

Padding The Truth

by Sasha Sanders

I dated this girl once. Or, to be more precise, I had one date with this girl. She was quite spunky, and I can't remember exactly what we did on this date, but I do remember that at about 4 in the morning we ended up at her place. It was a very nice place. I know this because she showed me around before we went into her bedroom. We kissed a little. Then I moved my hand slowly down her blouse. Then I touched her breast. Then I sort of stopped.

I didn't see her again after that. And I feel bad. I should have been more honest with her. I should have explained why I stopped. If it happened now, I would. I'm older and wiser. But back then I didn't know how to tell her that her padded bra was a turn off.

I think what happened that night illustrates arguments both for and against wearing padded bras, in that order. First: girl wears one, it gives her the cleavage she maybe doesn't have, or at least more than she normally has, and she feels attractive and sexy. Then: (possibly) girl goes home with guy, they get to second base, and there lies the rub. Because guys, as a rule, don't like padded bras. I've asked around, and it's not just me.

Now I can understand the desire to look desirable. And if the intention is to go out, have a harmless little flirtation and go home alone, well then there's no problem. Nobody else is any the wiser, you've had fun and felt good about yourself doing it. But if the possibility exists, however remote, that you are going to get a bit lucky, I say leave the padding in the closet. And here are some reasons why.

Firstly, padded bras don't feel like breasts. Breasts feel good. They are sort of firm and bouncy and nice to squeeze. Padded bras feel like something else. Something synthetic, something not fleshy. And that isn't so good.

Secondly (and apologies for making it all sound so marketable), wearing a padded bra is false advertising. For me, the real issue here is that it's misguided: the assumption being made is that guys prefer bigger boobs – and that's not always the case (believe it, because it's true). Of course, the other, more obvious issue here also stands: you're promoting something you haven't got.

Which brings me to the converse: *not* promoting what you *have* got. This is possibly the most persuasive reason not to wear padding. And it's also the most complicated. But let me explain.

When I was at the girl's home, I was really attracted to her. We'd spent a few hours talking, touching, laughing; there had been a build up of mutual sexual tension; and kissing her felt good. But when I realised her bra was padded, it said something to me. This girl, who moments before was sexy, exciting and desirable, was not only trying to be something she wasn't, or to have something she didn't; she was – worst of all – trying to hide something she shouldn't. And that wasn't attractive at all.

You see, there are many things that are sexy. A hairstyle, a body piercing, a giggle, the way clothing is worn, and yes, cleavage. But the sexiest things are more subtle. The sexiest things are qualities or characteristics. Like confidence or shyness or honesty. And maybe I was presumptuous but, in my mind, the girl's padded bra transformed her from being self-assured and flirtatious (both

very sexy) to being uncomfortable and insecure (both very unsexy). It was like she thought her breasts weren't good enough, and, by extension, there were other things about herself she thought weren't good enough. It was like she was uncomfortable in her own skin, physically and emotionally. After the evening we'd had, that was more disappointing than anything else.

Maybe I don't know what it's like for women. And maybe it's just me who feels this way. But rather forget the perfect bodies that, as The Body Shop says, only 8 women have and 3 billion don't. Rather say "look, these are my boobs, they're tiny (or enormous), but I'm happy with them. One hangs a bit lower than the other, and I have one or two hairs around my nipples, but I don't mind that. You know what? I've also got a big arse, but I like my big arse. I've got some cellulite, like 99% of women do. And by the way, there's a scar that runs down my leg. If that's a problem, you can leave." Rather go with what you've got. It's more attractive.