

CLOTHING CUES IN VALUES COMMUNICATION

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		Description of Importance	Behavior	Message/Statement	Clothing Cues for Women and Men
VALUE TYPE	Economic	Practical, convenience; functional usefulness; nothing wasted, frugal with money, time, space, energy; acquire wealth.	Focus on bargains; comparative shop, convenience shop, sale shipping; best for least cost; will sew, mend.	It's important to get the best buy, the best dollar value. It's important to save time and money. It's important that clothes last a long time. It's important to be practical. It's important to conserve—the environment is fragile.	Quality clothing at low price, on sale Easy care clothing, washable Man-made fibers, blends Durable fabrics Simple, basic styles to mix and match Classic, timeless styles Vintage clothes
	Aesthetic	Beauty of design; harmony, lovely; individual expressiveness; deconstruction is a threat.	Focus on beautiful clothing; beautiful style, colors, textures, patterns; cost is not an issue.	Beauty of the clothes is important. It's important to have total harmony.	Colorful, decorative Artistic mix of textures Harmonious Well designed
	Political	Power, authority, leadership; status is important; enhancement of self; celebrity conscious.	Focus on dress to impress, influence; seeks status clothes; seeks admiration; dress better than others.	Image is important. Appearance is important. It's important to impress others. It's important to influence others. It's important to be different than others.	Tailored clothing styles Expensive high fashion Name brands Designer labels and logos One-of-a-kind Sophisticated, understated
	Social	Other directed; concern about fitting in and belonging; concern for others about fitting in; about fitting in; everybody at ease.	Focus on conformity to significant others; dress appropriately or like others; would likely not dress better than others.	It's important to appear like part of the group. It's important to put others at ease.	Appropriate for the occasion Like friends or peer group Like fashion leaders Current trends
	Theoretical	Discovery of facts, truth; wants the real thing, no fakes; preserve quality; beauty not important; OR—Clothes of little importance.	Focus on product information; fiber content, care label; environmentally friendly; quality; OR—No attention to clothing.	It's important to have the "real" thing—no fakes. Quality is important. It's important to meet my needs. An orderly system is important. —OR— Other topics are so much more important, clothes don't matter.	100% wool, real leather or suede, natural fibers Reflects personal style A well-organized wardrobe —OR— Wears anything just to cover up Uncoordinated clothes
	Religious	Relationship to a higher being; part of orderly universe; recognizes the divine; simplicity of design.	Focus on the spiritual; appreciates God's gift of fibers; modesty and simplicity, uniform dress.	It's important to appear modest. It's important to have the body covered. It's important to not attract attention to myself.	Non-revealing, body concealing styles Loose fitting, plenty of ease Opaque fabrics Simple in style Fewer clothes
	Sensory	Sense of touch, feel, sensation; comfort.	Focus on feel of fabric and fit; soft fabrics, loose or stretch fabrics.	It's important to feel comfortable.	Soft fabrics Non-irritating fabrics Loose fitting styles Body revealing, freedom
	Exploratory	Creativity; individuality; thinking outside the box; explore options.	Focus on uniqueness, the unusual; experimentation in dress, wearable art.	Creativity is important. Individuality is important.	Add your own touch/flair to an outfit Unusual mix of colors, textures Unique combination of styles Hand-woven-hand knit fabric Hand-printed designs Self-designed, self made

(Table developed, based on Spranger's values as presented in *The Second Skin*, Marilyn Horn.)

Note: You need to recognize and prioritize your own values. Make clothing choices according to your priority.

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VALUES COMMUNICATION

Through Personal Style

By Judith Rasband

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Universal Elements of Image

The **universal elements of image include dress, grooming, body language, and etiquette**. Together, they create your visual image. Together, they create a silent language, a non-verbal vocabulary that speaks loud and clear. You cannot NOT communicate.

Elements Of Design

Specific characteristics, traits, or design elements in dress, grooming, and body language serve as **signs, symbols, cues, and clues** in non-verbal communication. The study of these cues or clues is the **science of signs or semiotics**. In dress, the cues or clues are generally the **elements of design**—the **lines, shapes, colors, textures, and patterns**; and the way they are used to create the goals or principles of design – namely **balance, proportion, scale, rhythm, emphasis, harmony, and unity**.

Many people do not even notice non-verbal cues, do not understand them, and therefore do not value them. Different people notice different symbols, elements, or cues depending on their background or frame of reference. It is essential to expand your frame of reference and become very sensitive. Elements or cues are not static but ever-changing. **The messages change according to the time and place, people and purpose**. The language of clothing changes depending on how the clothing is worn. **It's not only what you wear, it's how you wear it.**

Change one symbol, element, cue, or clue and you change the entire message. The more of the same cues, the faster the message gets across to you and to others. The visual or non-verbal messages may reflect or communicate something about age, gender, ethnicity, culture, intelligence, personality, values, attitudes, interests, intent, ability, individuality, popularity, membership, rank or status, loyalty, lifestyle, roles, and goals. What's more, your image is you in the eyes and minds of others—a mental picture or visual impression and the way you are perceived or typified.

Impression Formation

Impression formation occurs when a viewer makes **assessments or judgments about another based on appearance cues or clues**. Research indicates that clothing affects the impression formed. Impression formation based on appearance is **automatic and instantaneous**. **It sets the parameters for social interaction**. The impression may be unique or stereotypical, true or false. It may work for you or against you, often without you being aware, affecting the achievement of your goals or success in life.

Something called the "**halo effect**" occurs when one or a few noticeable **cues create a bridge to the assumption of additional cues, positive or negative**. Interestingly, as people evaluate another's clothing cues according to their own perception, people who dress more alike tend to value and support each other and while they tend to devalue and criticize those who dress differently. The greater the difference in dress, the more contrary the impression formation.

Stereotypes are based on the elements of image—dress, grooming, and body language. They are generally assumed to be false impressions. Yet, if everyone recognizes the stereotype—if a stereotype is the distillation of ages of social experience—it may be truer than most are willing to admit. Regardless, **if you do not wish to be seen as a stereotype, do not adopt the symbols or cues of a stereotype.**

The need to understand and create a positive first impression is a very real. You don't get a second chance to make a positive first impression. And it is **very difficult to correct a negative first and lasting impression**.