

Introduction

Do you know which clothes make you feel good as well as look good? How do you represent yourself to the world? Do your clothes reflect who you truly are? This book is about helping you to answer these questions and for you to understand your Wardrobe Personality. You will then have the confidence to dress to suit yourself and to be truly you. You will be able to adapt your wardrobe, achieve the most from your appearance and accomplish personal success through your own sense of style. A significant added benefit is that it should also save you money by helping you to avoid costly mistakes such as buying clothing from which you really won't get value for money.

Once you have understood your Wardrobe Personality you will be able to bring out the best in yourself and people will notice you for who you truly are. To answer the question – who is this book for? – ask yourself the following:

- **Do you want to own a wardrobe of clothes that you look and feel great in and look forward to wearing every day?**
- **Do you feel wonderful in some clothes, while in others you do not feel good at all, and want to understand why?**
- **Have you worn clothes that you have admired on others, but in which you feel uncomfortable and do not feel yourself?**

- **Do you want to understand what styles of clothes you will enjoy wearing for various situations, such as for important business, school or social events?**
- **Do you care about how you come across to others through your appearance? Be honest, everyone likes compliments about the way they look!**
- **Do you want to show people how your appearance is a true reflection of you as a person – who you truly are?**
- **First impressions do count, so do you want people to recognise who you truly are, because the outer you represents the inner you?**
- **Do you want to benefit from understanding other Wardrobe Personalities and being able to adapt your approach accordingly?**

Answer 'yes' to any or all of these and you will be much more aware how to acquire a wardrobe to suit the inner you after reading this book.

This book is for women, but I have written another for men. If you find this one interesting please do read the men's version, as it will help you understand and recognise the Wardrobe Personality of your husband, partner, brother, relative, friend or even business colleagues. It will help you to appreciate them for who they are, recognise why you may not always like what they wear and understand why they do, and why they may approach things differently to you. The latter point will enable you to anticipate how they will act at certain times (e.g. always up against deadlines, running late and disorganised, very dramatic, emotionally up and down, or meticulous in execution).

This book is neither prescriptive nor aimed at dictating what you should do or what you should wear, and you may not agree with everything I write. That's fine, but the underlying message is to encourage you to learn how to express your own style and to appreciate differences of opinion when it comes to appearance.

This is why people can turn up to the same event having interpreted one style quite differently to others.

Women have a vast choice when it comes to clothes. Which style? Which outfit combinations to mix and match? What is appropriate and comfortable to wear to work, to an event or just to walk the children to school? Women have so many more factors to take into account when choosing the correct clothes (far more than men). For example, when it comes to a formal event, a man need only to decide between a lounge or dinner suit, and then choose the shirt and tie. Whereas, a women should ask herself: “Can I wear trousers or does it need to be a skirt?... What length of skirt is appropriate – a cocktail dress or a full length evening gown?... Will it be cold do I need a jacket or a pashmina?... Which accessories will go with which neckline?... What underwear do I need to wear under the outfit tights, stockings and what shade should they be?... What accessories and what make-up, if any, shall I apply?”

When you do think you are wearing the right clothes, how do you feel? Do you feel great about yourself and do the clothes give you energy, lift your spirits and just make you feel wonderful? To look your best, yes, you need to be well-groomed, wear clothes that are a good fit, in the correct styles to enhance your body shape, and you should wear the right shades of colours to enhance your natural colouring. However, there may be times when you are not wearing the best shapes or colours, but still feel great or, conversely, you may be wearing the right shapes and colours, but not feel great at all! Why is this? Well, if the clothes do not represent your ‘Wardrobe Personality’ then you just won’t feel right: you may feel overdressed, too casual, too trendy, too traditional or just too uncomfortable. Your clothes need to represent who you are, your inner you. Your Wardrobe Personality means more than the clothes in your wardrobe. The style of clothes you choose and the accessories you wear give out lots of messages about you and they need to represent who you truly are.

Being Truly You will help you understand your own particular Wardrobe Personality so that you will feel comfortable and, through the way you look, your clothes will represent your own unique personality. What you like will identify your Wardrobe Personality when you attend an event or go to work or even

when you relax at home. Do you choose a pair of jeans, t-shirt and trainers rather than jogging bottoms, soft wool jumper and pumps to relax with the family or for an evening on your own watching TV? Our individual Wardrobe Personality is the most critical, but most overlooked factor when we consider how we might improve our appearance and develop our personal image and personal brand.

So many magazines, books and television programmes completely ignore our own individual personalities and try to shoehorn us into wearing the latest fashion, when we may well have no interest in up-to-the-minute trends and prefer either comfort, a more traditional look or even to create our own bizarre style. Many books have been written over the years on personal image and branding and TV listings are full of 'experts' advising celebrities or members of the public how they should present themselves. However, my book is designed to help you understand how to dress to represent the inner you and to show the world who you really are. This means finding your Wardrobe Personality; a subject that is so often overlooked and yet which is, to me, the most important aspect of managing your individual appearance.

Disclosing the inner you

Body shape and colouring, personal image and branding are very important, but the key is first to understand your own Wardrobe Personality so that it can shine through. Your Wardrobe Personality is a reflection of your own distinctive character, of the inner you. Once you have discovered your Wardrobe Personality, you can build and develop your own unique style, for whatever occasion; you will be yourself and not what others think you should be. Then, combined with the knowledge of which shades of colours and shapes of clothes best suit your body, you will present yourself at your very best.

This book will enable you to discover your Wardrobe Personality. To assist, I have identified the 10 most common Wardrobe Personalities by recognising that we now live in a much more varied society than years ago, with much greater influences on fashion and our life styles. We travel more, we may be mothers with full-time careers; changing nappies one minute and running an office the next. All this affects how we wish to dress. However, it is the combination of the various Wardrobe Personalities and how we define different roles through our

clothes that makes us unique. Find out which one(s) you are: most people will be a combination of at least two Wardrobe Personalities with a stronger primary and then other influential secondary ones. Often one will be more appropriate for the working environment or for a mum and housewife at home, whilst the other will be more evident in your personal or social life.

The purpose of this book is to help you recognise the origins of your style and why you interpret fashion differently to others. When you know your Wardrobe Personality it will help you understand why you may have a fetish for clothes, shoes and bags and/or follow the latest trends or, on the contrary, have no real interest in clothes. You will understand why certain clothes, fabrics, textures, patterns and accessories make you feel on top of the world while others make you feel uncomfortable, garish or dreary. You may have received a colour analysis and discovered there are some shades in your palette which you don't like or would never wear. Maybe during a style consultation you have been recommended a few styles that, again, you would never dream of being seen in. This is due to the fact that, whilst they may be appropriate for you, they are simply not suited to your Wardrobe Personality.

People wear different styles of clothes to the same event or to work. For example just think of how the female television news presenters vary with their different clothes, accessories and make-up. Take Moira Stuart, Sophie Raworth, Kate Silverton and Natasha Kaplinsky; they all have styles that reflect their personalities. Wouldn't it be boring if we were all the same?

As I have mentioned, this book does not dictate what you should and should not wear. It will help you to adapt your own style for different life situations and I hope it will give you the knowledge to wear your individual style with confidence and stay true to your most valuable asset – your personality.

Recognise the Wardrobe Personality of your friends and family

A further benefit of this book is that by understanding your own Wardrobe Personality you will start to recognise the Wardrobe Personality of your friends, family and work colleagues. You will begin to understand which Wardrobe Personalities you are most likely to get on with and the strengths and differences

of each. For instance, Fashion Fads (p.90) generally pay a great deal of attention to the latest fashion and, consequently, will constantly shop to buy the latest clothes, spending time getting ready to go out, whereas a Casual (p.62) will have no interest in fashion and will only shop for items when needed, spending little time getting ready to go out. Often the Fashion Fad will enjoy face to face socialising, going to the latest clubs and partying, whilst the Casual may well favour a quieter lifestyle drinking with friends in the pub, or prefer using social networking websites to face-to-face networking. Knowing the Wardrobe Personality of others will be hugely helpful when we go into longer term relationships, either professionally or personally. This is covered in more detail in Chapter 7.

So, whatever your age, size, colouring or race, please do not live your life wearing the clothes others want you to wear, or what you think you should wear to please others. Wear clothes that make you feel great as well as look great, and that show the inner you. Be proud of yourself, show the world the inner you, be different, and be truly you.

Angela Marshall

