

## **Throwing Stones at a Plastic House**

Clara Dao was a popular influencer on social media who amassed nearly eight million followers. She was globally recognized for promoting positive body content to young girls of all body sizes. Her content was geared towards women with flat chests- like herself- and she built her platform on “one single message of loving your natural body, your flat chest, especially. In March 2025, however, Dao underwent a \$3,398.56 breast augmentation surgery using the money from views of her channel. She went from a bra size of 32AA to a bra size of 32C, stating she “got the surgery because [she] was bored.” She also claimed that she was tired of producing content about flat chests.

Within hours of uploading the first video with her new body modification, Dao sparked instant controversy. Following her appearance modifying surgery, she lost around 500,000 followers across all platforms. Fans quickly noticed that Dao also deleted several popular posts that spoke out against the objectification of women's bodies. Former fans called Dao a “hypocrite” for preaching a positive message online and then going against her own advice. One commenter said, “first she preached body positivity and self-acceptance, then did the opposite.” Online followers who support Dao’s choice to have a breast augmentation emphasize that Dao has the autonomy to make the choices regarding her body and appearance without the input of her online following.

When Dao was prompted to share her perspective regarding surgery, she stated “you do not owe anyone the past version of yourself. You only owe yourself the freedom to become who you are meant to be.” Dao’s close friends and family members have also expressed their support for the breast argumentation. Dao shared that her “family has always encouraged [her] to get the surgery since [Dao] was 17, since before [she] started making the content.” Dao recognized that their support was rooted in understanding as they were aware Dao wanted change in her life.

The online commentary has sparked controversy over how influencers portray themselves online in relation to actions in their personal lives. Some people believe that influencers have the responsibility to uphold the image they share online whereas others believe that influencers have the autonomy to make personal choices that conflict with their online messaging.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Do influencers on social media have the responsibility to abide by the messages they are spreading through their content? Why or why not?
2. Is it justified for influencers to delete select content if their opinions have evolved and contradict the messages shared in the deleted posts? Does it matter if the influencer grew their fame through the now deleted posts?
3. Does the appearance of a person dictate what they can or cannot advocate for?
4. Do influencers have the moral obligation to justify their controversial actions online? Why or why not?

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### Works Cited

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