based on their description to highlight their distorted self-perception. In 2015, Dove erected two signs above entrances to shopping centres around the world – one sign read 'Beautiful', the other 'Average', with women choosing the door based on how they view themselves. According to Dove, just 4% of women classed themselves as beautiful. The #DetoxYourFeed experiment is yet another example of this strategy. By using deep fake technology in such a surprising and emotionally affecting way, Dove reignites conversation about the ongoing issues of self-esteem and harmful social media, and brings it all back to the brand's consistent purpose.

**Mass appeal** / In 2004 Dove launched its Self-Esteem Project, a global initiative that aims to build confidence in young people. It has since reached over 60 million people in 142 countries through its education programmes. While its efforts to inspire self-assurance in the younger population are commendable, Dove's product lines aren't limited to this demographic. And, it's crucial that Dove finds ways to appeal and connect with older consumers too who also purchase its products. Here, Dove is empowering young women and simultaneously reaching an older audience by speaking to and educating parents. As a result, Dove is increasingly likely to create positive associations and affinity with its brand among both audiences.

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