

Power of Personal Appearance

BY JUDITH RASBAND

Image management is the ongoing process of evaluating and controlling the impact of your appearance and the resulting response on you and others. The concept of image management applies to anyone who has ever needed to improve self image, self esteem, self confidence, capability and credibility. It applies to anyone who has ever wanted to get an idea across to someone else, to influence opinion or action—be it in the home, school, church, community or business setting. It is creating an authentic, appropriate, attractive, and affordable image. Intelligence, knowledge, ability, initiative, and effort are vital to success of any kind, but regardless of who you are, how old, and what your role or goal, ongoing image management can give you the personal/professional presence you need.

As an individual living and working in a highly complex and competitive society, you must recognize and understand the impact of your appearance as it communicates first to you and then to others. What you wear and the way you look affects:

1. the way you think,
2. the way you feel,
3. the way you act or behave, and then
4. the way others react or respond to you.

While it is important to like what you wear and the way you look, it is more important to understand why or why not and specifically how this affects

you, others, and your life and the achievement of your goals.

1. YOUR CLOTHING AND GROOMING AFFECT THE WAY YOU THINK.

You can't afford to think negatively about yourself due to some aspect of your appearance. When you appear authentic, attractive, and appropriate, you think more positively about yourself, your situation, and others.

2. YOUR CLOTHING AND GROOMING AFFECT THE WAY YOU FEEL.

You can't afford to feel depressed, unproductive, uncomfortable, antagonistic, argumentative, self-conscious, inferior, or full of self-doubt. A positive personal appearance is a fast, effective way to boost self-confidence and overcome anxiety regarding ability or acceptance. When you appear attractively dressed and groomed, personally authentic, and appropriate for the occasion, you feel more comfortable, confident, capable, cooperative and productive.

3. YOUR CLOTHING AND GROOMING AFFECT THE WAY YOU ACT OR BEHAVE.

You can't afford to act awkward, insecure, submissive, out-of-place, or out-of-order. Nor can you afford to act defensive, defiant, arrogant, aggressive, affected, superior, or conceited. A positive personal appearance is one of the most

effective ways to improve behavior and enhance performance level or productivity. When you appear attractively dressed and groomed, personally authentic, and appropriate for the occasion, you act more secure, at ease, mannerly, competent, and naturally able to do your best.

4. YOUR CLOTHING AND GROOMING AFFECT THE WAY OTHERS REACT AND RESPOND TO YOU.

Your appearance is the one personal characteristic that is immediately obvious and accessible to others. You can't hide it. Your appearance makes a strong statement about your personality, values, attitudes, interests, knowledge, abilities, roles, and goals. You can't afford to be seen as disrespectful, antagonistic, pretentious, scatter-brained, irresponsible, ineffective, or unproductive. You can't afford to create a negative impression or to build barriers between you and others because of unattractive, inappropriate, distracting, or offensive appearance. When you appear attractively dressed and groomed, personally authentic, and appropriate for the occasion, you create a positive impression and others are more able to perceive your positive traits and regard you more favorably.

Your appearance is one situation factor you can generally control. While there is no one-and-only right way to look "authentic," "appropriate," "attractive," and "affordable" are key words to dress by. The harmonious selection and coordination of clothing, with attention to proper

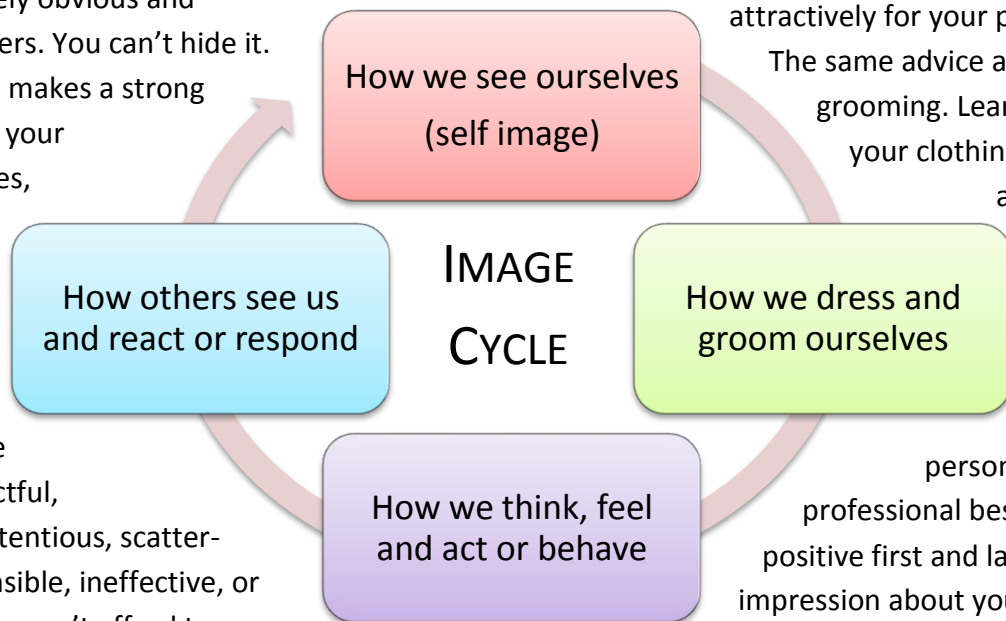
fit and care is essential. You must create an authentic, appropriate, attractive, and affordable appearance, then forget about yourself and get on with your life if you hope to accomplish your goals and objectives.

Think in terms of dressing authentically for you as an individual—for your personality, values, attitudes, and interests. Think in terms of dressing appropriately for the group, the occasion, and the purpose at hand. Think in terms of dressing

attractively for your physical body. The same advice applies to your grooming. Learn to manage your clothing and grooming aids as a

resource, a tool to help you think, feel, and act your

personal and/or professional best; to create a positive first and lasting impression about yourself and your abilities.



I challenge you to become more aware of how your clothing and grooming affect the way you think, the way you feel, and the way you act, and the way others react to you. With thought and practice you can create an affordable, attractive appearance, authentic, appropriate, and acceptable for both you and the occasion or expectations of others, an appearance that will help you achieve your goals and objectives. Make the power of personal appearance work for you!

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