

# AICI GLOBAL

## The Psychology of Style

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Clothes are opportunities. Different looks have different psychological effects. Getting dressed gives us a chance to express different dimensions of ourselves. Indeed, our life is a kaleidoscope of possibilities.

What outfit do you put together when you want to express the core of who you are? Are you excited about what you see hanging in your closet? Is every piece like one of those shimmering pieces of glass in the kaleidoscope — ready to create a pattern that can support and even change your life? Or are you seeing sameness? Same color, same style, no style really?

Is your closet full of color like your vibrant personality? Or is it smooth and creamy like honey and cream over strawberries? It could be warm and rich like polished antique wood and brass.

What words would you use to describe how you feel and how you want to be perceived? These words can help you create intriguing, fun, or powerful looks. When you put words to your “looks,” you are playing with the Psychology of Style.

What outfit has “you” written all over it? This is often a favor-ite stand-by outfit that, when you wear it, you always get compliments and also feel most like yourself.

What do you choose to wear when you want to stand out in the crowd? A “wow” outfit turns heads for the best reasons: it nails the dramatic look and yet we still see and experience you, not the clothes.

If you’re looking forward to a romantic encounter, what do you have in your closet that says you are a woman and approachable, yet strongly yourself?

There are times when you want to be quietly understated, when it wouldn’t be appropriate to be in the spotlight. What outfits support this look, yet remain elegant and intriguing rather than dowdy, dreary, or boring?

Thinking conceptually about your wardrobe in this way is the key to using the Psychology of Style to your best advantage. It’s also fun. What do you wear when you want to play? When it’s time to let out your wild side?

We all have so many different dimensions to our personality. Clothing is like those little col-ored pieces of

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glass in the kaleidoscope. Twist your wardrobe and put new patterns together to express all the colors that are you.

What do you wear when you need to be propped up? You haven't had enough sleep, or you are getting over the flu, or are grieving the loss of a loved one. Wearing dull, flowing clothes that drape heavily can keep you in the pit of depression, while other fabrics and construction details can literally prop you up and keep you going.

Take a closer look at your closet. Try on outfits you tend to wear when you are feeling low, or excited, or happy. Look in the mirror. Is this a "you at your best" outfit? Is it a dramatic or romantic outfit, or is it playful, quietly elegant, or an outfit you wear when you want to take charge? If you can't figure out what the outfit is saying about you, then it probably should not be in your closet.

The Psychology of Style is a reality we all live with every day. The outfit you are wearing right now is saying something about you.

Get up and stand in front of a full-length mirror. This might be a little scary, but it's important that we start to look objectively at what we are communicating about ourselves through our clothing choices. The reality is, everyone else who encounters you today is looking objectively. They might not be able to articulate what

they are seeing, but believe me, they feel it. This feeling, this sense of who a person is, is something we all do when we come in contact with each other.

What are your clothes saying about you? What's the first impression? Be honest. If it is in line with how you're feeling right now, with what you want to say about yourself, then bravo! You are using the Psychology of Style to your best advantage. If you're not sure, or your look is saying something that isn't in sync with you and your needs, then jot down a few notes, take a full-length selfie and email them to yourself.

Turn the prism of your wardrobe and imagine what you could be wearing. Let the world know who you are. There's no one like you. Celebrate what makes you special.

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**AICI CERTIFIED IMAGE MASTER CARLA MATHIS** provides image consulting for both individuals and groups. Her landmark book, *The Triumph of Individual Style*, is used in design schools in the USA and internationally, and has become a key resource for the personal image industry. Carla is co-founder and instructor of the Style Core Institute and has trained a network of 300+ stylists worldwide. She is a founding member of both the Association of Image Consultants International (AICI) and Colour Designers International (CDI), the two preeminent professional associations in the field. Carla is based in Los Angeles, California.