



Support Teleclass One Transcript – October 2009

Ginger: Welcome! This is Ginger Burr from Total Image Consultants. I am thrilled to be on our second monthly call for Who Taught You How To Dress. I want to welcome you all who are here listening and also those of you who will be listening to the recording or reading the transcript after the fact. I know not everybody can make it live.

We will be talking about Chapter 2 entitled “Oh, What a Mess I’m In.” I know that many of us, myself included, at some point in our lives have experienced that. Chapter 2 seems like the place to go after Chapter 1 where we started to create awareness for those of you who maybe didn’t already have it. Maybe you’ve been settling for looks that you don’t love or one that’s purely functional if even that. I know some of you don’t even consider your look that way.

The home study program is here to help you maneuver through all of that. Now that you’re in a place of wondering what’s next, we’ll talk about what’s gotten all messed up and how we begin to get out of that.

Before we do that, I just want to mention that next month’s teleclass will be on Wednesday, November, 11 at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time. At that point we’ll either be discussing the rest of Chapter 2, depending on how much we get through today, or we’ll move onto Chapter 3 which is “Hurtful Comments and Unwanted Advice.” That’s a huge chapter. We’ll see what happens with that.

I know that, at least in MA, for some people November 11 is a holiday. It’s even possible that a few more people will be able to join us.

Welcome, everyone. What I want to do before we get started is to introduce you to Kathy Esper who is guest hosting with me today. I’m going to embarrass her now. I know she doesn’t mind. Maybe she does, but that’s too bad. I have known Kathy for a number of years now. Since the moment I met her, I have to say I recognized her amazing beauty both inside and out.

I know you will experience this today. Kathy is someone who radiates warmth, kindness, and a central strength you can count on. She’s one of the most insightful, genuine and inspiring women I know. I don’t know if she sees herself that way. I hope she does. I have recognized that from the minute I met her.

Now, let me share her professional accomplishments which are wonderful as well. Kathy is the CEO and Chief Creative Officer of Kathy Esper Enterprises. She’s a certified coach through the ICF, which is the International Coach Federation for those of you who don’t know. She’s a certified equine facilitated experiential

learning instructor and holds her MBA from Babson College, the nation's premier and entrepreneurial school.

Her How of the Heart programs open the way for conscious entrepreneurs to create or recreate the business that expresses their heart's authentic vision while making money because creativity and cash do go together.

She specializes in two unconventional areas. One is applying the creative process for transformation in your business. The other is partnering with mystical horses to help bring the unconscious to consciousness by illuminating and moving through previously unseen blocks.

I feel honored to have Kathy on the call with us today. I know you'll enjoy her as well. Hi, Kathy!

Kathy: Hi, Ginger.

Ginger: Oh, good. You didn't hang up after all that.

Kathy: I'm glad we weren't on a video call because I was definitely embarrassed. Thank you for that beautiful, beautiful introduction. I feel the same way about you. You are one of the most genuine people I know. I feel very blessed that you are in my life. I am so excited to be on this call with you today. Thank you for inviting me.

Ginger: Thank you. You were the first person I thought of. What we'll be talking about today is Chapter 2: "Oh, What A Mess I'm In." It's really what bridges the gap between image and self-esteem, although to be honest, the whole Who Taught You How To Dress study program does that. This is where we really begin to get into the nitty-gritty of that.

As some of you know, originally when I was researching this book, I did a poll of my readers. In fact, I did it several times. I wanted to know what people thought about what they were wearing. One participant said, "I hope that people will forget what I'm wearing." I know that she's not alone in that way of thinking.

That kind of thought process happens over and over day in and day out for a lot of women.

I don't know about you, Kathy, but I think there have been times in all of our lives when we can relate to that kind of thinking. We don't want that to be true. Has that been true for you ever?

Kathy: Oh, absolutely, Ginger. I was so excited when you told me we were going to talk about this chapter. For everyone on the call and everyone listening, I started off as Ginger's client about six or seven years ago. I have literally transformed inside and out. Ginger's role in that transformation has been significant. Of course, it's all tied to self-esteem.

This is a great chapter to talk about. I do agree, Ginger. I feel like a lot of women feel that way. They feel alone in that. They're not really aware that other women feel that way.

Ginger: I think it's so true. I've been very blessed because of the people who have the program. I have been getting updates from some of them about how they're doing. It's so fun.

One woman wrote to me and said, "Just want to let you know once again how much I'm enjoying your program. I'm doing about a chapter a day so that I can digest the information and do the exercises. The way you weave psychology in with the way we dress is not only innovative but right on as well. I never considered all that goes into creating a wardrobe and our reasons behind selecting certain items of clothing. You're really onto something."

I think we have to look at that part. That's a huge reason why so many women keep repeating the same mistakes over and over. At least to them, they're mistakes because they're not happy in what they're wearing. The goal with this program is to get women beyond that point so they can be happy every time they get dressed. That is a very doable goal. I know a lot of women have given up on that.

Kathy: It makes such a difference when we dress in the morning or when we step out to meet people how we feel about what we're expressing through our clothes. At least for me, that part in Chapter 2 where you describe the purpose of our wardrobe really struck a chord. It turned on a lot of lights because this is just another expression our authentic selves. Yet, for me and I feel for many women, the society has sort of shifted that focus onto something else. How we dress has a different purpose but that's not really true. It's not really its true purpose.

Ginger: Right. The very first thing we want to do is to be happy ourselves in how we look. Then we worry about what everybody else thinks. There are classic clothes out there for sure. We want to love our clothes so much that we wear them out. You can't wear them any more because you'd be embarrassed to be seen out of the house in them.

Those things are really how we want to look at our wardrobe. We want to have enough clothes in our closet to get dressed every day, feel really great about what we have in there, and that we actually wear everything in our closet.

Kathy: Yes. Something just popped in while you were speaking. For me, it even goes a little bit deeper. I'm able to focus better and be better at work when I'm not worried about it thinking, "Is this flattering? I feel fat. I don't like my hair today," whatever the situation is. That focus goes away when I'm dressing myself, my self-esteem, or to express my authentic self. Then I'm a much better coach.

Ginger: Exactly. That's very true. When we don't have to worry about those types of things, we can focus on the other things in our lives that are really important and let go of all of that. We know it's all taken care of. Otherwise, we do obsess. We've all done it. The goal is to make those days very few and far between. For a lot of women, unfortunately that is not true.

First of all, the important thing is to figure out what is motivating you to get dressed now. I think a lot of people don't know what really has been driving their decisions in the clothing choices that they're making. If you haven't been through Chapter 2, this just gives you a little bit of a preview.

For those of you who have been through Chapter 2, there are a number of them. I'm not even sure how many there are. There might be nine. I thought we might just review them very briefly to have a sense of what some of the past motivators have been, so we know how we can then move beyond that.

The first one is "comfort at all cost." It's really funny. Obviously, we're all getting older now. I'm in my fifties. I even find that's true with me to a certain extent. Comfort is critical.

However, it's not my #1 motivating factor. I make sure everything else is equally important. For some people, comfort is what drives them. They don't know how to go beyond things like polar fleece. I can't tell you how many women out there, men too, I've seen walking around in pajama bottoms.

Kathy, do you ever watch "What Not To Wear"?

Kathy: I don't watch a lot of television.

Ginger: You're smart. I don't watch that much either. So many people asked me if I've seen it. I finally got cable about three months ago. I've become somewhat obsessed with watching it, although it hasn't been on lately. It just intrigues me,

their whole process for doing that. They had this one woman they were working with at one point.

If you haven't seen the show, what happens is some poor, unsuspecting woman has been nominated by friends or family. They go around and photograph her for two weeks in whatever she normally wears. Then they show here that video once she agrees to go through the process with them. That's the creating awareness of Chapter 1.

There was this one woman who insisted on wearing pajama bottoms everywhere. Now, she kept calling them "loung pants," which I thought was hysterical because they had little snowflakes on them. They were cute for if you were home and not leaving the house, but she was going everywhere in these pants.

That's somebody who really only goes either for comfort and/or is so at a loss as to what to do that that is what she has resorted to. Comfort is critical and important, but we don't want that to be the only motivating factor.

The second one is "full-body coverage" as I call it. I hear that a lot. There are many women whose body-image issues are huge. We get into that even more when we get into the chapter on standing up to outside influences, what the media has done, and hurtful comments and unwanted advice. It's no surprise that women have a lot of body-image issues.

A lot of women just want to cover their bodies. It may be presentable to a certain extent. It's just enough that they can be outside, out and about, and not worry that anything is showing. There's no fashion instinct, style instinct, or any degree of joy around dressing at all. It's just, "Let me cover my body."

It really makes me see this with a lot of women because they all have these amazing bodies. Everybody can look fabulous, but for a lot of women, these issues are self-imposed. Clearly it's because of past experiences. That's what we try to work through in this program.

The third one is called, "I don't care." There are people out there who feel clothing is purely functional. That's it. They just get the clothes on. As long as they're clean and look presentable enough, they can go out in the world and people won't point and stare. Some people don't even care about that. Then they're fine. They don't care what it looks like or if it's the latest and greatest thing. It's just to get dressed in the morning.

The fourth one is “there are too many choices.” I hear that from women all the time. There are so many places to shop and so many options out there. We’re constantly bombarded by advertisements and stores that are trying to get us to buy this, that and the next thing. The fashion magazines and Hollywood do, too. It makes you crazy.

So many women tell me that they walk into a store and their eyes glaze over. I understand that because, as I tell many people, that’s how I feel when I go into Home Depot. I can translate that into somebody who walks into a department store, looks around, and really wants to turn around and walk out.

I don’t know if you experienced that at all, Kathy.

Kathy: I love being a girly girl and taking care to dress in a way that expresses myself. All I can remember is when I had my personal shopping day with you. We went to that boutique right outside of Boston. It might have been in Brookline.

As excited as I was, I needed you because I didn’t know what to do. I didn’t know where to start or where to go. You just went to those racks and put outfits together. For somebody like me, that’s huge because it is overwhelming. It kind of freezes me.

Ginger: Yes, it does. That’s what Who Taught You How To Dress is all about. It’s giving you those tools a little at a time so that you can go out to the stores. You learn techniques for focusing so that you don’t want to run screaming from the store the second that you walk in. You can really get something accomplished rather than feeling like you’re constantly leaving with nothing, or worse, leaving with something you don’t really love because you felt like you had to buy something.

When beginning to make sense of that, even for people who enjoy the whole process of putting outfits together, they’re just not sure how to maneuver all of that when they get out into the stores. People aren’t alone. I like them to know that.

Kathy: It’s very important.

Ginger: The fifth one is “give me the basics.” There are some people who just know this style. They’re either Talbots girls, Ann Taylor, Jones New York, or Dana Buchman. It’s those kinds of looks that are very tailored and clean lined.

They know that’s what they like. That doesn’t mean they can’t also be a little bit confused by things. They know they don’t want anything fussy or super trendy.

They don't care about wearing the latest thing that's in, but they want things that work for them. They, too, can feel overwhelmed. They may also want to be comfortable. There are lots of things that can go on, but they know that the basics are their style.

For people like that, they're one step ahead of someone who thinks, "Where do I start? What is my style?" We tackle all of that in Who Taught You How To Dress. Don't worry about where you are right now. We just start from the very, very basics right from scratch.

That brings me to the sixth one which is "I feel lost." So many women think, "Forget it. I don't even know where to begin." They may want a look that's elegant or playful. They may want one that's conservative but sophisticated. It doesn't matter what it is. They just want to know how to do it, but they don't know where to begin. Who Taught You How To Dress is the perfect thing for them.

The seventh one is "can't find what I like to wear." These days, that is an overwhelming problem particularly with the fact that the designers are designing for 20-somethings or younger. They leave the rest of us to go it alone. We have to find resources that really cater to those of us who might be in our 30s, 40s, 50s or 60s.

It's not as easy to walk into a store and find what you like, but it's out there. You might have to look a little bit harder, and/or you need to know when you should just let it alone and not feel like you're forcing yourself to buy something. If it isn't right, you don't want to buy it. That's one of things I really like to stress throughout all of this. We will as we go along even a bit later in today's program.

The eight one is "creative." There are some people who just love the whole process of putting everything together. They love going and finding it. They love playing with it in their closet. I have a couple of clients like that who have a blast. They have drawers and drawers of jewelry. To them, figuring out how to put it all together is fabulous.

Most of those people will not be the ones buying Who Taught You How To Dress. They're already figuring that out for themselves. They enjoy the process. Most people are perfectly capable of figuring out how to do this but not everybody likes to do it. It's making it as easy for somebody who isn't in love with the process and/or getting them to love the process because we make it easier.

The ninth one is “time.” We’re all busy and have 80 million things on our plate that we’re trying to do all at once. Time is critical. For someone for whom going shopping is not a priority, then finding that little bit of extra time to make those trips to the clothing store aren’t going to happen if it isn’t fun, doable and efficient. That’s one of the things we want to work on as we go through this whole process.

With all of these motivations, or fashion MOs, it really is important to figure out where you are. It might be more than one. Look at what has been driving your purchases over the past year, five years or 10 years. If you’re not sure, go look in your closet. That gives you clues.

One of the things I say in the home study program is, “Many women have given up searching for their ideal look. They settle for what is familiar and live with a certain degree of frustration, but this does not have to be the case. The question is, ‘Are you ready and willing to put some well-spent time and energy into examining your look, your current and desired style, your body-image issues, and your level of self-esteem?’”

That’s what this program is about. In Chapter 2, we begin to look at a lot of these things starting with the whole issue of self-esteem.

Are you ready to jump in and look at some of the self-esteem things we have going on here?

Kathy: Let’s go! I just wanted to say I really loved the fashion MOs. I feel like it’s so important for people to find something to identify with. For me, it’s something to grab onto and then it’s the beginning of the tools that you give us later on to help us shift into a new MO that feels better for us.

Ginger: Absolutely. I think, as you said earlier, it lets women know they’re not alone. If they recognize themselves in one of these patterns, then they realize that, “Oh! If it’s here, then other people must share this issue.” Sometimes that itself is very, very freeing and motivating to think, “Okay. If other people feel this way and are able to do this, then I can do it, too.”

That’s what I want to stress with all of this. It’s never too late. It’s never something you can’t do. You may eventually, down the road, decide that there are parts of putting a wardrobe together that you don’t want to do by yourself. You’ll be coming from an educated position and a point of, “Now I know how to do it. Do you know what? I don’t like to do it. I’m going to have somebody help me.”

You may think, “Wow! I like this a lot better than I ever thought. Now I know how to do it.” That’s what we’re going to talk about. There’s a quote in the home study program that says, “My self-esteem is affected if I compare myself to others instead of enjoying and appreciating who I am right now.”

We’re encouraged all the time to compare ourselves to other women. I think that’s really unfortunate. It sets each one of us up for failure. I could tell you stories about myself of comparing my body to what I see other women have and how, half the time, mine doesn’t measure up to what I want. I no longer do that the way I used to.

I can remember sitting on the beach with my friends watching other women walk along the beach wanting their legs because I was born with white, freckled knock-kneed legs. That was something I’ve always been self-conscious about.

I finally had to realize I had my choice of accepting that and learning how to dress myself in a way that I felt didn’t draw attention there, or to live in misery. That didn’t seem like a good option to me. I’ve learned not to compare myself to others. There’s always going to be somebody who has something that you wish you had. We all have wonderful features about ourselves that we can recognize. That is an exercise we will get to in the program as well.

Let’s talk about the whole aspect of self-esteem. Obviously, our self-esteem begins to form from the second we’re born if not before that. I think there are even some studies that suggest that it starts before. We know for sure that it begins from the time you’re a baby.

Not everyone had tons of support, encouragement, and a loving home and family. They may have had a loving home and family, but people who didn’t quite know how to nurture it in the way that would’ve been nice. As a result, what happens is we’ve developed these issues, things we don’t really feel good about. I have several scenarios in the program. You can look and see if any of them sound familiar.

I was looking through this when I was preparing for the teleclass today. I looked at the very first one I have here which says, “Someone once told me I have a certain look.” That could be anything from girl next door, mousey, glamorous, flirty, sporty, tough to sweet or whatever. “Even though I feel more like _____, I know it’s hopeless. No matter what I do, I look a certain a way.”

All of a sudden when I was reviewing this, this popped into my head. When I was a teenager, I was considered a goody, goody and a little bit nerdy. I wanted desperately to be cool. That was my thing. I wanted to be cool and in the in crowd.

I'll tell you. That was hopeless. That was never going to happen. It wasn't my style. Yet, that's what I wanted more than anything, but people were always telling that wasn't me. I bought into that hook, line and sinker to the point of thinking, "Okay. Fine. I'm not cool, but that doesn't mean I'm a loser. It means that I'm somebody else equally wonderful." That's what I want everybody to realize.

I don't know if that one rang true at all with you, Kathy, but that was a big one for me.

Kathy: It's a huge one. It also reminds me that it sort of stunts our ability to grow. Sometimes people certainly don't do this, but we hear that we're a certain way. We don't give ourselves permission to go and be cool. Who's to say that you weren't cool? I wasn't cool either!

Ginger: That's why we're friends.

Kathy: We're cool now.

Ginger: That's right.

Kathy: It's part of society. What your work brings up for me is that we have such a strong societal message coming at us, particularly for women, about how we look with our body image. It really does a number on the self-esteem. This one brings that up for me. It's almost like somebody says something and we give them that power and make it true whether it is or not. I'm guilty of that, too. It really brought that up for me on a bigger level.

Ginger: We internalize all of that. Now, the thing that's really interesting is if someone says something complimentary to us, do we internalize that equally and quickly? Usually not. That's something else we can learn from or at least begin to pay attention to. Again, this is all about creating awareness.

Another one is "I purposely dress down because when I feel like I look good, it draws too much attention. I feel conspicuous and afraid of looking good." I know there are some people who will read that and think, "Who is that person?" You'd be surprised how many women feel a little bit nervous about feeling too good.

There can be a whole myriad of reasons or messages they got when growing up at times in their life that were very formative. They feel like if they just disappear and dress down, then they don't feel wonderful about how they look. They feel like something is missing. There's always that sense of something missing.

We are going to help everyone who has experienced this with this program to allow themselves that wonderful feeling of loving how they look and being okay with that. Today, I met someone for lunch. I put on this brown jacket.

For those of you who get my ezine, I featured a pair of earrings that my friend Karen Halaby sells. I love them. They're very sparkly. I decided I wanted to wear them. Some people would save them for night. I decided, "Not a chance. Then I wouldn't be able to wear them very much." I thought, "So what if I'm going to the café next door. I want to wear these. I feel good in them."

I let myself do that. Maybe 15 or 20 years ago, I might not have done that. Now, I think, "Do you know what? I feel great, so I'm wearing these." That's what I want for every single person who has this program. That's what I want for every single person whether or not they have Who Taught You How To Dress. If you haven't been able to get there on your own, each of these steps we take here will help you to get there.

In the same case, the next one is, "I want to be invisible." That's similar to the whole dressing down thing. There are so many women who just want to disappear, blend in, and not be noticed. This is your opportunity to stand up and allow yourself to be noticed in a way that makes you feel good not in a way that makes you feel vulnerable.

Then there's one that says, "My lifestyle does not allow me the luxury of dressing the way I like. My _____ requires that I look a certain way, so I squelch my style and conform in order to be accepted and not cause any conflicts." If this rings true for you, we will talk a lot about this one in the chapter about standing up to outside influence. That's the one that does a number on a lot of women who feel like they have to conform constantly.

I'm here to say, "You don't." You have to know what the rules are and some of the guidelines. Then you decide how you want to look. Nine times out of 10 no one's going to question that as long as you are feeling good about how you look. We'll get to that one when we get to that chapter.

The next one is, "As a young girl, I experimented with different looks. My family, friends, strangers made fun of me. Now I just stick with a basic classic look. Although unexciting, at least I do not run the risk of looking silly or inappropriate."

When I was a teenager back in the late 60s early 70s, no one around me wore much makeup. Makeup wasn't big then. It was but not in Feeding Hills. I remember I must have been about 14. I wanted desperately to wear lipstick. The lipstick back then was either a very pale pink or almost white.

My mother got me a pink lipstick. I have red hair and freckles. When you put pink lipstick on someone who has red hair and freckles, it's absolutely dreadful. Plus it was very light. You really noticed it didn't blend in. It didn't look natural.

I remember wearing it to school one day. So many kids made fun of me that I threw the lipstick away that night. Then I was afraid to try lipstick again after that, because I was afraid people would make fun of me. That has happened. That is a very small example. I was a teenager, but I did get over it once I found somebody who would teach me how to do it properly. It was such an embarrassing experience.

Kathy: Those are the ones that go the deepest. When we're a teenager, we're beginning. We're just stepping into it.

Ginger: That's definitely true. Next month or the month after, we'll be talking about hurtful comments and unwanted advice. When I took that poll, I cannot tell you how many women had had things said to them by family, friends or strangers when they were five, seven or 12 years old. Even at the age of 35, 50 or 60, those things still impacted the choices they made in the clothing they wear. It may have been just one comment not an ongoing barrage of comments.

That is absolutely heartbreaking to me. I want to make sure we help get people past that as much as we possibly can. Realize it's somebody else's issue not yours. We internalize that immediately.

The next one says, “I look in the mirror and just see someone who is _____. I do not feel I deserve to look good. I’m not sure my efforts would make a difference anyway, so why bother?” That one I hear a lot more than you would think. It breaks my heart every time I hear it. It’s always by women who are just lovely in their own right, but someone has made them feel that they aren’t.

There is a couple here for people who feel that they kind of have a handle on this a little bit. There’s one that says, “I enjoy looking good and feeling good about how I look.” There’s another that says, “On days when my self-esteem is a little low, I occasionally slip into my most comfy, ratty clothes and curl up on the couch. I just need to take extra good care of myself. With a little TLC, I’m back to my true self soon.”

What I also want people to realize is that there are days where you’re not going to feel as great as other days about how you look. That’s okay as long as it doesn’t persist. If you have a day where you’re feeling a little blah or if you live in New England you might be having a bad hair day, we all know that bad hair days can affect everything else about how we look. That’s okay. Give yourself a little break. Don’t tell yourself, “I should snap right out of it.” Well, sure, but give yourself a few minutes and take care of yourself. Let that be the process you go through.

We all need a little help in dressing up our self-esteem. I’ll give you a couple of examples of things that people have said. “When I put on a few pounds, it really hurts my self-esteem.” I like this one because I identified with this one in the past, “If I’m having a bad hair day, I do not feel good no matter what I’m wearing.” “My self-esteem is challenged if I appear tired, stressed or haggard when I look in the mirror.”

The more we can do to realize that there is a link between how we look and our self-esteem, who knows which came first. I’m not sure we can ever completely figure it out. The more we can make that connection the better.

I’m assuming that everyone has been doing the exercises as they go through. Obviously, it’s your program. You can do it however you want, but I do not recommend that you skim the first four or five chapters and move right onto six and seven where we get into the really practical tips for shopping, color, line and design. Really looking introspectively will help you to make better choices when you get to those chapters. It will help that become fun and easier.

Rather than going through the exercise right here, I know that we did get a few questions. Why don't we open it up for a minute to see if anyone has any questions? Last month we had a shy group, but I'm always happy to take questions from anyone for me, Kathy or both of us. If not, we did have some people email some questions. We can definitely talk about those as well.

Kathy: Questions are so fun. I love the question part.

Ginger: I know. They are. That's really where we find out what people are thinking after they go through all of this. We may have a shy group again. If I didn't give you enough time, feel free to interrupt us. Otherwise, we do have the email questions here.

There is one here that says, "I have often tried to model the style of someone I admire, yet it never works for me. Sometimes the style doesn't flatter my body shape or the colors make me look washed out. This disappoints me and I'm not sure where to go from here."

This is a great question. It's a little bit of an example of trying to get too far too soon in a way. Some of this we will tackle as we get to Chapters 5, 6 and 7. I do want to say that when looking at what other people are wearing and beginning to look at what you really admire about what they're wearing, I encourage you to make notes. Say, "Oh. So and so was wearing this beautiful sweater that tied in such and such a way. It had this detail on it." Make a note. If it's a friend, ask if you can take a picture of it.

Even though you may not be able to wear exactly what your friend is wearing because your body shape is a little different, your coloring might be a little different, or the texture might be too much or too little for you, just recognize that there might be some aspects of that outfit that you like. It could be an embellishment on it or the fit and you want to be able to wear something that fits you in the same way. Maybe it's the color.

Sometimes when you really examine it you'll think, "This is what I like about it." You may be able to take bits and pieces of it and incorporate it into your wardrobe. Sometimes it just doesn't work for you.

Not only did I want to be cool, but I wanted to be kind of artsy, too. That whole creative, artistic look is where you can put lots of fun things together. It looks a little eclectic and inspired. I've always loved that look. I finally realized that I just can't pull that off. I look ridiculous in that look.

Rather than try to make myself wear something that just doesn't work for my body type and personality, I collect friends who dress that way. Every once and a while I think, "I'm going to call Jane because she always has this wonderful, artsy look. I need an artsy fix." It's that kind of thing.

Sometimes you can just admire someone else and take little bits and pieces. Maybe you just realize, "It looks great on her. What I'm going to do is find a look that looks equally good on me," and go from there.

Do you have anything to add to that, Kathy?

Kathy: I just love the way you answered that question. That's something that I experience. Often I'll say, "Oh. I really like what Susan is wearing today," but I may try on something really similar if not the exact blouse. Then I'm sort of deflated when I realize it doesn't look the same on me as it did Susan. I'll abandon it. I feel incomplete.

What you've just brought up is that we can take pieces of what we love. Maybe I loved that her blouse was an emerald green. I can find another piece in that color that will work for me and be equally as happy without having to be a cookie cutter of somebody else.

Ginger: Absolutely. I think that sometimes we otherwise put ourselves down because we can't wear a particular style. It just might not be the right one for our body shape. It might not be the right one for our personality. We'll get into that a little bit more in Chapter 4.

We need to take all of those things into consideration and be a little bit kind to ourselves. If we find those things don't work, we know that there are other things that will work beautifully for us. Don't expect every single look to work perfectly on us just because it worked on somebody else.

Sometimes what you can do is take an outfit someone else is wearing and tweak it a little bit. Maybe you shorten the top or make the sleeves three-quarter length. Maybe you open up the neckline if it was a higher dual neckline. Maybe you make it a scoop neck. There are all kinds of things you can do with the help of a tailor as well to make an outfit work for you that wouldn't work for you the way your friend was wearing it.

Maybe, for instance, you split up the pieces. Maybe you take the top and wear it with something else because the pattern in both pieces together was too much for

you. There are lots of different ways you can play with that. The more you get to know about yourself, your coloring, body shape, line and design, the more you can begin to make those decisions a little more easily on your own.

Kathy: I love it because in a way it's kind of like a little scavenger hunt. We're identifying elements of the look we like. We're making it our own. At the end of the day, I'm going to feel so much better in a blouse that really works for me and not just the blouse that Susan had on though it looked great on her.

Ginger: Exactly. Another question is "A few years ago I wore the most beautiful outfit that I loved to a wedding. When I arrived, my sister asked me why I wore the outfit saying it didn't flatter me. Since then I am not able to feel confident about my clothing choices. What can I do?"

This one just breaks my heart. This is why Chapter 3, "Hurtful Comments and Unwanted Advice," is such a huge chapter. First of all, unless she asked her what she thought about the outfit, and even then we hope she would be kind, her sister should have stayed quiet. There's never a time when you want to say something to somebody unless they ask about how they look. You need permission. Otherwise it's none of your business. It does, unfortunately, take someone from feeling like they can put clothing options together.

I know we're jumping ahead into the hurtful comments chapter a little bit, but it really is a passion of mine. Someone else wrote in that somebody had commented to her very similarly to this also at a dressy event. It was the first time she had worn the outfit. She took it home, took it off, and never wore it again because it then had these bad memories of someone telling her she didn't look good.

That's one person's opinion. She should not have expressed it unless she was asked. It's never, never appropriate.

That also brings me to another question we have. "I have so many unworn clothes in my closet, some with the tags still on them. After cleaning my closet, I have some beautiful pieces that I'm ready to give up because they don't dress my best self as I learned from my Nurturing Beauty Personal Shopping Guide. I hate the thought of throwing them out though. Do you recommend any charities where I can pass them onto women who could really benefit from them?"

When you are cleaning out your closet, you'll do more and more of that as you go through the program. You'll really siphon down to the outfits that really work perfectly for you. As you begin to do that, you will have things in there, generally,

that are still in really good shape. They just aren't for you. It's hard sometimes to let go of those because you know how much money you spent on them. You don't want it wasted. You certainly don't want to throw it away.

Yes. There are charities. Clearly it depends a little bit on what the outfit is. If it's something for business, there is a national organization called "Dress for Success," which I know many people know about it. It's www.DressForSuccess.org. There is one here in Boston and also in the Worcester area. I know it is a national organization.

They take suits, jackets, tops, jewelry and scarves. They help dress women who are going out on their first interview or who have recently taken a job and can't otherwise afford an appropriate wardrobe for those situations.

There are also places like Big Brothers Big Sisters which is also known, at least here in the northeast, as Savers. They have a little store and tend to keep them very neat, which I think is wonderful.

I've actually even found a couple of things there because sometimes it's fun to do a little thrift shopping. They price things very reasonably. You can buy a jacket for \$7 or \$8. The things really go onto women who need them and will cherish them which I think is important.

There are many others like that. Those are two that I know of in the area that I have used personally. Kathy, do you know of any?

Kathy: I was thinking of Dress for Success also. Then I was thinking another one. Is it Rosie's Place in Boston?

Ginger: Yes.

Kathy: I believe they take them in, but I think they also teach the women how to go out and get jobs. I believe they'll take donations for business suits as well.

Ginger: They will. That's another good point. If any of you listening have organizations in your area, send them to me. If we can compile a list, I'd be happy to disperse that. Feel free to do that if you want. If I get enough of them, I will send out a list to everybody. You want to feel like those clothes are going to good use and that somebody really will appreciate them.

Kathy: I was just echoing what you said. That's a feel good thing to do, to help somebody else out.

Ginger: Yes. Then you feel like your money wasn't wasted. You really could do something good with it. Somebody else is getting the benefit which is nice.

There was another question here that I actually love. It says, "I work at home and didn't see the need to spend time or money dressing up until I was inspired to dress up my self-esteem in Chapter 2. You helped me to make the link between my self-image and my self-esteem. I now put makeup on before I sit down to work. I would love to purchase some new outfits rather than working in sweats simply because my clients can't see me. I'm not sure how to satisfy my self-esteem by dressing neatly and still be comfortable."

Again it really is that whole issue of comfort being important. Years ago, I went to work for a company. One of the things they taught me was when you sit down and you're making calls or speaking to clients on the phone, smile because even though they can't see you, they can feel the smile. It makes you feel better. You talk to people differently when you do.

I think the same thing is true with our clothing. If you're a coach and do tend to work at home or some other profession where you are by yourself a lot, you can just fall into a habit of wearing your oldest, rattiest clothes or staying in your pajamas. I've heard that one as well. Yet, you don't feel as good that way usually. I think it really does affect the whole process of working. I'm sure there are some people who would argue with me on that, but clearly the person who wrote this question doesn't.

I know that I always feel better when I've put makeup on. My makeup routine takes me all of five minutes. It's not like I'm spending hours putting it on. I take that five minutes to put it on and make sure my hair looks halfway decent. It's also important to have clothes that are really comfortable if you're at home. If they're not, they'll just sit in your closet.

The best jeans that I've discovered, and in fact I'm wearing them right now and I know some of you have heard me talk about them, is the Not Your Daughter's Jeans. Do you have those, Kathy? Have you tried them?

Kathy: Not yet, but I've heard about them.

Ginger: Oh my goodness. They have to be some of the most comfortable pants I have ever worn. I get them in brown and black. You get the darker colors not just in a blue jean. I'm not that much of a blue jean wearer, but I love brown and black jeans. They're incredibly comfortable. I can put a pair of boots with them. I have this

green sweater I like to wear that's a very comfortable v-neck. I can throw on a necklace or a scarf around my neck if I'm cool.

I can feel pulled together but I'm incredibly comfortable. It feels better than being in my bathrobe all day or throwing on a pair of yucky sweatpants that I can clean the garage in or something.

For instance, the Not Your Daughter's Jeans have stretch in them. As everybody knows so much clothing these days has stretch. That is part of what makes it incredibly comfortable. In fact, I never wore jeans ever until they were made with stretch because I found that they were just dreadfully uncomfortable.

A lot of people would argue with me. You could barely get some people out of their jeans. I never wanted to put them on because I found them constricting and tight. As soon as they put the stretch in them, I was totally sold.

I'm somebody who does brown and black jeans. That's another thing, too. If you're somebody who lives in jeans but want to upgrade your look a little bit, sometimes you can just move to a black or brown jean and maybe putting a boot on or something with a bit of a heel.

These days with the boots, you can get incredibly comfortable boots that have a bit of a heel that is a little bit thicker. You don't feel like you're wobbling if that's an issue for anyone. Yet you get that little bit of extra height. For some people, they move a little more gracefully when they have a bit of a heel on. That's a personal decision.

Moving to a black or brown jean can actually make you feel a little more pulled together than wearing a blue jean. It's not becoming unless you absolutely love them, your t-shirts and sweatshirts you throw on with the jeans. Find some pretty sweaters in fabulous colors that are still cozy and comfortable. You can tell I'm talking cozy because I live in the northeast. We're getting colder.

Kathy and I were talking earlier. It's all the sudden like January weather here and it's only October. I don't know what that's all about. I've got 80 million layers on as I sit here, but they're all very thin layers. You'd never know I have them all on.

That makes a difference. Do you have anything you would add to that, Kathy?

Kathy: First of all, I want to say thank you because I love the tips for Not Your Daughter's Jeans and also the brown and black color. That's really fun for me.

There were two things. One I want to tie back to the self-esteem. I work with a lot of entrepreneurs who work from home. This question is sounding very familiar to me. It's amazing how they will pick up the results they create in their business when I invite them to just dress as if somebody was going to come over. You don't have to dress as if they're going out and getting all dressed up.

All of a sudden something will perk up in them. They get a little more excited. They really do create different results in their business. It's pretty interesting. For me, there's some kind of tie to the self-esteem. When they feel better, they own that. They can do this in their business. That's the first thing, tying it back to that self-esteem and what you're able to create when that's raised a bit.

The second thing was when you talked about Not Your Daughter's Jeans. it reminded me that I have a curvy body. A lot of the pants I feel are really built for women who are less curvy. They're much more flattering and look great on them. When I put them on, it's horrific. It just doesn't work. This Not Your Daughter's Jeans honors different body shapes and styles.

Ginger: Yes. They do have different styles. It's definitely worth trying them on. Sometimes, with curvy bodies, you still have to do a little bit of tailoring at the waist, unfortunately, just because a lot of things are made for a little straighter bodies.

Don't ask me why. It makes no sense since at least half the population of women has a curvy body. I don't get that at all. Again, it's part of that designing for the teens and 20-somethings rather than for women who have women's bodies. You don't want to get me started on that one.

Kathy: They just need to honor all bodies. As a curvy girl, I envy the straight girl. They look much better in jeans.

Ginger: Yes. I can tell you that the girls who have the straight bodies want the curvy bodies. It's just like curly hair versus straight hair. We all want what we don't have, but these days often we can have both at least when it comes to the hair. When it comes to bodies, we can create illusion. That's something we'll get into as we go down the road a little bit.

I just want to remind everyone who is going through the program that there is one exercise in here that will keep coming up. In fact, it really is in your shopping guide. In this particular chapter, only some of the questions are there.

Remember, when you're shopping or going through your clothing that you're not wearing, ask yourself these questions. I'm going to say them because sometimes what happens is our eyes glaze over. When we've seen something once, we don't read it for real when we go back again.

I just want to remind you that when you're looking at something in your closet you haven't been wearing, ask yourself these questions:

1. Does it fit properly? Be sure it really does. If it doesn't, can it be tailored? If it can be tailored, do you want to put the money into it to be tailored? That's a very important question.
2. Is it comfortable? If it's not, you'll put it on and take it back off again.
3. Is it a great color on you? That's critical. We'll talk about that as we go along. If you haven't already done so and you're not sure about your colors, have your colors done by someone who really knows colors. Make sure they have a history of doing this for a while and that, generally speaking, they're not doing the seasons.
4. Does it go with at least one other item in your wardrobe to make a complete outfit or is that part of the problem? If it doesn't go with anything, can you find something else to go with it or have you been trying? In that case, you should just give up and get rid of it so it doesn't drive you crazy.
5. Do you have good memories associated with it? Sometimes things sit in our closet unlike the woman who got rid of that outfit after wearing it once because somebody said something mean to her while she was wearing it.

You may put something on and just think about some inappropriate comment. It could've been an experience you had that had nothing do to with the outfit but you associate that with the outfit. If it is a bad or painful experience, you might be better off getting rid of the outfit than trying to make yourself wear it.

6. Do you love it and think it is beautiful? This is something you'll hear me say over and over. It is absolutely critical that everything you buy you love and think is beautiful. There are no exceptions to that.

I think this has been great fun. I hope that those of you listening have enjoyed it. We are always open to questions. I want to encourage you if you can't make the

call or even if you can and are feeling a little shy about asking questions, feel free to email me questions in advance about the chapter we're going to discuss or any chapter. It doesn't really matter.

Next month we actually will finish up Chapter 2. We will then also begin addressing hurtful comments and unwanted advice.

I want to thank you all for being on here. The next call is November 11 at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

Kathy, I want to thank you so much for being on the call with me. It's so fun to talk about all of this as girly girls who are helping other girly girls, girls who want to be girly girls, or girls who just want to be themselves. That's what it's really all about, helping them to feel more comfortable with all of this and to go through the process.

I really want to thank you for being on the call today. You added a lot. I know everyone is enjoying hearing you. Give us your website.

Kathy: It's www.KathyEsper.com. I want to thank you for inviting me. You're most welcome. It was my pleasure to spend this hour with you. I always love talking to you about all of this stuff. I always learn something and go away with some new tip I can feel more girly girl about how I dress. Thank you.

Ginger: Great! Thank you very much. I look forward to hearing all of you on the call next month. Feel free to email your questions again. My email is Ginger@TotalImageConsultants.com. I hope you all have a wonderful month. Thanks so much.