



## Authenticity Being your professional best! By Dawn E. Waldrop

Ninety two percent of communication is through our visual presence. Fact: humans communicate visually. We are communicating more and more through the visual medium. A visual image is presented through our attire, grooming, and accessories.

Some may say, "It's not fair or not right." It has nothing to do with right or wrong. It is how we choose to communicate. It is not about making judgments rather it is about making observations. Let me share this story.

One summer day I was flying down south to speak to three hundred fifty teachers. It was my husband's day off and he said, "Let's pick up Adam (our 3 year old grandson) take him to the airport (he loves airplanes) to see you off. I said, "Great idea." So off we went to pick him up.

As I was tying Adam's shoes, he says, "Grandma come closer." I responded, "Adam, What do you want?" "Grandma, come closer I want to whisper something in your ear." he replies. As I leaned over, my ear next to his little mouth, he whispers, "Grandma, you look so pretty today." Ah, my heart was a glow. My husband surprisingly looked at me and said, "I can't believe he said that to you—I was going to tell him to tell you that."

I watch my grandson one day a week so he sees me in very casual clothes because we are climbing on the playground or playing in the creek. For the first time Adam was seeing Grandma dressed in a professional outfit. Adam had never seen me in attire other than casual clothes.

As I boarded the airplane I thought, wow, how **powerful** that a three year old can already see the difference of the message our attire sends. Many adults stop giving thought to just what am I communicating to others when I get dressed for my job. Yet we notice if others are presenting themselves professional or not.

Everyday, seriously look at yourself in a full-length mirror. Ask yourself this question. Am I dressed my professional best from head to toe? Give thought to how do you want others to perceive you.

Be careful, often times what our intentions are and what we really do, are not the same. Ask someone who will be honest with you this question. What two words would you use to describe me based on how I dress? If your intention is to be perceived at a high level of professionalism and they respond casual then revisit your reflection in the mirror.

Image is perception and perception is reality. If your intention is professional and they respond professional now you have made that perception a reality. Even if you feel you send the message of professional try this exercise anyway. It can be quite a learning experience.

Once we connect our intentions with reality, we present our authentic self professionally.

Dawn Waldrop is a National Speaker & Image Consultant. Founder of Best Impressions® LLC in 1989.

A leading expert on attire in the workplace she motivates professionals how to present their best image for success through keynote presentations, half/full day training sessions, one-on-one coaching & personal consultations.

She is the author of the book: Best Impressions How To Gain Professionalism, Promotion and Profit.

**www.best-impressions.com Call Dawn to discuss a tailored presentation for your group 330-483-0411**

