

Make

Count

by Victoria **Rayner**

It's only natural to want to observe and analyze other people. Impressions. We all make them. We all have them.

However, let's not forget that while we are studying others, we too, are being evaluated. Everyone is taken at face value, and a first impression is seldom forgotten. It is indelible. According to Betty **Harragan**, author of *Games **Mother Never Taught** You*, "If your clothes **don't** convey the **message** that you are competent, able, ambitious, self confident, reliable, and authoritative, nothing that you say or do will overcome **the** negative signals emanating from your apparel."

Wherever we go, people immediately react to our appearance, and **an** attractive appearance can tip the balance in your favor not only in the working world but during the balance of the day. **Since** attractive people are perceived as smarter, nicer, friendlier, and more cooperative, issues such as income, security, and acceptance are **all** strongly influenced by the way we look.

It is time that we start to examine our professional image through the eyes of potential clients. Our physical presentation reflects our confidence in our skills and **abilities**. Clothes are the self made visible.

A positive appearance is very valuable in any walk of life, but in esthetics, it is an absolute necessity to clothe and present ourselves well in order to be taken seriously. We are selling images of beauty and the way we look cues **our** clients *on* how we link ourselves **to our** profession. Therefore, making a conscious effort to bring out the best in our appearance demonstrates our commitment to our career.

A beauty student can get by **with** a thrown-together look hidden beneath a lab coat, but a **pro-**

... taste and style



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And, as you get more and more successful, clothes become increasingly important. A well-planned look gives you authority and power, and reflects your judgment. In a sense, clothes are a type of social shorthand which allows clients to read who you are immediately. Your image should say: I'm responsible, capable, aware of today's fashions, and up-to-date on beauty trends.

It should not say: I'm overworked. I don't care how I look today. I can't afford to wear the latest fashions.

YOU MUST BELIEVE THAT YOU enjoy what you do and are knowledgeable about your field. That you have integrity. Your appearance is your business card, so let your image tell others that you believe in what you sell.

The look and feel of success

Regardless of your personal preferences in clothing styles and decor, you will always stimulate more business by creating an air of opulence. Such an image spells success. In America, there are certain symbols associated with personal accomplishment. Which ones are worth owning depends upon your personal concept of success.

There are two distinct types of status symbols. The first types symbolize success in our own minds. They are private pleasures of personal value, gratifying our own individual taste and are usually purchased on a whim as a reward for our own efforts. People like to surround themselves with this type of status symbol because it makes them feel successful and energizes their earning potential. The item could be a piece of inexpensive costume jewelry that is a replica of a costly designer piece.

The second type consists of objects that announce our success. This could be anything from designer clothing or leather attache cases to precious or semi-precious jewelry. To look prosperous and feel successful, we should reward ourselves occasionally with selected, well-deserved essential and non-essential status symbols.

Playing the beauty game

When you consider our personal histories with overly critical siblings and schoolmates, it is easy to understand how we can feel insecure about certain aspects of our appearance. We are fortunate that as beauty professionals we can continue



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tribute to the lives of others. Through our knowledge of esthetics, we have the **ability** to enhance **our** clients' self-confidence and help them relate more compassionately to their bodies. First, though, we have to accept our own unique beauty by learning to like our looks.

Each of us has an inner view of our outer self **and** this view is often distorted. It goes beyond our physical characteristics into a gray area shaped by our emotions. We must take an objective look at ourselves to stop being overly critical of what we can't change. To nourish our body image, we must focus on accentuating our assets. We must resist the urging of commercial messages that dictate how much we should weigh or **how** young we should look. Self-acceptance is the prerequisite to a more powerful, personal, and professional image. An **esthetician** can't inspire others to view her as attractive without her own cooperation. While it

takes effort to **organize** a **well-**contrived image every day, it beats running around at the last minute and dressing in a panic. It is impossible to appear at ease and self-assured when you **are** haphazardly strung together.

Do these comments sound familiar? "No one will **notice** the tiny stain or rip"; or "My lab coat will **cover** it"; or "I'm too tired to **wash** and blow dry my **hair**. It will **just have** to do." How we kid ourselves.

Clients have a keen eye for this **type** of neglect. They recognize the difference and would prefer a **well-**dressed, efficient, and clean skin **care** specialist.

Define your style

Create an image that will match your **professional** persona. Too few **estheticians** have a good one. The way we dress in the workplace reveals our attitude about ourselves and our careers.

There is no substitute for a good, preplanned business veneer. The first step in this process is what I refer to as "paired costuming." This concept involves determining "appropriate" attire for the workplace, and dressing accordingly. It demands a consistency of style, coordinating the work costume to **your** professional environment. If you believe, for instance, that skin care is a scientific endeavor, try to **exemplify** that concept in your salon decor. Make it high-tech or state-of-the-art, Reinforce the concept via trendy clothing designs in bold colors with graphic detailing and geometric shapes. If, on the other hand, you favor more tranquil surroundings, choose casual clothing styles, tone on tone color shades **and** patterns, and maintain the cool, soft **textures** and cozy furniture designs that depict ease and comfort. If your preference is more formal, select classic, tailored attire con-

continues



structured from luxurious fabric. Support your theme through sophisticated decorating schemes to set a **dignified** tone.

Whatever your taste, select **clothing** styles and **furnishings** consistently, since unharmonious ensembles indicate confusion and professional befuddlement.

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Fashion rules

The secret of dressing well is knowing the rules of fashion and how and when to break them. Any item of clothing that is too short, too **tight** fitting, or too revealing is **inappropriate** in a work environment. Loud, flashy jewelry, particularly gaudy **earings**, will destroy a 'business look.' Decorative accessories should be kept to a minimum.

An **esthetician's** career involves activity: reaching, bending, standing, walking, *all motions* simplified by the right apparel. **Purchase** the best quality your budget allows, and keep your clothing in good condition. Periodically review your wardrobe and rid your closet of tattered or **outdated** clothes. Maintain your wardrobe spotlessly laundered, and wrinkle-free.

Color works!

Each of us **has** our own unique coloration, a combination of skin, eye, and **hair** color establishing color schemes that work best for us. Wear-

ing the appropriate colors will enhance your appearance, create drama, and inspire complements. **Unflattering** shades have a tendency to drab your complexion of vitality and create the impression of **fatigue**. Color reaches the human **subconscious** and has the power to make a statement of its own.

As a method of subtle persuasion, color should be studied in terms of its psychology and **symbolism**.

Unfold your image!

No look remains perfect unless it is constantly revised.

Keep in mind **the** following questions:

- Does your **current** appearance make **an** impact?
- Does your image impress, influence and stimulate?
- What could you do differently to make you appear more **qualified**, or more successful?
- How long has it been since you changed your appearance? Isn't it about time? ■



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