

My mission has always been to redefine beauty for the 21st century. First published in 1993, in the INTRODUCTION of *The Triumph of Individual Style*, I wrote the following about:

“Beauty Today

“In every age, women have wanted to feel beautiful and attractive for a variety of reasons.

Today, we are experiencing a dramatic shift in the meaning of beauty that has freed us from the shackles of all past ideals and standards of perfection. For most of us, it matters little how this change came about. We simply take for granted that women have earned the freedom to be unique and complex people. Feminine beauty today includes such qualities as confidence and self-acceptance, strength and intelligence, health and individual style.

More than anything else, individuality sums up the modern definition of beauty and style. Why is this such an exciting time for developing individual style? For one thing we have available today a wealth of clothing styles and colors that sets us free to put our own signature on fashion. For another, modern society supports the pursuit of individuality with more and more avenues for self-expression -- in the arts, in education, and in our choice of work or lifestyle. Likewise, in the realm of beauty, we are also learning to value and enjoy our differences. This book celebrates this era of real women who are breaking the molds. Each setting her own standard of beauty by playing up her uniqueness. Each experiencing the triumph of Individual Style.”

And in CHAPTER 8, *Your innate creativity*, I wrote this:

“Creativity is the heart of personal style; self-acceptance is its soul. The more contented the soul -- that is, the more you esteem yourself and honor your body as beautiful, the stronger that creative pulse will beat -- and the more life you will give to your personal style.

Personal style is an act of self-definition that is driven by the human need to exercise and proclaim our sense of beauty and creativity about our bodies. It happens best when we can say, “No!”, to the general culture’s messages on what is, or is not, beautiful -- because almost all of us are left out of the definition. Lowered self-esteem is often the result of our allowing outside sources to define our body image for us. From the start of this book, we have shown you how to demystify beauty and fashion. By looking at yourself through the eyes of the artist, you’ve learned how to express aesthetically your own standard of beauty.

Personal style demands a commitment to your inner well-being, and the first step toward that commitment is to reclaim the power of beauty from those who would put us “in boxes” which can stifle the joy and block the triumph of individual style. By knowing Your Body’s Design Pattern and seeing how it relates to clothing, you’ve begun this takeover by enhancing your instincts to make good choices in clothing a good percentage of the time. This alone will save you needless experimentation and expense. On a practical level, knowing your unique body in this way is economical. This is the tangible side of being the master of your own beauty. There is an intangible value as well -- for on the surface, we may be talking merely about clothes, but underneath the overall message is about being fully human.

In the end, personal style is not about how much money you can spend on clothes; but about how creative you are with the money that you do spend. It is not about being obsessive about fashion or style; but about possessing a clear sense of your style. It is not about comparing yourself to others and feeling unequal; but about discovering the point of view that sees that specialness of each individual -- a perspective that can lead you to feel connected rather than compared to all humanity. Clothes are merely a vehicle for showing this specialness, if and whenever you choose.”