

## Picture Perfect by Jill Zimmerman Rutledge

### Introduction Excerpt

...I wrote this book to help teen and preteen girls with the hard issue of body image. As I was planning it, I thought how helpful it would be for a girl to have some good coping skills--so she could feel better about her body instead of feeling unhappy about it. So she could accept her body type, just as she accepts the color of her eyes or her birthday. So she could feel like her body is only one part of the beautiful person she is...

I chose my title, "Picture Perfect," because it means two things. First, it addresses the fact that our culture tells girls they must be "picture perfect"--perfectly thin, perfectly groomed, have perfect hair, perfect skin, perfect teeth, perfect grades, perfect friends--to be considered successful. Since *no one* is actually perfect, this message often spells disaster for a girl's body image.

But "picture perfect" also means that we can picture ourselves, flaws and all, as, well, perfect. That's because no two people are exactly alike, so only you can be perfectly you. In that sense, you are valuable and attractive, and if you try to be someone else, you take away from being perfectly you. We can try to be healthier, kinder, smarter, more creative, and so on. But if we don't appreciate our specialness and uniqueness, we can't really achieve the goal of being the best--including the most attractive--we can be....

I invite you to talk to yourself in "Picture Perfect". I encourage you to give yourself positive messages that I call "Special Statements." In my favorite story, "The Wizard of Oz", Dorothy had a Special Statement that helped her deal with the bewilderment of Oz. Dorothy's Special Statement allowed her to feel grounded when her world was spinning out of control. It calmed her feelings, so she could envision--and wake up in--her safe, secure life in Kansas. Dorothy's Special Statement was, "There's no place like home." Of course, we all need to find special, positive words to say to ourselves when we feel upset and confused, and this is especially true when we feel bad about our bodies. Every girl needs a Special Statement to boost her body image!

All the girls in "Picture Perfect" have their own Special Statements, which they share with you...