



DAWN O'PORTER

## HONESTLY...

WARNING she always says what she thinks

# “Why do all female celebrities have to be role models?”

A teenage girl told me I was her role model the other day. I think it was supposed to be a compliment, but it actually gave me the fear. If I am a role model, does that mean I can't mess up?

The truth is, like many people in the public eye, I didn't set out to try to shape the way that people who consume my work live their lives. I set out to entertain them. That isn't to say I don't hope that elements of what I do

inspire people, but role model? Nope, that's just terrifying.

I think the term 'role model' is an unfair expectation to put on the wrong people. For example, why is it even in the same sentence as Rihanna? She isn't one, she's not trying to be one, end of story.

I think it's yet another way that the media boxes in women, dilutes them, and defines how they can and cannot behave. Men are rarely slammed for letting the side down when they do something outrageous,

but for some reason women are expected to be more responsible, which, if you ask me, is a bit boring.

Why can't some women just be rock stars? I like rock stars, I wish I was one. Unfortunately, I like making pesto and when I dance I look like Gail from *Corrie* on a Power Plate. But in my head, before I go to sleep at night, I'm a rock star.

I often wonder why so few men are labelled with the term, and the reason is partly because

of the imbalance between men and women in the media, in sport and in high-profile positions in the workplace. This means that the women who are in positions of power and in the public eye are considered representative, while the sheer volume of men means that by proxy they have more freedom to behave as they wish. Well, what a yawn-inducing thought that is.

When I was a kid I was obsessed with Madonna. I remember my mum telling me to stop singing about feeling like a virgin, and for my 12th birthday I made all of the girls come as Madonna and all the boys come as John Travolta. But despite this fancy dress, I knew it wasn't OK for me to simulate sex with men and women on stage while wearing a corseted body sock and ice cream cones on my tits. What I did know was that it was OK for me to express myself. That there was the option to play it safe, or the option to break free from conformity and be whoever I wanted to be. Madonna never wanted me to be like her, she just wanted me to feel free. She wasn't my role model, she was my release.

Celebs can't be held responsible for shaping our nation's youth. Of course they are idolised by millions and they inspire certain attitudes, but the term 'role model' should be reserved for the people in society who actually make a difference, ►



I've recently been filming – the hours were long and we were on location all over the place. I did my own make-up every day and had to work out what was quick and long-lasting. Now I will never be without the following: Laura Mercier Foundation Primer, Chanel Vitalumière Foundation, Nars Laguna Bronzing Powder, YSL Touche Eclat, MAC Blot Powder and Laura Mercier Invisible Loose Setting Powder. It all stayed put.

◀ and not just the ones who are making the headlines. I mean parents, sisters, aunts, teachers, to name but a few.

I know a lot has changed since my day (\*shudders\*), and the internet has given more access to the unconventional than ever before (twerking, anyone?), but that isn't the celebs' fault. We can't ask them to be something they're not, just because we can see it. As a society, we put stars on a pedestal, we create the stage, they're just doing their thing and there are plenty of influences to choose from. We have enough examples of well-behaved women to allow others the freedom to be wild.

My breed of feminism isn't simply that women should do what they want, when they want – the fact that men were allowed to get away with that attitude is what we've been trying to escape for so long. What I want is choice, options, and an honest portrayal of womanhood in all its forms. Where we can be who we want to be without feeling like society is making us conform. And that is what the media does; it berates women in the public eye who it does not deem 'good girls'. I don't think the rebellious rock stars are humiliating themselves, I think society humiliates them with its response.

Despite my obsession with Madonna as a teenager, my true role model was my auntie who raised me. I fantasised about being a rock star but, in truth, I wanted to grow up to be a successful, bee-keeping salt-of-the-earth type like she was – but with a pair of ice cream cones in my knicker drawer, just in case.

love  
Dawn  
XXX

Tell me what you think  
@hotpatooties #GlamourMagUK



And you thought normal men's toilets were gross...

## MEN: Love yourselves, too

I wasn't surprised to hear that men make up 42% of liposuction patients in the UK, according to The Private Clinic on Harley Street.

I recently realised that pretty much all the men in my life are on diets, but hardly any of the women. Are the roles reversing? The media certainly seems to be targeting the lack of a six-pack in the same way it used to target cellulite. Happily, I think the UK has reacted well to the need to portray positive body image for women. If you look to our TV presenters, Davina McCall, Holly Willoughby, Fearne Cotton, for example, all have healthy bodies, and we should be proud of that. So come on, boys, don't get yourselves in the mess we did. Let us take you out for a few pies, we'll pay!



## AUNTIE TWIT

Dawn solves your problems (well, sort of) in 140 characters

**@hotpatooties** I need to buy a house with no money

**@charleywills** Have you considered buying with a friend? Or even a few friends?

It's so hard to get on the housing ladder but that's a good option for some.

**@hotpatooties** "commitment phobes" – how do you decide when enough is enough?!

**@jesserose86** Dump him and wait. If he comes back to you then you can trust it, and never feel like you cornered him. If he doesn't, SCREW HIM!

**@hotpatooties** how to ACTUALLY achieve work/life balance

**@girllostincity** It's about making sure work ends at 6pm and taking weekends. But if you are self-employed, just take the work while it's there. Sleep when you're dead etc. #mylife

## HEY, LADY

This month's shout out goes to a chick so many of you will have seen, but possibly haven't noticed enough for my liking.

Hayley Sanderson, 30, the singer in the band on *Strictly Come Dancing?* Oh guys, she is quite simply... the bomb. Outside of the TV show, Hayley is the lead singer of The Stylophones, a vibrant troop whose songs are based on social satire. Despite the busy *Strictly* schedule, the band is in the studio creating an album that they hope to be ready in the new year. Look out for it. For an instant fix of her talents and charm, watch the *Makin A Mess* video on YouTube, and then Tweet the hell out of it. ©



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