

Image Is Everything: Do We Buy It?

Dr. Jennifer Baumgartner

Summary

We are told image is everything. Is this true? And do we buy it...literally? We answer these questions exploring image work, the positive and negative responses to image work, and current research. We explore the connection between image and consumer behavior, examine the signs and symptoms that our clients might exhibit, and determine the reasons for them. Finally, we generate ways to alter negative behaviors and formulate a healthy image sans negative influences of materialism.

Introduction

Dr. Baumgartner is a clinical psychologist who specializes in the treatment of mood, anxiety, substance use, and psychotic disorders. In addition to her clinical work, she specializes in the psychology of dress, examining internal reasons for external choices. Through her wardrobe consulting business, InsideOut, Dr. Baumgartner works with clients to examine how they acquire, store, and organize their clothing as indicators of internal conflicts. She then reworks the outside to prompt changes on the inside.

Dr. Baumgartner has authored a book, [*You Are What You What You Wear: What Your Clothes Reveal About You*](#). Additionally, she offers educational seminars to the fashion industry and is a consistent contributor to national and international media outlets including television, radio, and print. She has written, produced, and served as an on-air host for "A Better You With Dr. Jennifer Baumgartner" (UDC TV). Her work has been regularly featured on Psychology Today, Good Morning America, NPR, The New York Times, Forbes, Women's Wear Daily, Cosmopolitan, Glamour, People, Fox News and the Wall Street Journal.

What I do:

-A clinical psychologist who specializes in the treatment of mood, anxiety, substance/alcohol, and psychotic disorders

-Author of *You Are What You Wear: What Your Clothes Reveal About You*

-A wardrobe consultant for business InsideOut who examines three patterns of dress behaviors (acquire, assemble, and store and organize clothing) as determinants for innerworkings

Wardrobe behaviors are often a microcosm for the larger life (parallel/rebellion).

1. Individual Client: id patterns of dress behavior, look for internal connections/motivations, making shifts in the external to trigger change in the internal.
2. Corporate Client: consultation for brand development, campaigns, and events
3. Media: provide insight and explanations of research into psychological (individual) or sociological (population) dress behaviors for on air, online, and print outlet
(Ex: going to the hospital for skinny jeans, soccer team uniform, dark side of decluttering)

What I don't do:

-Fashion/dress psychology/psychologist:

Psychology of...

Not an APA recognized psychological discipline (training program, codes, standards, journals, CEU)

-Any heavy clinical issues are referred out (DSM)

-Do not read outfits but behavioral pattern and cite research re: choices about self and other-reaction

What we will do:

-Increased interest in the intersection between fashion and science: examining thoughts and emotions surrounding our buying behavior

-Buying image, when it becomes a problem, and what to do about it

-Science of image (self other feedback loop)

-Image Creation (buying)

-Problematic thoughts and behavior (materialism and consumerism)

-Thought and Behavioral modification (CBT)

Image is Important:

Image consultation:

-physical appearance, behavior, and communication

-self presentation which alters other-reaction, reaction punishes or reinforces clients behaviors, alters clients thoughts, impacts clients emotions (positive or negative).

Focusing on dress

Negative Response:

-deemed as shallow

- claims of increased depression, anxiety, and eating disorders, decrease in self esteem and self assessment
- not scientific

Positive Response:

- Scientific research shows us that image is important
- Much research is done with consumer, marketing, and psychology schools
- Tweaks in external presentation can be used strategically to maximize self-assessment and other-reaction-feedback loop
- Use this to represent practice, defend practice and secure clients

Image Research:

-Shoes:

Gillath, Bahns, Ge, and Crandall (2012) from the University of Kansas, examined the accuracy of first impressions of personality, attachment style, and demographic information based on shoe choices. Participants filled out self-descriptor questionnaires and had pictures of their shoes taken. These pictures were given to other participants who based on the shoe pictures were asked to determine the descriptor questionnaires for the wearer. Overall they found that age, gender, income, attachment anxiety, and agreeableness were most accurately predicted.

Query: How might you use this with a client?

American Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Society (1999) assessed relationship between education and heel height. 58% of women with more than 4 years of college education wore flat shoes. The greater a woman's educational attainment the lower her heel.

Query: How might you use this with a client?

Nicholas Gueguen, *Journal Archives of Sexual Behavior*, University of Bretagne (2014). Three studies of blonde and brunette women in black suits with straight skirts and white shirts. 1a. wearing either black flats with no heel, black shoes with a 2 inch heel or black pumps with a 3.5 inch heel—approached several people and asked them for assistance. Approached men 25-50, asking for their help with a survey on gender equality. 83% of men helped with high heels and 47% in flats. 1b. (men vs. women) In a food survey about what they ate. 82% of men agreed to do the survey when the women wore 3.5 inch heels, compared to 42% who did when they wore flats. 33% of women said yes to the survey request, regardless of the heel height. 2. Gueguen told the women to drop a glove. 93% of men returned glove to high-heeled woman, 62% with flat shoes. In women, 52% for the heel wearers and 43% for the flats wearers. 3. Women wearing different heel heights in three bars. 7.49 minutes to approach women wearing the high heels and flat shoes 13.54 minutes. Men use physical attributes as a way to gauge women's attractiveness and to find potential mates. 1. Movement: Higher heels make her hips sway more. Even women who were seated and wearing heels were approached by more men. 2. Association: Gueguen blames the media for its association between stilettos and sexiness. The results showed that high heels were associated with greater sexiness, overall physical attractiveness, breast attractiveness, beauty, attractiveness to other men, and willingness for a date.

Query: How might you use this with a client?

-**Jeans:** Dr. Karen Pine (2012) found women who feel depressed are more likely to wear jeans and baggy top and when happy are more likely to wear a dress.

Query: How might you use this with a client?

-**Suit:** Dr. Karen Pine (2011) assessed first impressions on dimensions of confidence, success, trustworthiness, salary, and flexibility She found that people rated men more positively wearing a bespoke rather than the off-the-rack-suit. Women were perceived more positively in a skirt suit than in a trouser suit on these dimensions.

Query: How might you use this with a client?

-Handbag logo:

Griskevicius, Wang of Carlson School of Management, U of Minn (2014) conducted 5 experiments to assess use of luxury items in protecting mate

1. Women were given a scenario of seeing a woman at a party with her date. Then they were asked what they thought about that woman's relationship solely based on the quality of her belongings. Women were more likely to think that owners of luxury items were in a devoted relationship, and they were less willing to flirt, and believed the man had something to do with the luxury purchases.

2. Women imagine that another woman was flirting with their man, in order to make them jealous. Then, in a seemingly unrelated task, the women were asked to draw a designer logo. Women who were jealous drew logos twice as large compared to women who were just asked to draw without being provoked.

3. The researchers saw the same behavior when they tried that experiment on single women. The luxury goods were a signal to stop women from latching onto their future, prospective significant other.

4. They gave participants \$5 and told them that they could spend as much as they wanted to buy \$1 raffle tickets to win a \$200 shopping spree at eight different luxury brand stores. Then, they tried to make some of the women jealous just like they had done in the previous experiments. Women who felt their relationships were threatened were willing to spend 32% more in order for a chance to win the shopping spree. They were also shown to want more expensive handbags, cars, cell phones and shoes.

-Previous research by Griskevicius showed that men bought more expensive products in order to show off their wealth and attract mates. Using this study, he believes women buy expensive products to show off to other women, not in order to appeal to men.

He added that women who don't have the desire to flaunt expensive goods may not have as many fears about losing their significant other.

Query: How might you use this with a client?

-Red:

In Men:

Elliot, Kayser and colleagues (2010) at the University of Rochester studied the power of red. The results showed that women ranked the man as more attractive when he was

presented against the red backdrop. Color did not affect men's ratings of other men. In other experiments they found the man in red was rated as high in social status, and with higher potential for success. The researchers concluded that the link between red and sexual attractiveness is facilitated through the color's link to higher male status.

In Women:

[Andrew Elliot and Daniela Niesta](#) (2008) found that men reported higher sexual attraction toward a woman dressed in red compared to women dressed in other colors. Men also expressed the intent to spend more money on a date with a woman in red.

In a 2012 study involving 272 restaurant customers, researchers [Nicolas Guéguen and Céline Jacob](#) found that male patrons gave higher tips to waitresses wearing red over waitresses wearing white.

[Sascha Schwartz and Marie Singer](#) of the University of Dortmund in Germany showed that 'red effect' holds for young women but not for elderly women. (The age of the men doing the rating, however, did not matter: young and old men alike ranked young women in red as the most attractive).

[Adam Pazda, Andrew Elliot and Tobias Greitemeyer](#) found that men perceive women in red as more sexually receptive, and that they perceive sexually receptive women as more attractive.

[Nicolas Guéguen](#) also found that men attributed higher levels of sexual readiness to women wearing red.

[Daniela Niesta Kayser, Andrew Elliott and Roger Feltman](#) found that men directed more intimate questions toward the 'woman in red' (intimate questions are a known indication of increased sexual interest). In addition, men chose to sit closer to the woman in red than to a woman dressed in a different color (blue, in this experiment). The effect remained significant even when the researchers statistically controlled for the potential impact of other factors, such as mood, general arousal, and the participants' self-rating of attractiveness.

[Andrew Elliot and Adam Pazda](#), conducting research on the Internet, published a study last year showing that women, in their profile pictures, wore red more often on hook-up sites than on marriage-oriented dating sites. On dating sites overall, women expressing an interest in casual sex chose to present themselves dressed in red much more often than women who expressed an interest in serious relationships only. According to the results, women dressed in red are more than twice as likely to describe themselves as interested in casual sex than women wearing any other color.

Red-sexual arousal due to increased blood flow to face (lips and cheeks) and reproductive body parts,

Query: How might you use this with a client?

-Enclothed cognition: Northwestern's Adam and Galinsky (2012) assessed affect clothing has on internal factors. In Experiment 1, physically wearing a lab coat increased selective attention compared to not wearing a lab coat. In Experiments 2 and 3, wearing a lab coat described as a doctor's coat increased sustained attention compared to wearing a lab coat described as a painter's coat, and compared to simply seeing or even identifying with a lab coat described as a doctor's coat. Change occurs with physical experience and symbolic meaning (associations) you have with your clothing

-Actor uses a costume to inhabit a role or "act as if"

Query: How might you use this with a client?

Clothing Conformity:

-In February (2014) Silvia Bellezza, a doctoral student, and two Harvard professors sought to examine what observers thought of individuals who deviated from the norm in the workplace and in a retail setting. Pedestrians were more likely to think that a well-dressed individual was more likely to have the money to buy something in the store. Shop assistants thought the opposite. Gym-clothes-wearing client was confident enough to not need to dress up more.

- Students afforded more respect to a fictitious bearded professor who wore a T-shirt than to a clean-shaven one who wore a tie.

-Francesca Gino, professor, wore red Converse sneakers to teach a one-day event on business management education course. Those who identified themselves on a questionnaire as having a higher need to be unique were more likely to give her higher ratings than those who didn't.

-If an individual was viewed as accidentally out of sync that erased positive feelings about him among those surveyed. Those opinions only improved when the survey group believed their contrarian acted differently on purpose.

Query: How might you use this with a client?

Problem:

-We inherently know that we are influenced by our own image, influenced by the reaction an observer has on our image, and influenced by the image of another.

-Now science has shown us that deeper internal processes influence our image, and our image influences those deeper internal processes (reciprocal relationship-InsideOut)

-Image focus is not inherently negative but can have negative repercussions when tied to materialism/consumer behavior

-People often create an image by buying something

-Focus toward things causes greater problems-leads to shift in thoughts and behaviors

-Materialism-desire for stuff

-Consumer behavior-actions to get the stuff

Client Questionnaire: Query

Raise your hand if you or a client has done the following:

Have a closet full of clothes with "nothing to wear?"
Have clothing with tags still on it?
Have clothes still in bags?
Shop without purpose?
Feel anxious if you can't shop?
Shop to improve or enhance emotion?
Never satisfied with your look?
Must wear a new outfit every day?
Have great concern over other-reaction to your look?
Compare your look to another?
Copy celebrity fashion?
Are swayed by ads?
Buy cheap?
Buy in bulk?
Buy frequently?

If you said "Yes" to most or all of these questions you may be engaged in materialism and consumerism (thoughts and actions)

Query: I do not see clients with too few items. I see clients whose items do not fit, serve a purpose, etc. Describe what you see with your clients.

Why we buy:

External

a. Advertisements:

-post war(1920s, 1950s) spending was encouraged to bolster the country's economy (patriotic)
-advertising created anxiety of not having an item which created a false need to buy the item

1. buy to equal or surpass (the Joneses), measure up
2. prevent crisis

Ex: medical diagnosis

b. Exposure:

-Keep up with the Joneses: id our place in social strata, something to make us feel successful and something to aspire
-Jones were close to home, small radius physically, financially, etc. (neighborhood, church, school, work)
-Internet: exposure widened, the Joneses have physically and financially expanded/out of reach
-Habituation-what is unobtainable is obtainable, expectations are unreasonable but we are unaware, a new normal, chronic feeling of failure

c. Accessibility:

-fashion production moved overseas
-labor is cheap, fast, and unmonitored
-as production rate increased trends cycled more rapidly

-customer has greater access 1. Physical access-online options and rapid turnover of in-store options 2. Financial access-inexpensive
-*fast fashion* was created=on trend, cheap, disposable, replaceable
-guilt of having too much stuff in home is removed because *fast fashion* can be purged w/o experiencing loss
-Result: problem on both ends fast acquiring, fast removal w/o enough recipients
(Ex) *True Cost*: Documentary examining fast fashion directed by Adam Morgan (2015)

d. Credit Cards:

-no longer need to save
-increases purchase impulsivity
-buy now pay later
-relieve tension and create illusion of affordability for you and financial success for others
-Result: boredom-no thought, no need, no use

2. Internal

-Tim Kasser, Professor of Psychology, Knox College, studied materialism (value money and possessions)
-meta-analysis of preexisting research and found that those focusing on materialism have lower personal well being and psychological health and those who value things have not had important security needs met
-driven to find security in stuff, never really can, feel more insecure, materialism leads to further deep-seated insecurity (self-reinforcing)

a. Family:

-maternal nurturance-measured, less nurtured children are more materialistic
-parental styles measured-possessive, harsh, unstructured, children are more materialistic
-divorce-when terms of divorce reduce nurturing parenting practices, children more materialistic
-SES-low SES household and neighborhood, children are more materialistic

Why? 1. look for approval use materialism to get it 2. anxieties for basic needs and security created materials fulfill these needs 3. Susceptible to consumer message
-Advertisers are turning to child and adolescent consumer, debate to remove that target
-sexualizing teenagers, increase thoughts of mating and competition, increase buying due to increase insecurity and need for compensation and competition

b. Nation

- generation-older individuals who have experienced difficult economic times and war, more materialistic
-single lifetime-increased materialism relates to recession
-nation-poorer nations, more materialism
-female-women have higher materialistic needs, esp. in societies w/o power

Why? Decreased opportunity for education, reproductive control, and financial security, lower overall security leads to more materialism

c. Nonconscious Process

-dreams- more death and falling dreams, more lack of resolution or control of fear in dream, more materialistic

-death- participants of study lead to think or write about death became more materialistic

Why? Insecurities raised, Cannot overcome insecurity, Driven by materialism

Query: Why do your client buy/overbuy without need?

Why is this a problem: (Query)

a. Debt:

-MagnifyMoney.com:

42.4 percent of Americans carry credit card debt:

\$10,902: Average balance for those with credit card debt.

\$8,864: Average credit card balance for millennials.

\$12,026: Average credit card balance for Generation X.

-NerdWallet.com

\$7,087: Average household credit card debt.

\$15,191: Average balance for households that have any credit card debt.

-CreditCards.com

\$5,047: Average balance per American adult with a credit card.

\$2,720: Average credit card debt per U.S. adult with a credit report and a Social Security number.

\$3,364: Debt per person for all resident American adults.

\$7,100: Average debt per household with credit card debt

-Consider principle vs. interest, want vs. need

b. Space:

-home, car, storage units (which have increased in size overtime)

-Self Storage Association's 2013-2014

25yrs-1st billion sq ft, 8yrs-2nd billion sq ft (1998-2005)

8.96% of American households rent self storage units

10.85 million of the 113.3 million US households rent

enough storage space to allow 21 square feet for every American household

7.3 sq ft of self storage is available for every man, woman, or child in the US

13% will rent for less than 3 mo, 18% for 3-6 mo, 18% for 7-12 mo, 22% for 1-2 yrs, and 30% for more than 2 yrs

68% live in a single family household and 27% live in an apartment. 2/3rds have a garage, 1/2 have an attic and 1/3 have a basement. (SSA Source)

Why?

No home- military tours of duty, frequent moves, or combine or downsize the home.

Life's transitions-move home or to friend's after graduating, losing a job and divorcing

Climate issues-earthquakes and hurricanes limiting use of basements, attics and other storage options.

Too much-stuff not needed or used

Time: (from meta analysis of online data)

Women spend 8 years of their life shopping

23,214 hrs spent washing clothes

5 yrs online

46,800 hrs housework

6 mo waiting in line

60 min/mo or 720 min/yr trying on clothes

30min/mo, 360 min each yr returning things at mall

(meta analysis of online data)

Prosocial:

-relationship between materialistic and prosocial and empathic thoughts and behaviors measured

-inverse relationship found

-when money is on someone's mind, prosocial behavior, lack of empathy, engagement with others decreases

-negative impact on personal and community connection and relationships leading to unhappiness

-(Ex) *Journal Of Couple & Marriage Therapy* study, materialism positively correlated with unhappiness in marriages

-(Ex) Researchers studied more than 1,700 couples to find that those in which both partners had high levels of materialism exhibited lower marital quality than couples with lower materialism scores.

-(Ex) Previous studies have found that students with higher extrinsic, materialistic values tend to have lower-quality relationships, and to feel less connected to others.

-(Ex) study published in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, followed 2,500 people for 6 yrs, materialism fosters social isolation; isolation fosters materialism.

Summary: focus on things decreases relationship with other, increases negative emotions, increases buying (self-reinforcing)

Environmental: (from meta analysis of data)

-relationship between environmentalism and materialism measured

-inverse relationship found

-when money is on someone's mind environmental concerns decrease

-Ex: less likely to ride bikes, recycle, and reuse

Psychological:

-David G. Myers, author of *The American Paradox: Spiritual Hunger in an Age of Plenty*, affluence has increased not subjective happiness

-pursue wealth and material possessions, less satisfied and fewer daily positive emotions

-life satisfaction is correlated with having less materialistic values

-no direct correlation between income and happiness

-when basic needs are met, wealth does not alter well-being and happiness

-wealthy people, higher rates of depression

-the continual striving for greater wealth and more possessions, unhappiness

(Studies below complied here

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/09/materialism-system-eats-us-from-inside-out>)

- (Ex) series of studies published in the *Journal Motivation and Emotion* in July showed inverse relationship between materialism and well being (good relationships, autonomy, sense of purpose and the rest)

-(Ex) researchers tested a group of 18-year-olds, then re-tested them 12 years later. rank the importance of different goals – jobs, money and status on one side, and self-acceptance, fellow feeling and belonging on the other. given a standard diagnostic test to identify mental health problems. At the ages of both 18 and 30, materialistic people were more susceptible to disorders. But if in that period they became less materialistic, they became happier.

-(Ex) psychologists followed Icelanders weathering their country's economic collapse. Some people became more focused on materialism, in the hope of regaining lost ground lower levels of wellbeing. Others responded by becoming less interested in money and turning their attention to family and community life, higher levels of well-being.

-(Ex) a group of adolescents through a church program focused on sharing and saving. The self-esteem of materialistic children on the program increased vs decrease for control

-(Ex) study in *Psychological Science*, participants exposed to images of luxury goods, to messages that cast them as consumers and to words associated with materialism experienced immediate and temporary increases in material aspirations, anxiety and depression, more competitive and selfish, had a reduced sense of social responsibility and were less inclined to join in demanding social activities.

Query: Is this a problem for your clients? Describe. See the effects as a consultant/psychologist

Solution:

-Improve clients' functioning-financial, interpersonal, mood, self assessment w/o direct psych intervention

-Place thought in between desire and acquire

Assess:

Is there enough?

What is not working?

Why is it not working?

Pattern?

(Ex):impulse buys/emotional buys

-lack of cohesion/buy in isolation

-buy in crisis

Query/Apply?

Use what you have:

-we are told what the classics are: dark bootcut jean, white button down, LBD, etc.

- these may not be our basics
- examine the contents of the closet that are 1. work horse pieces and 2. blank canvas pieces
- work horse piece: item worn most often in the wardrobe
- blank canvas: item that has versatility (climate, formality, function, etc)
- buy accessories to change (cognitive trick)

Thematics:

- themed based dress
 - pick theme: silhouette, color, function, look
 - assign three options to each theme (look theme: safari, sleek modern, hippie.)
 - all clothes work together, buying becomes strategic and less frequent
 - shopping/assembling becomes cognitive process rather than impulse
- Query/Apply?**

Budget:

- place boundaries on what enters the wardrobe
 - limit budget: frequency, duration, number of stores, number of items, money spent
- Query/Apply?**

Disable Accounts:

- credit cards increase impulsivity of purchase
 - automated accounts increase impulsivity (instore, online, on phone)
 - thought time between want and purchase are not slowed with cognition
- Query/Apply?**

Clean Money: (oprah.com)

- Journal of Consumer Research examined clean vs. dirty money
 - Seller: at a farmer's market sellers overcharged after receiving dirty money and lowered price with clean money
 - Buyer: want to rid self of worn bills due to feeling of disgust with contamination and retain crisp bills to be spent around others
 - Overall: people associate worn bills with contamination and disgust
- Query/Apply?**

Merge Accounts: (oprah.com)

- Univ of Utah examined spending habits based on account organization
 - 10% less spent when all accounts were merged into one area
- Why? See entire picture of spending which now becomes a cognitive/thoughtful/mindful process
- Query/Apply?**

Drink and Hold: (oprah.com)

- Univ of Twente (Netherlands) examined shopping and delaying urination
- drink water, wait while browsing, and hold it in, buying decreases
- holding it in has an inhibitory spillover effect

-overall self control increased

Query/Apply?

Wear heels: (oprah.com)

-Brigham Young Univ. examined shopping in heels

-when shoppers must maintain balance in higher heels spending decreased (midpriced items purchased)

-crossover effect-physical act of maintaining balance influenced mind to stay in middle

-while shopping in store or online-engage in actions that require balance and

moderation—Ex: wear heels, yoga, leaning back in chair, and standing on one foot

Query/Apply?

Fill your mind: (oprah.com)

-when you are relaxed you will shop more

-relaxed brain does not perceive threat

-when occupied shopping (after work or ticking off items in to do list) spent 15% less

Query/Apply?

Keep Visual: (oprah.com)

-Univ of Toronto and VA have pic of goal in pocket: children, home, etc.

-when people kept pic of children with cash earmarked for savings spend less,

-when people see digital renderings of self when old more likely to save

Query/Apply?

Cost to Unit: (oprah.com)

-Emily Guy Birken

-use units of something you like to equal cost of item that you want to buy

-Ex-Bag costs \$2000, ride on carousel costs \$1.50, bag costs 1333 rides on carousel

Query/Apply?

Media diet:

-the message we receive of what is available, what others have, what we might need, and what might happen if we don't get it

-more media more material values

-removing these messages remove the possibility of needing or buying (Ex: ad block, mute ads)

-anxieties between wanting and acquiring are gone

-(E)x: remove ads from children's schools

Query/Apply?

Internal:

-Clothing Consciousness-examine who what where when of purchases

(<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-psychology-dress/201110/clothing-consciousness>)

Query/Apply: Pick an item in mind for you or your client

1. Cost: Consider your resources before you consider your purchase.

Do you actually have the money, in liquid funds, to buy?

If you have the money, is this money what is left over after you pay for the necessities?

If you can easily afford the item, do you still need to spend the money on that item?

Query?

2. Maker: Think about who your buying from and for what demand are you supplying. Who is making your design, manufacturing your product, distributing, marketing, and assembling?

Do these individuals honor their employees with respect, fair treatment, and sufficient pay?

Do they create a product using green practices?

Do they support appropriate messages about children, teens, and adults?

Do they promote a global view of beauty, including age, body shape, and color?

Are they working to fit your lifestyle or must you fit the lifestyle they deem acceptable?

If you are upset by the answers to these questions but still must have the item, look for something similar elsewhere, such as a vintage shop, different store, or savvy seamstress.

Query?

3. Source: It is simply not enough to consider who your product came from but what it came from.

Is your item composed of animal, plant, or synthetic materials?

Did the animal endure maltreatment during its life or death? Would you still buy if you saw the animal bludgeoned, skinned alive, or crying out?

If you had to get the animal product yourself would you be able to treat a creature this way?

Do your research as there are pictures and videos available. Consider fur from a second hand store or choose from faux options.

Query?

If not animal based, was the means of acquiring the plant source destructive to people or the environment?

Were the synthetic fibers made in an unhealthy manner? Were the acquiring practices wasteful?

Are there better alternatives for these materials?

Are the ornamentation items, such as clasps, buttons, and decorative objects "friendly"?

Query?

4. Need: Even after you have considered all of the questions above, the final question

you must ask yourself is "Do you need the item?"

Will this item add to your look, your life?

Or will it clutter your space, your mind?

Will it make your life easier or more complicated?

Buying the item takes internal and external resources and so do alterations, storage, coordination, and outfit formulation. Even if you don't need the item but still want it, consider the motivations for want.

Is your want stemming from insecurity, inadequacy, boredom, loneliness, need for distraction, or addiction to acquiring?

Query?

Overall query?

-Consider past, present, and future of item

-Insecurity:

-root of materialism and problematic consumer behaviors in insecurities

-get to the root of the insecurity

-External-looks, success, job, finances

-Internal-maternal nurturance, paternal style, low SES, death fears

-Intrinsic development:

-grow as person (self), be closer to family and friends (other) improving broader work (world)

-develop experiences

-(Ex) Gilovich's meta analysis shows money buys happiness up to a point.

-Adaptation-Initially, happiness with purchases was ranked about the same. But over time, people's satisfaction with the things decreased, satisfaction with experiences increased.

-Because a material object is ever-present we adapt to it but experiences are incorporated into our identity.

-Research shows once people have the chance to talk about it a negative experience their assessment increases

-Shared experiences connect us more to other people than shared consumption. They're part of the stories that we tell to one another. If someone wasn't with you when you had a particular experience, you're much more likely to bond over both having had the same experience

-You're also much less prone to negatively compare your own experiences to someone else's than you would with material purchases

-Researchers Ryan Howell and Graham Hill found that it's easier to compare material goods than experiences

-By shifting the investments that societies make and the policies they pursue, they can steer large populations to the kinds of experiential pursuits that promote greater happiness

Summary:

-In creating an image people believe they must buy more stuff (clothing, shoes, accessories)

- They are left dissatisfied
- Shift in focus toward minimalism, essentialism (Ex: minimalism movement, small house movement, Marie Kondo, fashion craftsman, bespoke options, personalizing clothing)
- Buy less, buy better
- Extrinsic reward: nicer things, less space needed, more savings, better environment
- Intrinsic reward: less pressure, anxiety, depression, more self-development, positive interpersonal relationships, security,
- Examine with clients: why there is so much, how to have less, address underlying issues, improve clients overall
- Create image focused on maximizing internal (specifically self development)
- ***Have better not more**

Contact:

drbinsideout@gmail.com

Book Sources:

Affluenza, Clive Hamilton and Richard Denniss

The Joy of Less: A minimalist living guide, Francine Jay

Shiny Objects: Why we spend money we don't have in search of happiness we cant buy, James A Roberts

The Overspent American: Why we want what we don't need, Juliet B Schor

The Overworked American: The unexpected decline of leisure, Juliet B Schor

The High Price of Materialism, Tim Kasser

You Can Buy Happiness (and it's Cheap), Tammy Strobel

Affluenza, John De Graaf, David Wann, Thomas H Naylor

Essentialism: The disciplined pursuit of less, Greg Mckeow

Getting Rid of It, Betsy and Warren Talbot

Live More Want Less, Mary Carlomagno

Spent, Sally Palaian