

How To Create A New Image

By Curt Hagedorn

Most beauty salons now offer a menu of spa and/or beauty services designed to complete the look that starts with a good haircut. Check out the offerings your favorite hairdresser can provide, from manicures to facials to makeup and skin care advice and products. These include items like aromatherapy, massage, and other treatments designed to reduce the stress that can cause premature aging. You'll find that your salon professional is a vastly underused resource, particularly for men, when it comes to creating a whole new you. The right time to start may be for a special occasion or as part of a top to bottom personal renovation.

In today's dog eat dog world, getting ahead is often a great deal more about inspiration than perspiration, and the time you spend considering how you appear to the world – your colleagues, clients and even your friends – is never wasted. Particularly in a culture that is increasingly youth obsessed, you may find that your personal style needs a little freshening to capture all the brass rings, both personal and professional, that come your way.

First and foremost, it's important to be honest with yourself. Don't be brutal, but honest. If you've gained a few pounds either lose them or learn how to hide them effectively and stylishly. This does not mean just wearing larger and larger clothes. Wearing a tent-like dress or huge t-shirt just paints a visual portrait of hugeness (and it doesn't matter if it's black.) Try the tricks of professional stylists and wear clothes that fit, no matter what your size, that accentuate your best features and that help minimize others. Dress monochromatically on the top and bottom, wear a belt or sash that helps define your waist whether you have one or not, and over the top contrasting jacket, tunic or sweater can help what's underneath look a lot slimmer. Wear jewelry, a scarf or brightly colored tie that draws the eye up to your face. When you're wearing a confident smile it's always your best feature.

And speaking of your face (and hair and hands, and feet,) remember that grooming, basic skin care and makeup can help accentuate what's most youthful and attractive about you. Play the "celebrity twin" game. Find a celebrity whose body type and coloring are most like yours (be honest) and look at what they wear, how their hair is done, and their make-up. Whether it's in real life or on the screen. Though you may not be able to afford the designer clothes they wear, you can approximate their look. Particularly things like hair and makeup and copy the tricks that their professional (and highly paid) stylists use to help them always look well put together. Don't cling to the past. Wearing the same hair and kinds of clothes you did when you feel you looked your

best only results in the embarrassment of fifty year olds trying to look like 20 year olds. This is something that can only be accomplished with diet, exercise and eventually, plastic surgery.

There is one way that you can mimic the celebrities and that is, wherever you can, take advantage of professional advice. There's nothing a personal shopper likes to hear more than you are looking for a whole new wardrobe (even if it's going to be a process of "a few pieces now, a few pieces later"). Your local beauty salon and spa and that hairdresser you trust are absolutely itching to wash out that gray, update your Farrah wing cut to something more contemporary and help you find a skin care and makeup regiment that you can live with right down to treating yourself to a regular manicure. This applies more and more to men as well. If you're beginning to feel the 20 and 30-somethings breathing down your neck at the office, ask your barber about taking out some of the gray, or subtle changes in color that can brighten your face, or a haircut that makes you look more up to date. Particularly if you're losing your hair, a good short haircut can make it seem like a style-choice, rather than a tragedy. Look how many celebrities are doing it from Bruce Willis to Matt Lauer. And things like facials and manicures, as well as a good exfoliant, astringent and moisturizer and knowing how to use them can go a long way to creating a whole new you. It's worth the few extra dollars a week or a month that putting your image in the hands of professionals will cost you.

Finally, don't despair. You don't have to look 20 or 30 or even 40 to succeed. But renewing your appearance with an eye to maximizing the possibilities is going to give you not only a fresher look but also a fresher attitude to meet the competition toe to toe, and take advantage of all the opportunities for work and play that the world has to offer.