

New research reveals British women reject celebrities in search of real life role models WAGS, wannabees and women who kiss & tell are branded a waste of space

British women have had their fill of empty-headed celebrities who are famous for just being famous according to new research out today (Friday 12 June 2009). In a poll of 1,000 UK women aged 18-65 years old, nine out of ten said that there are too many women in the public eye who lack real substance.

The research set out to explore females' views on what it takes to be a woman of substance in 2009 Britain. It is being released to coincide with the launch of a campaign and national awards to find *real* women of substance living and working in the UK today (Friday 12 June 2009). A summary of the findings is below together with information about the awards:

WAGs, wannabees and women who kiss & tell are branded a waste of space: The research reveals that WAGs, wannabees and women who kiss & tell are a massive turn-off for ordinary UK women. Daughters of the rich and famous who have not personally earned their success, models and politicians are also seen by females as women with no substance. In particular, the nation's women reject the new breed of celebrity socialites. Over two-thirds name Paris Hilton (70%) as the female personality most lacking in substance, followed by Kerry Katona (63%) and Peaches Geldof (54%). Other female celebrities given the thumbs down are Jordan, glamour models Jodie Marsh and Danielle Lloyd, reality TV personalities Chantelle Houghton and Chanelle Hayes, WAGs Victoria Beckham, Alex Curran and Carly Zucker, as well as troubled pop singer Amy Winehouse.

Lack of female role models: Women who took part in the research believe these stars without substance are poor role models for young women and girls. Eighty-six per cent of mothers are especially concerned according to the research. Teenage girls and young women even admit this themselves as 95% of 16-24 year olds say they are concerned about the lack of female role models in their life. This was the highest percentage out of all age groups.

Time to recognise Britain's own women of substance: The research reveals a demand for ordinary women to be recognised for their extraordinary contributions, admirable qualities and achievements (83% of all UK women say it is about time that **real** women of substance are celebrated).

As a result, HarperCollins and its world famous bestselling novelist Barbara Taylor Bradford OBE are launching **A Woman of Substance Awards** to find females who epitomise what it is to be a real woman of substance today, who deserve special recognition and the chance to shine in the spotlight.

Conducted in association with the Daily Express, Debenhams and P&O Cruises, and in support of the charity Target Ovarian Cancer, Barbara is encouraging females across Britain to nominate themselves and/or other women in their personal and professional lives at www.awosawards.co.uk

The awards are inspired by Barbara Taylor Bradford, the creator of the original woman of substance, Emma Harte, in her worldwide bestselling novel, *A Woman of Substance*. They are being launched to coincide with the 30th anniversary since Barbara’s debut book was first published in 1979. It is now one of the top ten bestselling novels of all time with more than 31 million copies sold. It has been published in over 40 languages and in 90 countries.

Barbara Taylor Bradford says: “*A Woman of Substance* is a book that has changed the lives for a lot of women. It empowered them to believe in themselves. It gave them the confidence to overcome a lack of education or great adversity and triumph as a human being. It showed them that with great ambition, discipline and stamina they could really succeed. I’m delighted that now, 30 years later, we are surrounded by real examples of women of substance and I feel it’s about time that we recognised and celebrated their achievements!

“It’s essential that we don’t rest on our laurels. Even today, we need to champion women who do extraordinary things be it in their home and with their family, in the area they live in, in the work that they do given the research show 23 per cent of women in the UK have no female role model in their lives today. It’s quite shocking.”

So who do women most admire? The research reveals that mothers are the most important role models in the lives of UK women today. Fifty-one per cent of women in the UK pick their mother as the woman they admire the most – way ahead of females in the public eye (15%). Friends came out second for 31% of women followed by grandmothers (18%) & sisters (16%). Work colleagues were admired by 9% and bosses and mother-in-laws by just 6% respectively.

What does it take to be a woman of substance today? According to the research, the attributes most admired in women of substance are determination, honesty, selflessness and integrity.

Quality	% of woman agree important
If she is someone who fights for what is right	63%
If she has overcome personal barriers and hurdles to achieve success	56%
If she has risen to fame because of raw talent	53%
If she is someone who has worked hard to help others succeed	36%
If she is someone who remains true to her roots	33%

A Woman of Substance Awards’ entry information can be found on www.awosawards.co.uk Closing date for the Awards is 31 July 2009. Finalists and their guest will be invited to attend the Awards event – personally hosted by Barbara Taylor Bradford OBE and her publisher, HarperCollins - in London in early September. The overall winner will receive a prize package of a luxury cruise for two people and two children courtesy of P&O Cruises, a full makeover (hair, make-up and manicure) and styling session courtesy of Debenhams Westfield, a £250 Debenhams gift card, a copy of Barbara’s latest book, *Breaking The Rules* (due out 3 September 2009), a newly released, luxury bound limited edition of *A Woman of Substance*, plus a DVD package of Barbara Taylor Bradford films.

Ends

About Barbara Taylor Bradford

1. Barbara Taylor Bradford was born and raised in Yorkshire. She left school at 15 for the typing pool at the Yorkshire Evening Post. At 18, she became the paper's first woman's editor and, at 20, moved to London and became a columnist and editor on Fleet Street. She published her first novel, *A Woman of Substance*, at the age of 42.
2. Barbara has had 24 books published, all worldwide bestsellers, especially in the UK and America. She is one of HarperCollins bestselling novelists with books sales of over 81 million copies worldwide.
3. Barbara's latest book, *Breaking The Rules*, (her 25th) will be published in the UK on 3 September 2009 (*Breaking The Rules*, HarperCollins, RRP £14.99). *A Woman of Substance* 30th anniversary paperback will also be published with a new foreward by the author (HarperCollins, RRP £7.99).

A Woman of Substance Awards

- **How to enter:** The nomination form is available online via a specially created website www.awosawards.co.uk, and entry forms can be picked up in a number of libraries across the UK.
- You can nominate yourself or someone else. You can nominate more than once.
- To enter the *A Woman of Substance Awards* describe in your own words (max 500 words) why you or the person you are nominating should be recognised. Please send in a recent photograph (or a colour photocopy of the photograph) of the person being nominated.
- Nominations close on Friday 31 July when the entries will be reviewed and a shortlist created. One winner and four runners up will be chosen by a panel of judges that will include Barbara Taylor Bradford.
- A shortlist of candidates and their guest will be invited to attend the Awards event – personally hosted by Barbara Taylor Bradford OBE and her publisher, HarperCollins - in London in early September.
- Please see the website for Terms and Conditions.
- **Prizes:** The finalists and one friend/or family member will be invited to a special awards' reception in London where one lucky person will be crowned **A Woman of Substance 2009** and also scoop the top prize package including: a luxury cruise for two adults and two children courtesy of P&O Cruises, a full makeover (hair, make-up and manicure) and styling session courtesy of Debenhams Westfield, a £250 Debenhams gift card, a copy of Barbara's latest book, *Breaking The Rules* (due out 3 September 2009), a newly released, luxury bound limited edition of *A Woman of Substance*, plus a DVD package of Barbara Taylor Bradford films.
- The remaining four runner ups will each receive a prize package which will include: full make over: hair, make-up, manicure and styling session by Debenhams personal shopper stylist at Debenhams Westfield plus £250 Debenhams gift card, a certificate of commendation, along with a selection of Barbara Taylor Bradford newly published books and a DVD package of Barbara Taylor Bradford films.

About Target Ovarian Cancer

- **Target Ovarian Cancer** www.targetovarian.org.uk – 020 7923 5470 - is a new, dynamic charity fighting to improve life chances and life quality for women with ovarian cancer, by raising money for campaigning, vital research and education. Change is long overdue – the UK has the lowest survival rate in Europe at 30%, unchanged for 30 years. The ground-breaking Target Ovarian Pathfinder Study, which publishes its first results on 29 June, aims to find out why.
- “Too many women in the UK are dying from ovarian cancer – 12 a day – because of late diagnosis and a limited choice of effective treatments,” said **Target Ovarian Cancer Chief Executive, Annwen Jones**. “We can and must do much better for women with ovarian cancer and it's wonderful that Barbara Taylor Bradford and the A Woman of Substance Awards are partnering with Target Ovarian Cancer to raise desperately-needed awareness and funds to help save lives. Women have amazing strengths whether they are battling cancer, holding communities together or striving against the odds to raise families and run careers at the same time. We would encourage everyone in the UK to nominate the women they admire most for the Woman of Substance Awards.”