

# les nouvelles *esthétiques* & spa

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*"The impact you make when you walk into a room leaves a lasting impression on potential employers, business partners, clients and everyone who matters to you."*

# business | in my words

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## woman power at the spa

**W**HEN I FIRST STARTED my spa business about 25 years ago, I had to knock on many doors before I found a space for my spa, laboratory partners to manufacture my products, distributors to sell the products and many other parties that were necessary in order for my business to work. Even in my earliest professional pursuits, I always made a point of dressing for success. I wore a suit, perfected my makeup, styled my hair and put on high heels—everything I could think of to project the image of the mind-blowing success I wanted to achieve.

Yet my initial attempts at approaching people were often met with a somewhat biased reaction. Why? Because I was a young woman in my early 30s, blonde with a small build—in other words, I did not come across as a powerhouse of a woman, at least not from the outside.

As a teenager and well into my 20s, I suffered from severe acne. The disease of the skin, at that time, had also become a disease for my self-esteem, as is the case for many people with the condition. I lacked the confidence and self-assurance I needed to succeed. It is for that precise reason that I initially went into the skin care field. I yearned to learn how to rid myself of the condition and to someday help others who suffered from it as well. When I finally started creating my own skin care products, I was thrilled to share my knowledge with others who

needed help. Success for me meant having self-confidence and looking the part. Conquering my acne had a two-prong effect: I started to look better, and as a result I felt better.

### Self packaging

Of course, the fact that I am in the beauty business does make it necessary for me to look my best at all times. After all, why would women want to purchase spa treatments from someone who looks unkept? In the business of selling beauty, we all have to be beautiful. However, there is another reason why I always adhered to the rule of looking terrific at all times—as an esthetician you are packaging yourself!

As skin care professionals, it is our job to keep our clients looking as attractive as possible. Sometimes, however, we need a little reminder for ourselves. Let's face it—you may have a brilliant business idea, been at the top of your class in school, are already a successful entrepreneur or are quickly climbing the corporate ladder—regardless of your professional standing, you must present yourself in the best possible way in order to speed your path to great achievements. As women, we have some great advantages over men when it comes to improving our looks. Yes, we have glass ceilings to break and sexism to overcome. But we also have an arsenal of tools that help us look—and consequently feel—better, thus making

us stand out from the crowd. It is crucial to learn how to use these tools to our advantage to advance our success in our professional ventures.

I have often thought about the meaning of power and have come to the conclusion that it has a different meaning for men than it does for women. For women, power comes with feeling comfortable in our own skin, being confident and connected with ourselves. In her book *The Power of Beauty*, Nancy Friday makes the following suggestion: "Women in power look assured and at ease. It is a feeling that comes from within. They do not fidget, their eyes are not running around, they are in control and are comfortable with that feeling." What is important to recognize is that outer beauty often helps with inner comfort and peace. In other words, when you look your best and make the most of your appearance, you will notice that you feel calmer and more collected, which leads to feeling better overall.

### Strength and beauty

Certainly you may be reading this and thinking to yourself, why do I need to worry so much about my appearance when there have been so many powerful and accomplished women who probably did not place so much emphasis on their appearance? You can probably identify many examples of these women such as former Secretary

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If you already have the brains, the education, the experience, the guts and the charisma—the rest is easy!

### And brains, too!

Examples of power-and-beauty abound. Tyra Banks—a model-turned-mogul—is a great representation of a successful woman who made her looks work for her. She started out as a very popular runway model who appeared in major fashion shows for many top designers. From her modeling career she moved into minor film and television roles, eventually creating and producing “America’s Next Top Model.” The show, which is now syndicated in more than 100 countries, made Banks an international star not just for her appearance, but also for her brains. She soon followed the success and bankability of “Top Model” with “The Tyra Banks Show.” Audiences love her candid approach and no-nonsense conversations about a broad variety of topics. Banks certainly exemplifies beauty and success in one powerful package.

Want more inspiration? Just glance at any magazine in the grocery checkout line. First Lady Michelle Obama is on every cover! Mrs. Obama looks great wherever she goes. Designers cannot get enough of her. She has already set trends and sales on certain brands of clothing have gone through the roof simply because Obama wears them. Attractive and well put-together? Yes, she is. She is also a Harvard educated attorney—and before her husband’s run for presidency, she was a high-ranking career woman at a major Chicago hospital.

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of State Madeleine Albright and former Prime Minister of Israel Golda Meir. It is true that there are plenty of cases where women with simpler looks achieved great professional heights in politics, business, entertainment and other arenas.

But the truth is that throughout history, beautiful women have often gotten what they wanted and maintained positions of power. From Cleopatra to Helen of Troy, beauty ruled and continues to reign. However, smart women know that there are plenty of ways to help beauty along. Sophia Loren once said: “I’m not ugly, but my beauty is a total creation.” When probed in an interview, Ms. Loren explained that many tools, from makeup brushes to hair spray, are used to highlight her best features and conceal her imperfections.

You may be wondering where feminism fits into such practices. By trying to doll ourselves up, are we not just playing into the role of “pretty Barbie dolls”—the very stereotypical view of females that we have been trying to overcome? Should we not be judged for our abilities rather than our hair and heels? Of course. We should be judged by our experience and knowledge. Unfortunately, we live in a world where people often formulate opinions of others based on first impressions. It is sad, but it is also true.

### Lasting first impressions

The impact you make when you walk into a room leaves a lasting impression on potential employers, business partners, clients and everyone who matters to you. Obviously, your appearance is a significant part of the impression. Studies have shown that it takes interviewers approximately seven seconds to decide whether they will give the job to any particular candidate. Seven seconds! That means that in the time it takes you to walk into a room, shake hands, sit down and, hopefully, smile—your potential employer has already made up his or her mind. Unfair? Maybe. But the reality is such that looks matter. Do not view this fact as degrading—consider it a tool you can use to get ahead faster and more easily.



## POWER TOOLS TO LOOK YOUR BEST

- **Dress for success.** There is no other way to put it—you must dress in your best business attire in order to be taken seriously in our competitive world and shaky economy. That means a great suit, a nice blouse, a good pair of heels and the right accessories. Tasteful jewelry works. A bulky, clunky handbag does not.
- **Take care of your face and skin.** Your face is the first thing people see, so it must glow. Visit the spa for professional skin care services whenever possible, consider trading treatments with a colleague in between visits and keep up with your daily home skin care regimen. You know the basics: a good cleanser, a moisturizer, an exfoliant and a sun protector work miracles on any complexion. Put your best face forward and you will be amazed at how people respond!
- **Makeup.** Color yourself beautiful, but do it in a tasteful, non-intrusive way. The adequate use of makeup highlights your best features while minimizing your flaws. Makeup can help hide dark circles, blemishes and scars. Simultaneously, it can accentuate your eyes, spotlight your cheekbones and outline your face beautifully. That is a tool that men cannot use as readily as we can, so make the most of it!
- **Do not forget hands and nails.** Keep it simple with nails when it comes to dressing for business. No bright polishes or ragged edges. Stick with either clear or light-colored polish. Keep nails short and neatly filed and do not pick or chew them.

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### Like a million bucks

But why only look at celebrities? Among the people you know, there are probably plenty of authoritative and driven women who package themselves in such a way that causes everyone to stop and take notice. Remember that it is a skill you can learn. If you already have the brains, the education, the experience, the guts and the charisma—the rest is easy!

A dab of makeup, a visit to the hairstylist for the right coif, a stop by the local boutique for a couple of power suits or other ensembles that make you look and feel great—all of these attributes can help you reach even higher ground and go further in your professional (and personal) life. Trust me. I've been there, done that, so I know. What helped me start my business more than a quarter of a century ago was tireless persistence and always looking like a million bucks—even when I had just pennies to my name. Become the whole package. You will be amazed at the results! ■



**Lyn Ross** is a licensed master esthetics educator, a recognized leader in the professional skin care industry and the founder of Institut' DERMEd. With more than 25 years of in-clinic esthetic experience,

Ross is dedicated to sharing her knowledge with licensed esthetics professionals. A true medical spa pioneer, Ross has written numerous articles, authored chapters in textbooks and has appeared on radio and television shows highlighting professional skin care.