

Celebrities & Celebrity Culture: Role Models for High-Risk Behaviour or Sources of Credibility?

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Representations & Role Models

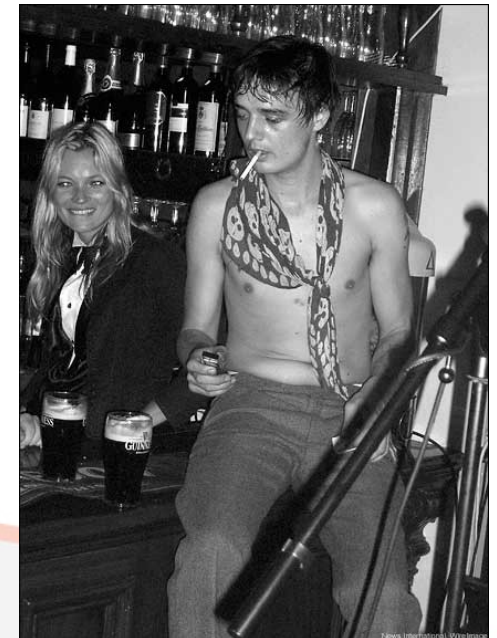
Media images & representations:

- Substantive work on media reps
 - 'media images', 'stereotypes', 'ideals'
- quantitative, causal relationships **but**:
 - how are images consumed, meaningful?
 - How do they translate into practice
 - social networks & friendships



Role Models:

- Commonplace but “unclear ... in a psychological sense how ‘role modelling’ might actually work” (Gauntlett, 2008)
 - How do role models become meaningful to people?
 - Social or Individual function?
 - One or more role models depending on contexts/behaviours (tensions?)



Contemporary celebrity culture

- Historic, current configuration in 80s (Cashmore, 2006)
- Dominates media content across formats (tabloidization of news)
- Becoming/being a celebrity – accelerated, visible process
- Reality TV (X Factor, Britain's Got Talent, Big Brother)
- Extraordinary Ordinairiness, 'willabees'
- Taylor Herring: top 3 career aspirations
- Not achievable by all, except through:
 - **Consumption:** consuming, living, behaving like a celebrity
 - **Self-promotion:** technology enables us to construct ourselves as media



- **Content & narrative analysis**
 - heat, Closer, OK!, New!
 - Highest ABC circulation figures for 18 – 24yr olds (most likely to participate in high-risk behaviours)
 - Examine contexts & narratives about celebrity (textual & visual)
- Readership survey – how is celeb content consumed in magazines?
- Interviews & focus groups – how celebrity/ies are meaningful to readers?

Methodology



Initial findings

- Recycling of key, dominant narratives/stories:
 - Appearance (transformation: weight, cosmetic surgery, addiction)
 - Relationships (marriage/divorce etc.)
 - Pregnancy (attempts/miscarriage/adoption)
 - Mental/health breakdowns (mad-bad to recovering-good)
 - Katie Price, Kerry Katona, Cheryl Cole, Charlotte Church & Victoria Beckham – ongoing process of managing, repudiating, creating scandals that afford media attention
- Celebrities routinely shown engaging in high-risk behaviours, simultaneously depicted as shameful & aspirational
- Alongside ‘advertorial’ content – weight-loss, tanning, cosmetic, leisure, fitness, spiritual products

Closer NEWS

'Charl's smoking 30 fags a day to stay skinny' say pals

Friends and family fear Charlotte Church is taking her weight loss too far by banning treats and smoking heavily



Charl - on weight out last week - blames her smoking on her return to currying

SHE RECENTLY dropped from a size 14 to a slender size 8, but Charlotte Church appeared to have lost even more weight when she stepped out last week. The star looked thinner than ever, revealing her collarbones and ultra-skinny legs as she enjoyed a cigarette break.

After losing 3st to relaunch her TV career, pals now fear *Over The Rainbow*'s judge Charlotte is taking her diet too far by cutting out almost all carbs and smoking up to 30 cigarettes a day.

A source says: "Charlotte is smoking pretty much constantly and we all fear she's using fags to suppress her appetite. She is always popping out for a cigarette during filming and can get quite antsy if she hasn't had one for a while."

"And she barely seems to eat on set. She always has a healthy breakfast but then for the rest of the day she'll survive on just a Caesar salad without the croutons and dressing, or nibble on fruit or just have a couple of protein shakes. She's been complaining that carbs make her sluggish and has almost removed them from her diet completely."

The source adds: "She says she's happy with her figure, but she's still losing weight and everyone is scared she's heading towards a size 0. It's as though she's almost becoming obsessed with how much weight she's losing and it seems she's loving the attention her new figure is bringing. It's not healthy."

The singer, 24 - who has children Ruby, two, and Dexter, one, with her boyfriend of four years, rugby star Gavin Henson - lost three dress sizes in time for her stint as a judge on Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest BBC1 talent show *Over The Rainbow*. It's the first time she's been on TV since *The Charlotte Church Show* ended in 2008.

She revealed recently that her dramatic weight loss was down to cutting down on carbs and eating smaller portions, saying: "I don't think I've ever been this thin. I haven't exercised - I just don't eat as much." And she added: "Unfortunately in our industry you have to be slim."

Insiders say Charlotte has even banned treats from her dressing room - and has been spurred on to stick to her strict diet by her new designer wardrobe.

The pal says: "Charl's bought

herself a whole new wardrobe and is feeling sexier than ever. It's been years since she's gotten that kind of attention for her looks.

"But her mum Maria and others close to her are a bit worried that after two years of being away from the showbiz scene, Charl's being sucked back in. She thinks Charlotte has been feeling like a fish out of water and will do anything to fit in."

A pal adds: "She doesn't want Charl to put her health at risk in her desperation to be the next Cheryl Cole or Dani Minogue."

"And Gav thinks Charlotte's taken the weight loss too far, but he's also worried that if he chips in with any negative feedback it could do her emotional damage. He's too scared to say anything because he can see how much she's loving her new figure and he doesn't want to dent her confidence."

Meanwhile, pals say Charl's 30-a-day smoking habit is taking its toll on her skin.

A source says: "Her skin looks really dehydrated - she's even got signs of crow's feet around her eyes and has dry lips, which is strange for someone so young. The heavy smoking may keep her weight down but it's certainly not good for her skin - or her health."

Charlotte quit smoking in 2006 and was even the poster girl for an anti-smoking campaign that year, but she blames her recent return to partying for taking up cigarettes again, saying: "It was when I started going out... I'm definitely going

to give up again."

Despite her strict diet, the star still likes partying and last week was pictured enjoying a glass of wine after filming. She was spotted at a bar until 2am with Gavin, and recently admitted: "Gavin and I still haven't quite learned to drink responsibly."

But friends say although Gavin enjoys a drink, he's desperate for Charl to give up the ciggies.

A source says: "That's the one thing Gav wants to change. He hates seeing Charlotte puffing away, but he knows it's a nervous thing, as well as a way of distracting her from food. She's constantly worried about her new role as a judge - delivering her lines perfectly and coming up with witty responses."

"Charlotte is a volatile and emotional girl - she pretends to be Little Miss Confident, but the opposite is the truth."

"Every time her inner circle try to talk to her about slowing down the diet and giving up smoking, she responds with: 'I'm fine and I know what I'm doing - I'm not a kid, thanks.'"

And while Charl is loving being in the spotlight again, pals say behind the scenes she's finding juggling her career with being a mum exhausting.

A pal says: "Charl spends most of the week working on *Over The Rainbow* in London, but tries to spend a couple of days at her house in Wales. She's finding the juggling act hard and has been tearful lately, but Gavin has reassured her it'll be worth it to get her career back on track."



Pals fear Charl is smoking to suppress her appetite

The star revealed her super-skinny legs last week

By Katie Bonks

THE BIG INTERVIEW!

'I've dropped a dress size eating soup for breakfast'

The TV presenter tells Closer how she keeps in shape and why leaving GMTV will be heartbreaking

PENNY SMITH TALKS EXCLUSIVELY TO CLOSER



Penny is thrilled to have dropped a dress size

SHE'S KNOWN FOR HER glamorous, youthful looks, but it doesn't come without effort. When Penny realised she was creeping up to a size 14, she decided to try a radical new soup diet.

Since starting it in October, the GMTV presenter, 51, has dropped a dress size and is now back to a slim 10/12, and it's all thanks to eating her home-made vegetable soup for breakfast and dinner.

"I'm thrilled with the results - I've even lost my big bottom!" Penny told Closer at the Mark Hovet Get The Look book launch.

"I've bought a new wardrobe to celebrate - I went to River Island the other day and bought about 10 tops!"

"I take my soup, made from carrots, celeriac, peppers, onions and bean sprouts, into GMTV in tupperware and I gorge on it for breakfast. Then, because I have to get up so early, I sleep through lunch, and for dinner I have even more soup. After that I feel stuffed and I can't eat any more."

Now Penny, who's been happily dating actor Vincent Leigh, 41, since 2001, jokes that she'd love to start selling her soups to other dieters!

She says: "I could start flogging it to Saintsbury's. Can you imagine me doing the breaststroke in a bowl of mushroom soup for the ad? That would be amazing!"

She adds: "I'm so obsessed with veg - I had two absolutely delicious carrots the other day and when there were none left in the fridge I had a mad panic!"

Penny, who admits to having had to watch her weight since the age of 12 - and even put on 4st in just three months when she temporarily ditched dieting at the age of 18 - also stays trim by cycling everywhere.

She cackles: "The other day I cycled to London's Borough Market for lunch and got quite squiffy on a couple of glasses of rosé."

"On my cycle back home, I started shouting at all the cars after a Porsche almost ran me down. I thought: 'Is this the first sign of madness?'"



She was a size 14 in September

Teen boy: 'I'm having a sex change to look like my idol Jordan'

MICHELLE HEATON & ADELE SILVA
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Closer

COLEEN
"I'VE BLITZED MY BABY BELLY!"

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SIZE 8

CHERYL'S BATTLE WITH DEADLY MALARIA
Tells pals: 'I thought I was going to die'

Sheds 1st 7lbs on strict no sugar diet
Cuts carbs every other day

SIZE 12 4 MONTHS AGO

Diet plan inside!

ISSUE 420

← CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Blitz your body like Coleen!

Get in shape like Coleen on our 1,200-calorie plan. Like her diet, it's low in starchy carbs and added sugar – you could lose a stone in six weeks!

Closerdiets.com

Closer NEWS

Look amazing in your bikini like Coleen!



Choose one breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack each day – vary your choices and add plenty of veg. Also have an extra 300ml skimmed milk every day to use in drinks or to make shakes (100 calories).

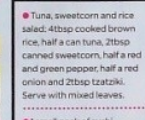
BREAKFASTS 250 CALORIES



- Fruit salad: 1 slice melon, 1 apple and a handful each of strawberries and blueberries with 1 small pot fat-free yoghurt and 2tbsp oats. (V)
- 2 grilled rashers of lean bacon with 2 scrambled eggs and poached mushrooms.
- 2 poached eggs with 1 grilled tomato and poached mushrooms. Plus 1 peach. (V)
- Continental breakfast: 5tbsp cottage cheese, half a mango, 2 slices lean ham and 1 small pot fat-free yoghurt with a handful of raspberries.
- 1 bottle of berry smoothie and 10 almonds. (V)

For more healthy meal options, visit www.closerdiets.com now and choose the Blitz diet plan. You could lose up to a stone in just six weeks!

LUNCHES 350 CALORIES



- Tuna, sweetcorn and rice salad: 4tbsp cooked brown rice, half a can tuna, 2tbsp canned sweetcorn, half a red and green pepper, half a red onion and 2tbsp tzatziki. Serve with mixed leaves.
- 1 small pack of sushi (around 250 calories) and 1 tub fruit salad.
- Greek salad: 75g feta, half a green and red pepper, cucumber, 1 small red onion, 10 olives, 1 tomato, 2tsp olive oil and white wine vinegar. (V)

- 1 grilled skinless chicken breast with a large salad. Plus 1 pot fat-free fruit yoghurt and 1 slice caramelised onion.
- Half a small pot of houmous with veg crudites. Plus 1 bowl fruit salad and half a pot low-fat natural yoghurt. (V)

DINNERS 400 CALORIES



- 1 grilled salmon steak with carrots, asparagus, baby corn and mangefout. Plus a handful of cherries.
- 1 grilled lean rump steak with salad and fat-free dressing. 1 bowl fruit salad and half a pot low-fat yoghurt.
- Tuna Nicoise salad: 1 boiled egg, 1 small can tuna, salad leaves, 1 tomato, 10 olives and green beans, with 2tbsp fat-free French dressing. Plus 1 peach and 1 kiwi fruit.
- 1 grilled skinless chicken breast with red and green pepper, red onion, courgette and tomatoes roasted in 1tbsp olive oil, 1 slice melon.
- Omelette made from 1tbsp sunflower oil, 2 eggs, mushrooms and 4tbsp low-fat Cheddar, with large salad, 1 apple and 1 peach. (V)

SNACKS 100 CALORIES



- 1tbsp cashew nuts. (V)
- 1 oatcake with 2tbsp cottage cheese, 1 pineapple ring canned in juice. (V)
- 1 small (250ml) glass of red or dry white wine. (V)
- Half a small pot of tzatziki with celery sticks. (V)
- 1 small pot fat-free yoghurt. A handful of strawberries. (V)



→ Ideological function of celebrity magazines - *deconstruction & reconstruction* of celebrity & celebrities

Implications for Social Marketing

- Celebrities engage in high-risk behaviours shown as shameful and aspirational – how do young people engage with this?
- Becoming a celebrity - aspirational identity narrative available to young people – what does this mean to them, what does it entail?
- Does the ideological tension of reconstruction/deconstruction invalidate celebrities as credible sources for soc mark interventions? OR does this mirror the lives of young people in an authentic manner?

→ Critical need to qualitatively expand our understanding of representations and role models

→ Downstream – we need to understand what role these dominant narratives perform for any intervention to be effective

→ Upstream – whose interests are served?

Celebrity is not an impartial declaration of merit or talent; it is an economic mechanism designed to keep consumers from asking questions about media ownership, control, and taste-making.