



# Betty Cornell's Teen-Age Popularity Guide

By Betty Cornell

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Available again for a whole new generation of readers, the original 1950s popularity guide that was the inspiration for teen author Maya Van Wagenen's memoir *Popular: Vintage Wisdom for a Modern Geek!*

Filled with fun tips and vintage wisdom, *Betty Cornell's Teen-Age Popularity Guide* offers advice and guidance for teens who want to be poised, self-confident, and "shiny bright." Betty covers topics ranging from "Figure Problems," "Good Grooming," and "What to Wear Where" to hints on dating, hosting a great party, and becoming "the most popular girl in your set!"

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## Editorial Review

### About the Author

**Betty Cornell Huston** was a teenage fashion model in the late 1940s and the early 1950s, working for the John Robert Powers, Harry Conover, and Ford Modeling Agencies. As a well-known junior model, Betty was invited to conduct good grooming classes that ultimately lead to a career as an author of advice books. In addition to the *Teen-Age Popularity Guide*, her other books include *Betty Cornell's Glamour Guide for Teens* (1951), *Betty Cornell's Teen-Age Knitting Guide* (1953), *Betty Cornell's All About Boys* (1958), and *So You're Going to be a Teen* (1963). She continued to model through the 1980s.

Betty earned her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Education from Chestnut Hill College in the 1980s. She married John J. Huston in 1952 and settled in the suburbs of Philadelphia where they raised three children. Betty has nine grandchildren, volunteers at her local school, and finds time to paint watercolors. Betty currently resides in Audubon, Pennsylvania.

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### 1

### Introduction

“Hi!”

I'm Betty Cornell. I'm the author of this book and I think it only fair to tell you how I got to be that way. First of all let me say that I don't consider myself any great shakes as far as being an author goes. I'm not a writer. I'm a model. But the truth of the matter is that because I am a model I decided to write this book.

I wrote this book to set down for you the things I learned about beauty and popularity from being a model—the know-how and the how and the why, etc. Also I have tried to answer the questions teen-agers have kept asking me, such as “What do I say?” “What do I do?” “How do I act in such and such a situation?”

The answers I've given here are based on my own personal experience. Being a model, I had to know what was the right thing to say and do any time, anywhere. A model is so much in the limelight that she just can't afford to make mistakes. Believe me, when you're on parade all day long, you learn fast. You smooth off your rough edges in a hurry.

In the process of smoothing off rough edges, you find yourself in no time at all what people call “Polished.” Suddenly you're the kind of person who does the right thing naturally and easily at all times. You have that wonderful and elusive thing called poise. The girl with poise is the girl who knows about good personal care and good conduct. She may not be the prettiest girl, but she's certainly one of the most popular. She gets the dates, the class offices, the bids to college proms.

Because I learned all these basics while I was a teen-ager, I hope that you as teen-agers will find my suggestions helpful. They are specifically designed for you, not for your mothers or your grandmothers, although I wouldn't be surprised if you find that older people are borrowing this book of yours from time to time.

The purpose of my book, then, is to help you teen-agers make the most of yourselves. If you follow through on what I have written here, I know you will be pleased with the results. I say so because these are the methods by which I made myself over from a chubby and awkward little high-school girl into a full-fledged

model. Just to prove that I'm not fooling, that I mean what I say, I'm going to review a little bit of my personal history for you. At the end I think you'll see that the only difference between Betty Cornell, the shy, awkward, tubby teen, and Betty Cornell, the model, is the difference between a girl who just slopped along and a girl who found out how to look and act her best.

Not so very long ago, when I was fifteen years old, I was doing all the things any ordinary teen-ager does. I was living with my family, going to school, and being the bane of my older brother Bob's existence. I thought I knew everything. Bob knew that I didn't, and was always trying to prove it.

I remember that one of my biggest problems was the fact that Bob used to rule my social life with an iron hand. He would come to parties where I was having a gay time, ring the doorbell, and announce: "Come to pick up my sister. Time for her to go home." Then I was mortified. Now I realize that he was doing the right thing.

In fact, I know now that an older brother is about the best social insurance any teen-ager can have. I found that Bob was the best person to tell me what the score was as far as boys were concerned. Lots of the tips on boys that I have included in some of the chapters of this book were tips I first learned from him.

It was then, when I was fifteen, coping with brother Bob and living in Teaneck, New Jersey, a small suburban community not far from New York City, that I decided to become a model. As a matter of fact, I didn't make the decision myself; a friend of my mother's did. I was casting about for a way to earn money for college and, being young and unknowing, I decided to try my luck.

And it was luck. I was accepted as a model, but not for glamorous poses. My early modeling consisted of posing for tubby teen pictures. I soon learned there was not much future in being a tubby teen. So at sixteen I took stock of my situation and decided to really go to work on myself.

I did all the things that you will read about later in this book. I went on a sensible diet, cut out between-meal nibbling (I used to eat enough between meals to satisfy an army), did daily exercises, cleared up my complexion, and styled my hair. And with the help of my family, including Bob, and the advice of my friends and fellow-models, I learned how best to cope with the social situations that came up in both my private and my professional life. At the end of my self-improvement campaign, I was no longer a tubby teen in every sense of the term, I was a real junior-size model with a lot of self-confidence.

In fact my campaign was such a success that when I graduated from high school I found that I did not have enough time between modeling jobs to keep up my college work. So I devoted myself exclusively to modeling. I have never regretted giving up college, for I went on so many trips to Arizona, to Florida, and to Canada as a model, that traveling became an education in itself.

As you know, I'm still modeling today. And I still keep right on performing all the simple rituals outlined for you here. Now I don't guarantee that these rituals will make you a model, or the most popular girl in your town. But I do guarantee that they will make you prettier and happier. I point out to you that these routines made me a model, just in order to give you confidence in my suggestions, to prove to you that they really, truly work.

I know teen-agers who have tried my suggestions and I know with what good results. Some time ago I gave a series of lectures in the Youth Center in my home town of Teaneck. It is from that series of lectures that this book has grown. Here, as in those lectures, all I have tried to do is make suggestions. The rest is up to you. Suggestions aren't good if they're not put into practice. I hope you'll find that putting them into practice is lots of fun. I did.

The reason I say it's fun is that every girl, I don't care who she may be, wants to be attractive and popular. To get to be that kind of girl, all you have to do is try some of my suggestions. They work. What I did, you can do too. I found that the best way to tackle the job is to recognize that success is up to you. If you put real elbow grease into acquiring beauty, poise and polish, you'll find it pays off with more dates, more fun, more good times. Gee, what more could anyone ask?

## 2

### **Figure Problems**

"I'm too fat."

"I'm too thin."

Nearly every teen has had one of these figure problems at one time or another in her life. As a matter of fact, some teens have probably had both within the space of a semester or so. The reason this is so is that as a teen-ager your body is still in a state of flux—it has not stopped growing long enough to find its natural balance.

Your body does not completely finish growing until you reach the age of twenty-one or so. Of course, by the time you reach your teens you have stopped growing as rapidly as a baby, but you are still growing nonetheless—if you have stopped growing up, you have started growing out, or vice versa.

But just because your body is restless and refuses to settle down is no reason to despair of having a good figure. It is a question of mind over matter. Start by intelligently figuring out your figure problem. Find out about your body. Are you large-boned or small-boned? Is your tendency toward longness and leanness or to shortness and plumpness? Stand before your mirror and contemplate yourself from head to toe. Fish out the measuring tape and take statistics.

Statistics are alarmingly accurate. Chances are when you take yours you will wish they weren't so. Those extra pounds that you guessed you might have gained are unequivocally recorded on the tape measure. What you feared has come to pass, what a popped button or a pulled seam has been plainly insinuating for some time, is true: you are overweight.

Now overweight is nothing to be alarmed about. It is easy enough to do something about it and do something about it sensibly. Don't lose your head and go on a starvation diet. First talk the matter over intelligently with your family and your doctor. It may be that your extra pounds have come about because of a glandular disturbance. It is more probable that they are a result of overeating. But never take the chance of upsetting your body routine by a silly diet. Always check first with your doctor before you make any plans to lose weight. When you get his O.K., then and only then diet, and diet under his supervision.

When you are dieting, stick to your doctor's advice as to what your proper weight should be. When you reach the figure he has set for you, stop there. Don't try to become underweight on the assumption that you will look more glamorous when you are thin, pale and wan. 'Tain't so. You won't look glamorous at all—just bedraggled and tired out.

Another important thing to remember about a diet is that it is just as important to count the calories you eat between meals as the ones you eat at meals. In fact, many of you would probably not need to diet if you cut down your between-meal nibbling.

Have you ever stopped to add up all those extra snacks you tuck away during the day? A bar of chocolate at recess, Coke and pretzels in the drugstore after school, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches before dinner, and

before bed all the leftovers from dinner. When you stop and think about it, all those tidbits add up to quite a sum.

What's more, that's not all the between-meal nibbling that goes on. There is still to be considered all the gorging that takes place at parties, particularly at club meetings and general get-togethers. I am being fair, I think, when I assume that many of you stuff away a good bit of the following: peanuts, crackers, potato chips, carbonated beverages, and finally a helping of some large, lush pastry.

I speak of in-between eating so forcefully because it's just that kind of eating, a nibble here and a nibble there all day long, that was my Waterloo. In fact, in high school I was renowned for being able to stow away more than any other girl in the crowd. Boys who took me out on a date suffered in their budgets for weeks afterwards. I wasn't just a one-hamburger girl—I was a two- or three-hamburger terror. Need I add that for a time my dates were few and far between?

So I say that if you are worried about your weight, cut down between-meal nibbling. Pass up the party fare and concentrate on eating your fill at mealtime. That's what meals are for.

There is one meal in particular that should not be overlooked—and that meal is breakfast. Now, there are some teens who think that skipping breakfast keeps the weight down. Such, I am sad to relate, is not the case. Non-breakfast-eaters too often find that hunger drives them to nibbling before lunch and nibbling on things that are loaded with calories: things like chocolate, cookies, and pastry.

No, if you are serious about having a good figure you must eat breakfast. I eat a good, substantial breakfast every day. I eat it because I found out that it is the most important meal of the day. It is the meal when your body, after an all-night fast, needs food and is better able to assimilate what it takes in.

If you are one of those Lazy Lils who just can't get up in time to eat breakfast, then you are starting the day off on the wrong foot. If you call downstairs: "Just five more minutes, Mother," then you had better plan your evenings more systematically so that you get to bed early enough to make you feel rested and raring to go come morning.

Eating a good breakfast may not come easily at first. But after a little practice you'll find you enjoy it. I know I do. And you'll feel much better for doing so. You'll have more pep and more energy, and if you stick to the menus I am about to suggest, you'll also have less poundage.

#### SAMPLE BREAKFAST MENUS

1

1 half grapefruit

1 soft-boiled egg

1 slice whole-wheat or rye toast (use small amount of butter)

1 glass of milk

Coffee or tea (if Mom allows it), but drink it black, no cream or sugar.

2

Orange juice

Ready-to-eat cereal with milk ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup) and one teaspoon sugar—no more than that (I saw you reach again for the sugar bowl. Put it back, you'll learn to do with less).

1 glass of milk

Coffee (black) or tea

3

1 half grapefruit

1 poached egg on rye or whole-wheat toast, small amount of butter

1 glass of milk

4

Sliced orange

Hot cereal,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of milk, one teaspoon of sugar

1 slice of toast (and watch that butter)

1 glass of milk

These suggested menus are not something dreamed up for this book. They are the result of many years of expert study by people who know what they are talking about, the dietitians. And these diets work. I know: I use them.

There are just a few things I want to note about these menus. One is the absence of any kind of fried food. That is because fried food of any sort is fattening. If you persist in sticking to your favorite sunny-sides-up, your day of reckoning will come. You will be forced to choose between letting out all your waistbands or buying a new school skirt with the money you were saving for a formal.

The other point I want to mention about these menus is the alternating of eggs and cereal. That is done to keep breakfast from becoming monotonous. If you vary your low-calorie dishes, you will tend to forget that you are even on a diet.

After breakfast comes lunch. I don't have to ask what you have been eating at that time of day because I remember what I used to pack away—a meal that would have done justice to a football player. It wasn't long, either, before I began to look like one of the team's tackles.

Many of you bring your lunches to school and buy milk at the cafeteria. That is a good way to avoid temptation—you don't even have to go near the long line of delicious dishes. With a little cooperation from your mother, you can plan to bring a non-fattening and nutritious luncheon. Here are a few ideas about what to pack:

1. Hard-boiled eggs.
2. Small container of cottage cheese.
3. One slice of whole-wheat or rye bread—small amount of butter.
4. Fresh fruit (you can eat lots of it).
5. American or Swiss cheese sandwich, lots of lettuce—no mayonnaise—use whole-wheat or rye bread.

6. Any kind of lean-meat sandwich.
7. Consommé.
8. MILK.

Any sensible combination of three or four of these items will make a healthful luncheon and one that is light and easy to carry. Probably the only difference between what I have listed and the lunch you are accustomed to packing is the absence here of cake and cookies. But just because they are absent, don't think that you can slip into line and get a few. Oh no, the desserts were left out on purpose. If the prospect of lunch without a sweet dessert is too gruesome for you to imagine, there's no hope for you. You have allowed your sweet tooth to overrule your wisdom tooth.

On the other hand, there are those of you who bring money to school instead of a lunch-box. You are in a more dangerous position than your lunch-toting friends who turn their backs on the rows of food and can concentrate on hard-boiled eggs. You must go down the line of jelly doughnuts, chocolate cakes, peanut butter sandwiches and such. But stand firm, scoot past these calories, and plant yourself in front of the salads.

Choose from any of the salads, but pay particular attention to the leafy green ones, the vegetable concoctions, and the fruit fantasies. These will be the best for you, because you can push the dressing to one side. Salad dressings, both French and mayonnaise, are taboo for dieters because they are rich and oily. Salads such as chicken, avocado, and tuna fish are not recommended because they contain food oils as well as dressing oils. One of the best choices you can make is hard-boiled egg garnished with water cress—it is chock full of protein that will help to burn up your excess fat.

After your salad has been selected you may add a slice of bread, rye or whole-wheat, and a glass of milk—white, not chocolate. Then for dessert, sublimate your yearnings for that sumptuous affair of gooey sauce and ice cream and choose from the fruits—either a stewed fruit or a fresh one. You can vary your selections from day to day, but stick within the suggestions I have outlined for you.

Time for dinner, and all of you, whether you be the lunch toters or the lunch buyers, are beset by the same problem. At breakfast and luncheon you are pretty much on your own; you can easily skip the calories because your choice is varied and what you eat does not conflict with anyone around you. At dinner you are in a different position. Dinner is a family meal. And it is a meal at which the family expects to eat well. Your father looks forward to pie, your mother makes pie.

You cannot expect the rest of the family to give up their pie because you are on a diet. You cannot quarrel with your mother because you refuse to come to the table, afraid that you will succumb to eating that pie if it is offered to you. What you must do is to come to dinner prepared to say nicely, "No, thank you." "No, thank you, no pie. No, thank you, no seconds." In the beginning, you serve yourself and you use no gravy or butter. You indulge yourself with large servings of the green vegetables and you look the other way when the bread is passed. In other words, you eat the meat, the vegetables, the salad. You also may eat the dessert, but only if it is fruit, Jell-O without whipped cream, or custard. All through the dinner you keep a careful check on your calories, but you do so without calling attention to the fact. Above all, you join in the family circle, and under no circumstances do you behave like a martyr.

Below I have listed some good non-fattening dinner menus. They will all look familiar because they are just like any normal family dinner with the extras removed.

#### DINNER ON A DIET



1 glass of tomato juice

large patty lean ground beef, broiled, no gravy

large serving of spinach

tomato, lettuce, and hard-cooked egg salad, with vinegar

stewed apricots

1 glass of milk

coffee or tea, if desired or allowed.

2

1 cup clear soup

large patty of ground beef

½ cup boiled cabbage

asparagus salad with sliced tomatoes

small sherbet

1 glass of milk

3

1 cup vegetable soup

veal cutlet, broiled, with the fat removed ½ cup boiled rice, with tablespoon gravy

tomato and cucumber salad, vinegar or lemon juice

1 glass of milk

4

1 glass of tomato juice

generous serving of lean roast beef

small baked potato, ½ teaspoon butter or tablespoon pan gravy

large serving of green leafy vegetable, any kind

3 stalks of celery stuffed with cottage cheese

baked custard

1 glass of milk

5

1 cup vegetable soup

generous serving of lean broiled fish, with lemon

½ cup stewed tomatoes

3 stalks of celery

an apple, pear or any other fresh fruit

1 glass of milk

6

1 glass of tomato juice

generous serving of broiled calf's liver

serving of cooked carrots tomato and lettuce salad with lemon juice fruit Jello

1 glass of milk

7

1 cup clear consommé

generous serving of lean roast lamb, beef or veal

small serving of mashed potato, with tablespoon pan gravy

1 cup string beans

tomato and lettuce salad, with vinegar dressing

small serving of fruit sherbet

1 glass of milk

If you stick to the three meals a day that have been outlined for you in this chapter, you'll lose weight. Do not be discouraged if nothing happens immediately. A diet that progresses slowly progresses more surely. Trick diets in which you lose weight quickly often turn out to be ones in which all the weight comes right back the minute you stop dieting. Starvation diets such as the all-liquid ones or others popular from time to time can be injurious to the health and should be avoided.

## **Users Review**

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