

LISA BEVILL:

a Christie Brinkley wannabe?

NOT! (anymore)

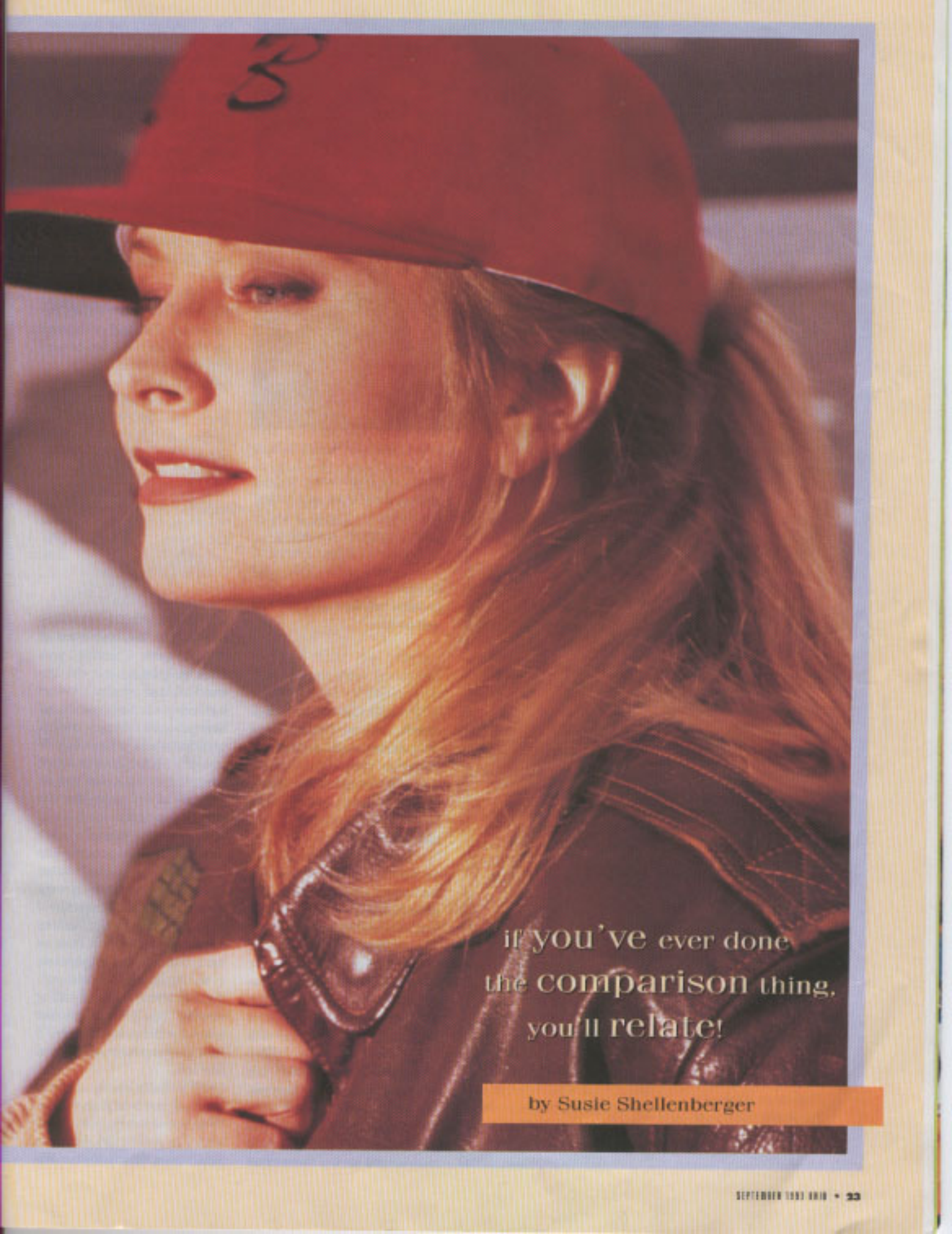
Recognize these lyrics? "Double-double your refreshment. Double-double your enjoyment. No single gum double-freshens your mouth like double-fresh Doublemint gum."

Hard to believe that the girl singing these words was double-double unhappy during her teen years. Behind the sugary-sweet voice that has since made the commercial a familiar hum-along lived a girl filled with self-doubt, depression and even thoughts of suicide.

Lisa Bevill struggled with something *you* may be facing, too: trying to live up to the "perfect body." ←



PETER MAGE



if you've ever done
the comparison thing,
you'll relate!

by Susie Shellenberger

the comparison killer

"I'd pick up *Seventeen* magazine," Lisa remembers, "and just stare at supermodel Christie Brinkley. I'd practically gag because I wanted so badly to look like her."

Thumbing through the pages month after month, Lisa became acutely aware of every blemish and imperfection she carried. With tears streaming down her face, she couldn't help but wonder why *she* couldn't look like Christie.

"I'd glare at her body in envy. But no matter how hard I exercised or dieted, I just couldn't do it," Lisa says. "So I felt like a failure. I hated my thighs, my stomach, everything about me. Christie was beautiful and popular, and I wanted what she had. More than anything else in life, I wanted to be liked and accepted."

Lisa stored her anger and warped feelings deep inside, but the frustration grew. As



▲ Lisa and her husband Jeff have been married for six years.

she stood in front of her bedroom mirror, her heart often screamed, "You're ugly! How can you be so fat?"

On the *outside* Lisa was every parent's dream: excited about church, doing well in school, playing the piano for her youth choir. But on the

inside, she was slowly falling apart. No one knew that behind the perky smile lived a frightened, depressed teenage girl.

"Nobody knew I needed help," she admits. "Everyone thought, *She's got it all together*, because I made sure I painted that picture."

bad times get worse

Though Lisa came from a terrific family, it was filled with heart-ripping troubles: Both her parents were seriously ill. Imagine her heartbreak at age 12 when she learned that her mom had cancer.

"It was devastating," Lisa recalls. "We lived on an emotional roller coaster. We didn't know whether she'd live six months, two years . . . or two weeks."

"I was scared!" Lisa says. "No one wants to be orphaned. Though I *knew* my parents loved me, I couldn't help but worry about the day when I'd be all alone. I just wanted to feel secure . . . like we'd all be together forever, but I was scared to death."

As she cried her prayers to God, she often wondered if this would be the last prayer

she would pray for her mom or dad.

Her dad lived with the agonizing pain of rheumatoid arthritis. He died when she was just 19 years old.

"It was a sudden thing," she says. "The arthritis had crippled his hands and feet to the point where they were bent and twisted. One afternoon he called to Mom—who was in the next room—and said, 'I think I'm going to faint.'"

"When I heard him calling, I immediately rushed to his room. He had collapsed on the floor, so I bent over and cradled him in my arms. Seconds later, he was dead."

Lisa's mom died just a few years later—the day after she returned from her honeymoon. "It was so hard," she recalls. "I didn't know how to deal with all the emotions I'd collected over the years."

rainbows through the storm

"The comparison thing mixed with the unknown of my parents' health was slowly killing me on the inside," Lisa admits. "It was hindering me from seeing all the *positive* things about myself: a girl with a ton of potential. When I began to see myself through *God's* eyes instead of my own, the depression started to lift."

Lisa began learning that God loved her exactly the way she was. A counselor helped her wade through the baggage, all the feelings she'd kept inside . . . stuff like not measuring up, the fear of being abandoned, depression, even thoughts of suicide.

"I got to a point of telling myself, 'You'll never look like Christie Brinkley. You're 5 foot 6—forget about being 6 feet tall.'"

"I actually looked at every part of my body and said, 'You know what? I love you, and I'm gonna try to make you better than you are. But

Lisa on Sex and Dating

• I know, I know. Hormones are screaming loudly. But you know what? God isn't embarrassed for you to come to Him with your desires. I mean, He really *knows* and *understands* the temptations you face.

• He won't think less of you to hear you say, "Lord, I really want to fool around but I know it's wrong. Help!" He created those feelings—He just wants you to allow Him to help you control them.

• If someone is pressuring you sexually, that's not love. That's why group dating is such a terrific idea; it limits a lot of the sexual pressure.

• The song "Chaperone" on my first album deals with sexual temptation. I want kids to remember that they have a heavenly chaperone watching them. Check out these lyrics:

*You and me, the temperature's rising
We're all alone, in the heat of the night
S.O.S. temptation is trying me
Somebody help me 'cause I'm losin' the fight
Oh, I need You near me, Lord
You're always by my side
I'll never be alone
You're with me day and night
You are my chaperone*

Lisa on Spiritual Growth

• I really believe in being involved in the local church. God never meant for us to simply walk in, be fed and leave. Though we need to receive spiritual food, we also have a responsibility to turn around and give to others within the body of Christ.

• It's also essential to read the Word and pray often to maintain a consistent and close relationship with Christ. Christian books have also been helpful for me. Frank Peretti's *This Present Darkness* made a big impact. My favorite devotional book is *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers.

I'm not going to knock myself out trying to look like this month's cover girl."

As Lisa allowed God to heal her damaged self-concept, other benefits occurred as well. Her spiritual life began to blossom, her faith deepened and she became more confident in the talents God had blessed her with.

the big payoff

Today Lisa's a happily married wife and mother. Her son, Cody, is 5 years old, and she's expecting another child in November. She still has tough days, but now there's a difference. She *likes* herself. She's content. She's fulfilling God's dreams for her life.

Lisa has one album under her wings, *My Freedom*, and her second will be released in December. Her involvement in contemporary Christian music sort of happened through the "back door."

Church music played a big role in her life during high school, and after graduation she began auditioning for "jingles" in Nashville.

If you often catch yourself humming along with familiar TV commercials, then chances are you have even sung *with* her!

Recognize this? "I love what you do for me, Toyota!" And you can smack along with this one: "You get extra flavor, extra fun with Extra

sugar-free gum!"

Lisa's also done a Domino's pizza jingle, a diet Orange Crush tune and several more you'd recognize. Producer Brown Bannister (who's also worked with Amy Grant and several other Christian artists) got wind of this energetic talent and signed her as his premier artist on a brand-new label: Vireo Records (a division of Sparrow).

lessons from the past

Now that her future looks bright, how does it feel to flash back to those painfully shy school days? "I've learned that even though time can't erase the hurtful memories, I don't carry around a bunch of bitterness. Harboring all that sadness would only cripple me," says Lisa.

"Occasionally I bump into a few of my high school classmates who still live in the Nashville area," she continues. "The football players and the guys in the big cliques who wouldn't give me the time of day *then* are suddenly paying all kinds of attention to me *now*. I just want to scream, 'You snobs. You're so shallow!' Of course, I don't," Lisa says, laughing.

"But I sometimes feel like saying, 'Okay, so I learned how to do my hair; I learned how to wear makeup—big deal. Dare to look past the surface.'"



▲ Catch Lisa Bovill in one of many concerts around the nation or at DC/LA '94 next summer.

◀ Lisa's seventh-grade pix. Her fave subject? Art.

Lisa's also learned that performance isn't the key to acceptance. "I always felt if I performed just right, everyone would like me. I *now* know that the only person I need to be performing (or living) for is the Lord. Whew! That sure takes a lot of

pressure off," she says. "It feels so good to finally realize that God accepts me *just as I am!*" •

Drop Lisa a note at:
P.O. Box 210993,
Nashville, TN 37221

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