A Spring Affair: Letters to the Editor

April 2, 2015 By Kate Ferguson

Good morning Ms. Ferguson,
I read Real Health magazine and it is also distributed in my office. I felt strongly compelled to contact you about the cover of the Spring 2015 issue. As you know, actress Naturi Naughton is wearing a very revealing top next to a article title about sex robots. Moreover, the language under the actress's name is about empowering women and girls.

This cover was so offensive, it makes me want to stop distributing Real Health. Nothing about a cleavage plunging top is empowering to females. It further objectifies them and solidifies the already rampant mainstream messaging that women are valued due to their bodies and beauty. They are sexual objects. It doesn't help that next to Naturi's face are the words "sex robots" in big bold lettering.

Please publish something in the next issue regarding the offensiveness of this cover, as I can tell you that I am not alone in having issues about the "health" messaging coming from this magazine.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments.
Respectfully,
Jessica

Greetings Kate,
I stumbled across the latest Real Health magazine today. And, the short of it is, I'm appalled.

How could you honestly think that a title of "Sex Robots" next to an incredibly revealing top is "empowering" anyone. Just in case this got past you unknowingly, I've highlighted the key parts of your magazine cover in the attached photo. But, let's be honest, as editor in chief, you probably noticed.

I understand your demands in this society - sex sells and you're in the business. But don't lie to yourself (or your readers) that you're helping to empower anyone while also succumbing to patriarchal demands.

If you really want to make a difference and empower people, then do it actively and consciously - not in a tiny blurb next to what you meant to be a distracting photo.

Disappointed feminist,
Jessica

Good Morning,

I rarely have complaints about the magazine, however, the Spring 2015 issue cover is degrading. The picture of the actress, while she is beautiful, has nothing to do with health. The picture actually belongs on a fashion cover.

If I didn't know who the actress was, I would think the picture was associated with the article on "Sex Robots".

Please refrain from degrading women, we go through enough already.
Jacqueline

THE EDITOR REPLIES

A Spring Affair: Empowerment Issues

Thank you to all the readers who wrote in with opinions on our Real Health Spring cover. I recognize your time is short and your willingness to take precious minutes to share your thoughts is incredibly helpful as we shape the magazine moving forward.

There were two main themes to the feedback. The first involved some taking issue with the choice of what Naturi Naughton was wearing. The second and bigger concerns revolved around the cover line highlighting our sex robots piece and it's placement on the cover near Ms. Naughton's face.

The cover image focused on Ms. Naughton, who is a passionate advocate for the issue of empowerment of women and girls. The story detailed her experiences as a young girl and reveals the strength and inner courage it took for her to overcome judgmental eyes and criticism from people who summed her up and dismissed her before she ever opened her mouth.

There was no intent to mislead or create confusion around Ms. Naughton's story. The "sex robots" coverline highlighted another article featured in the publication. It is unfortunate her powerful story was overshadowed by the misunderstanding and this is something I will work hard to ensure doesn't happen again in the future.

The selection of the cover image of Ms. Naughton was what I felt was a striking image that reflected her self-confidence and beauty. I thought a healthy vitality fairly burst from this image of Ms. Naughton who was wearing a dress she wore in an episode of the popular series Power in which she stars as Tasha St. Patrick. Your feedback is appreciated and will be part of future cover choices.

I would like to close by adding the staff at Real Health will continue its effort to bring readers more award-winning, comprehensive health and wellness information that's of relevance to the communities we serve.

It's our pledge at Real Health to always be responsive to the concerns of our readers and please continue to share your comments, ideas, opinions and suggestions with us.

Thank you.

Kate Ferguson
Editor-in-Chief
Real Health

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