

'Like a girl' means downright amazing things

By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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This Women's Month, I interviewed Jeanne du Plessis, Procter & Gamble South Africa spokesperson, to find out how the Always #LikeAGirl campaign is influencing South African girls, in accordance with its latest survey, conducted locally.

The campaign seeks to change the negative connotation of the phrase 'like a girl', which is often used to reinforce a stereotype of female inadequacy, to one that encourages confidence.

Always, together with 82% of South African girls, want the phrase 'like a girl' to mean something positive and encourage girls to be brave and stand up for themselves. "Confidence plays an integral part in the development of young people, especially teen girls. The lack of confidence can significantly hamper their growth and lead to them not being able realise their potential. I am proud of the Always commitment to inspire girls to grow up to be confident women," says Du Plessis.

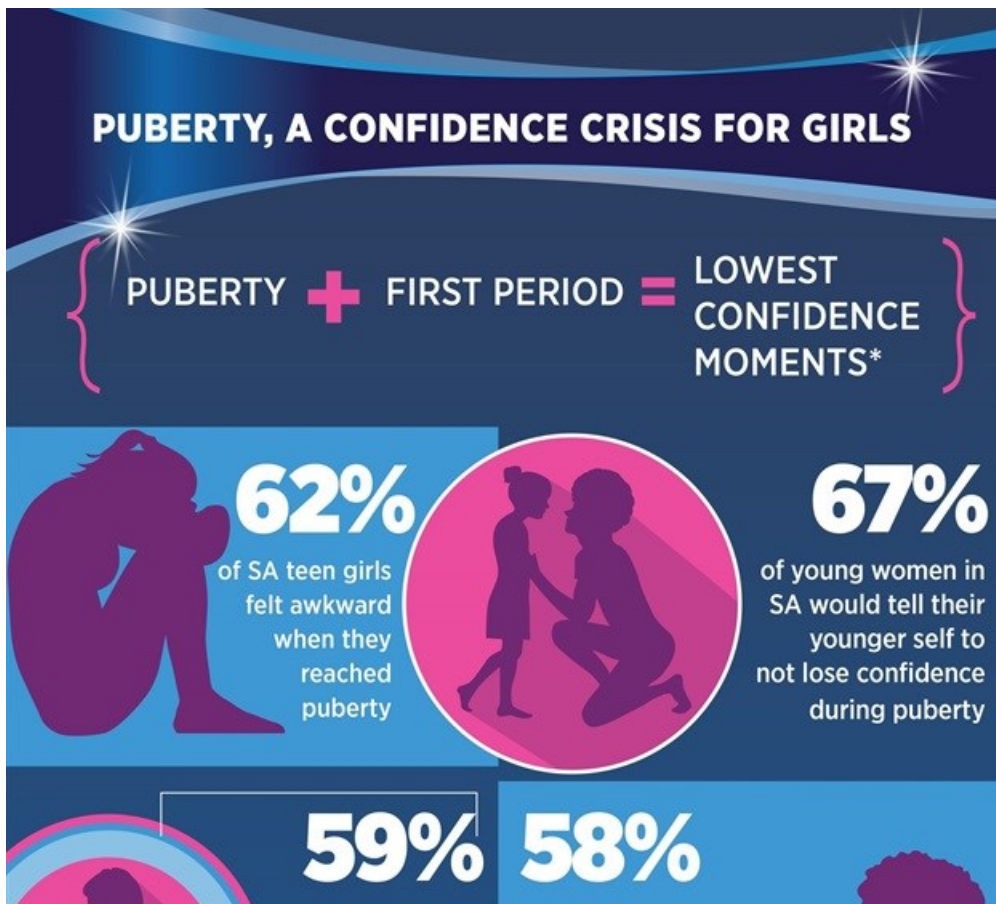
Almost half of South African teen girls and young women surveyed say that getting their period decreased their confidence.

"Together, we can stop the drop in confidence and make puberty a moment that propels girls into womanhood with confidence, following in the footsteps of extraordinary South African women.

Together, we can rewrite the rules and make 'like a girl' mean amazing things," she adds.



Jeanne du Plessis





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POWER OF WORDS

“like a girl”

is used as an insult by both boys and girls.
always wants to put a stop to this and change
the negative perception of “like a girl” to mean
being strong, talented and downright amazing



68%

of SA teen girls feel
that the words people
use to describe them
can increase their
confidence

82%

of SA teen girls want
“Like A Girl” to
mean something
positive



TAKE A STAND

Together we can make ‘Like A Girl’ mean amazing things.
Join us and share what you proudly do #LikeAGirl. Share a photo, video
or send us a message to show that doing things “Like A Girl” means
being strong, talented and doing amazing things *always*

always



SOURCE: Statistics are based on a 2017 Always online survey of 956 South Africa females ages 16-24.
**The questions highlight attitudes in a South African girl's life.

Key findings

- 62% of South African teen girls felt awkward when they reached puberty
- Almost two thirds of young South African women would tell their younger self not to lose confidence during puberty
- 59% of South African teen girls wish they had been better prepared for puberty
- For more than half of South African teen girls, their first period marked a low moment in their confidence
- 82% of South African teen girls want "Like a girl" to mean something positive
- Only about half of South African girls feel that they had good mentors as a teenager
- 72% of South African teen girls would describe themselves as self-conscious and two thirds of young women still feel this way

■ Which of these findings stood out to you and why?

That 82% of young South African girls want the phrase 'like a girl' to mean something positive. It just reinforces exactly what the campaign is about.

The other was that 68% SA teen girls feel that the words people use to describe them can increase their confidence.

■ What did and does #LikeAGirl now mean to you (before and after the campaign)?

Before the campaign, I must admit that it was a phrase that had a negative association for me. Many of us casually use 'like a girl' to label someone as weak or inferior. After this campaign, I'm standing with 82% of South African girls who want the phrase to mean something positive. 'Like a girl' can and should represent the strength, talent, character and downright amazingness of every South African girl. I think that anyone who is exposed to this campaign will agree!

■ How has this campaign been localised and what effect has it had in the South African context?

Always has been championing girls' and women's confidence for over 30 years. We want all South African girls to stand up for their dreams and grow up to be strong, confident women, like those who came before them.

We conducted this survey to understand what affects South African girls' confidence, especially during the formative years of puberty and their first period. For 58% of teens, their first period marked a low moment in their confidence and 60% wish they had more information about puberty. We know that the words we use can further harm girls' confidence, but 68% of teens told us that the words we use to describe them can also build their confidence.

This is why, through this campaign, we want to redefine 'like a girl' to mean something positive for every South African girl.

Together, all of us can take a stand and show young girls that doing things 'like a girl' should never be used as an insult – that it means being strong, talented and downright amazing. Puberty education is another powerful tool that helps boost confidence and Always gives puberty education to 300,000 girls in South Africa every year, together with Always donations for the most vulnerable girls through our 'Always Keeping Girls in School' programme.

■ ***Do you think, in 2017, it's important having a month dedicated to women in South Africa?***

I don't think that it should be huddled into one month, this should be a year-long perception. I think Women's Month is just a reminder to celebrate women all year long.

■ ***What is your message this Women's Month?***

Stand up for your dreams 'like a girl'.

■ ***What advice would you give to girls with low self-esteem?***

Don't let the uncertainties of puberty get you down. Draw inspiration from the remarkable South African women who stood up for what they believed in, and encourage each other to grow up to be proud and confident women.

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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