

“Do More, Be More!”- How this is Affecting our Adolescent Girls

Society today is open to the achievement of women like no other time before.

Keeping a balanced healthy view of oneself instead of striving for perfection can be difficult to resist. Just take a look at a typical adolescent girl’s schedule- they have less free time than working adults and get less sleep- less than any group of Americans! They are stuffing their schedules with responsibilities- being a best friend, great student, amazing athlete, humble volunteer, and of course maintaining an image- body, face, hair, clothes and their social media accounts. Perfection.

Adult women know this pressure, but now it’s on the back of our young daughters. The strive for perfection is infectious as more doors open, more responsibilities come, and expectations grow. When will enough be good enough? Adolescent girls are experiencing a surge of anxiety and depression as they strive to be great, not just good at everything, not just their inherent talent.

We as parents need to step in, because enough is enough in more than one way. Consider if your daughter is saying or doing any of these things:

- Feeling overwhelmed often
- Underestimating her achievements
- Expecting that daily stress is normal
- Not getting enough sleep
- Having limited down time
- Feeling she has to have the ‘right’ grades, friends, clothes, etc

- Criticizing her body, achievements, performance

If the above is to some degree true for your daughter, she may be at risk.

As parents we have to examine ourselves. What messages are we sending? Who we are as a woman, our esteem and our attitudes, speaks volumes more than words. We cannot control all that society puts out there, but we can control the message we send in our own homes.

Let her know in your home that these toxic messages are rejected. Acknowledge it’s that way ‘out there’ even for adults, but at home she is already everything she needs to be. Encourage her to be herself at home. Let her know love and acceptance are not earned by accomplishment, but is inherent and unconditional.