

"I shut down bullying at my school with one Instagram post."

RACHEL, 17, WENT FROM BEING BULLIED TO SPARKING HER SCHOOL'S LATEST TREND – BRACELETS THAT SHARE A POSITIVE MESSAGE.



The response to my bracelets was amazing.



WHENEVER I FELT A SURGE OF INSECURITY, LOOKING AT MY BRACELET MADE ME FEEL BETTER.



My bracelets are a reminder to be positive.

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Growing up, I always felt self-conscious about the way I looked. I was always the tallest person at school – even taller than the boys. Because of my size, people called me “Chubs”, which unfortunately rhymes with my last name. The mean nicknames stuck with me, and made me feel really bad about myself.

The negativity really consumed me. I tried to distract myself by watching TV, but it just made me feel worse. All the celebrities were so beautiful, with perfect skin and slender bodies. None of them looked like me.

To make myself feel more positive, I started wearing a bracelet that said, “I am beautiful. Who are you?” It was a reminder that I truly am beautiful, because everything about me makes me who I am. Whenever I felt a surge of insecurity, looking at my bracelet made me feel better.

I looked up more body positive quotes on Pinterest and it helped lift my mood. One of my favorites was, “Life is tough, but so are you”. I decided to make my own bracelet, combining that quote with the quote on the bracelet I already wore. It read, “Life is tough... but so am I”.

When my bracelet came in the mail I shared a picture of it on Instagram.

I was nervous, because people generally use Instagram to make their life look perfect, and here I was announcing to everyone I felt insecure. I had no idea how people would respond.

When I checked Instagram a couple of hours later, I was shocked. The response was overwhelming. I got so many comments from people – even ones who didn’t even go to my school – saying they wanted a bracelet too.

I re-ordered more of the bracelets and sold them, donating the money to Girls on the Run, a nonprofit that empowers girls through running teams and self-esteem workshops. So far, I’ve raised over \$2,000. I could have kept the money for myself, but making an impact on others was more important to me.

It’s been amazing seeing something with a positive message become the latest trend in my town. So many girls who I thought had the perfect life and had no insecurities at all have started telling me things about themselves that they feel self-conscious about. My eyes have really been opened and it’s made me realise that I’m not alone.

Being part of something positive has made me more confident. Even being tall, something I used to hate, has become a strength – I joined the volleyball team and it’s a huge advantage!

What I like to tell people who don’t feel beautiful is something I heard *BeYOUtiful!* author Julie Marie Carrier say: “Remember your ABCs – Always Be Confident. And if you don’t feel confident, act like it and no-one will know the difference.”

I truly believe anything you set your mind to can happen. I’m living proof!