

Mindful dressing

The mindfulness movement has worked its way thoroughly into our busy lives – now you can even apply its principles to your wardrobe.



JULES Standish is the author of *The Essential Guide to Mindful Dressing; Choose Your Colours, Control Your Life*. Here she talks to Jane Carstens about what it means to dress mindfully.

What is mindful dressing? It is consciously choosing colours to wear that make you radiate with happiness and wellbeing, and also instil a sense of calm, confidence and control to look your best and feel fabulous at all times. By mindfully choosing colours that you love, your wardrobe can become a reflection of your personality, the message you are portraying, your intentions for success and how you communicate your feelings. It doesn't matter what sort of life you lead: the way you feel about yourself is fundamental to the way your life will work out.

How can wearing particular colours have such a strong effect? Research shows that colours have a powerful psychological effect on emotions, including boosting self-esteem and wellbeing. Colour is absorbed through the eyes, primarily via the pupil, then the lens where it goes to the retina at the back of the eye. The retina consists of light sensors and transmits approximately 80 percent of the stimulus to the visual cortex for sight. The other 20 percent stimulates the glands, which in turn affect your hormonal system and emotions.

Your book talks a lot about the effects of ageing. Why? Women in older age groups definitely need more help. Their looks are fading, their bodies are changing shape, they have menopausal symptoms like thinning hair and flushed cheeks. Their life is also changing, with children leaving home, divorce, looking after or losing elderly parents, and this all takes its toll emotionally and physically. The result is reduced confidence.

Plus, there is huge media pressure to look young and slim which adds to poor self-esteem. Ageing and menopause equal invisibility to many women, but I believe it can be a positive time to re-evaluate your appearance, including discovering the right colours to put into the wardrobe. This can be truly transformational, providing an instant 'face-lift', improving mood, and helping women with low energy to feel more feminine and confident.

You also include make-up, hair colour and jewellery. Does it all have to be spot-on? In a perfect world, women would be wearing their best colours with complementary cosmetics and jewellery all of the time! The truth is that sometimes that's not possible, particularly in the corporate world where uniforms or codes of presentation are required. In these cases I always recommend wearing colours women love as underwear - the physical benefits will still be felt as you absorb colour through your skin.

* Colour your world

Standish says combining any of the following colours with neutral shades of black, brown, grey or white will make your wardrobe practical and smart for that ultimate mindful co-ordination.

Blue - great if you feel stressed or anxious, or need good communication.

Red - will give you energy if you are tired or run-down, going out on a new date, need to inject some passion into a relationship, or are going for a job promotion.

Green - acts as a physical tonic, helps detox the body, is balancing, and helps with all decision-making.

Orange - the colour of vitality and optimism; instils confidence to get you started on new projects.

Yellow - injects joy into your life, helps you to detach emotionally from a negative situation or relationship; is the colour of mental creativity, and wearing it makes others smile.

Pink - the colour of compassion and nurturing, with hot pink projecting an image of independence and powerful, dynamic femininity.

Purple - the colour of inspiration and creativity; assists any types of mediation in relationships or at work.



If you have to wear the wrong colour, make sure your make-up is in the right shades to suit either a warm, yellow/golden-based skin tone, or a cool blue/pink-based one. Try to add a great accessory colour, such as a coloured piece of jewellery or scarf to reflect these harmonious colours up against the face, and counteract the detrimental effect of the wrong-coloured top.

What is the most amazing transformation you've seen through mindful dressing? The case I tell my students is about a woman who came to see me in her 60s who had never been complimented. I colour-analysed her as a 'Spring', and every time one of spring's bright, warm drapes was put against her face, she smiled; the transformation to a healthy and youthful-looking complexion these shades projected was fantastic. She embraced her new colour palette immediately and we bought her some fabulous trousers, an electric blue blazer, cream shirt and bright pink scarf, which she wore out that weekend. She rang and told me that the first thing her hostess did when she opened the door to greet her was to say; "Wow you look fabulous!" Complimented at last!

Mindful dressing can seem overwhelming at first. Do you have some tips to get started? My best advice is to start slowly with wearing new colours or shades you haven't worn before. Buy inexpensive tops or scarves to see how you feel when you wear them. If they work, you can splash out on bigger investment purchases, knowing you have mindfully chosen your colours for optimum wellbeing and success. *