

Your Real Power Suit is the Body In it Balancing Life and Energy to Optimize Success

Did you know that the instant you step into your day, 8 out of every 10 people you come in contact with will process your *visual* image before you even open up your mouth to say anything? You may think this is unfair, “*I’m actually a really great person. Why should that matter!?*” Yet if image is reality, isn’t it worth paying attention to? You may be at the top of your professional game – the best trainer, the top seller, a real go-getter – but if your image is in need of a polish, you could find yourself on a slippery slope toward *less*.

Think of image as a value-add you deliver the instant you walk into your day. We *put it out there* through objective factors like clothing, grooming, and general appearance – the seemingly unfair visual characteristics that often bear judgment from others. We also create it through internal processes like body language, personal attitude, and physical presence – our insides projecting out to the world.

As a fitness professional, your clients look to you for a hint of what they can be. They want more energy, better self-esteem, more confidence, and a body they can be proud of! How well are you living up to their expectations? Should you? Maybe we should talk a bit more about this ‘Power Suit’? What you wear and how you wear it make an impact on your business. Your external appearance in combination with your internal body and mind processes affect your behaviour and confidence levels. That combination ultimately affects your performance. That means that you could be dressed for success, but poor confidence with your work, or low self-esteem over a bad decision may resonate as incompetence or indifference. It means that your fabulous education and top-notch experience could be shadowed by the fact that your clothes are wrinkled or out of date. It’s not fair, it’s just there. In today’s highly competitive fitness market, how do you differentiate yourself from your competitor?

In *any* business, long-term success involves creating, managing and exploiting *assets* and *skills* that competitors find difficult to match or counter – basically, having the drive, determination, and passion to do what the others aren’t doing, or don’t want to do. Everyday, you coach your clients and participants through exercise, which is something *you* have no challenge with and *your clients* sometimes don’t want to do. You’ve excelled in that aspect of your life through practice and perseverance. Does your business and the image you’ve created around it get as much attention?

Let’s look at three areas that deserve some attention.

Attending to Visual Image

Human beings are pinned to visual cues to make decisions about so many aspects of life from safely navigating traffic, picking produce that isn’t too ripe, or has too many bruises, to deciding about a person we’ve just met. It would be nice if visual appearance wasn’t so high on the success scale, but since it *appears* to make an impact, think about these simple reminders.

Dress for success

In the business world we talk about the POWER SUIT, dressing for success, confidence through clothing ... projecting your professional self to your potential client and beyond. Why should it be any different for the fitness professional just because your ‘board room’ happens to

have weights and cardio machines in it? You're making an impression on everyone who sees you on the job.

Remember to:

Keep current with your styles. If you haven't shopped for new 'work clothes' in the last 5 years, consider a new look.

Develop a 'uniform' that works well for you. For example, in the gym where I train, we all wear white tops with black bottoms. We look sharp, professional, and like we're part of a team.'

Dress professionally, not provocatively. Many fitness professionals mistakenly think they have to show off their bodies in order to sell their skills. Bare midriffs, too tight shirts, or short shorts will not only make some of your clients uncomfortable, but they make *you* look unprofessional. Wouldn't you rather be known for your beefed up grey matter than your beefed up biceps? Besides, if you're fit, even looser fitting clothes will show you off with style!

Exercise the Mind Gym

If you can't quite wrap your head around the importance of visual image let me enter some hope into the argument. Sure, visual image makes a big impact, but I truly believe that the most important part of *any* professional billboard is how we feel about ourselves ... our insides projecting outward. Whether you're 5 foot 2 or 6 foot 2, 150 pounds or 350 pounds, style guru or stuck in a time warp, if you feel great about yourself people will take notice. They'll want a piece of what you've got, and that's good for business. If you've got low self-esteem or negative energy surrounding you, people will part a path to let you go by, and you could be watching potential business walk away. Appreciate that there are many ways to '*mentally energize*' and come closer to your potential. We spend our day getting and giving energy through two-way interactions between what we do, think, and feel – and by how well our physical machinery is housing it all.

Doing relates to our behaviour patterns, i.e. Going for a walk, interacting with positive people, engaging in meaningful work.

Thinking is based on how we formulate our thoughts. Do you engage in mostly positive or negative self-talk?

Feeling is affected by how we identify with emotions. Our mood or affect can be high, low, good, bad, indifferent, and that will impact how we get through our day.

Physiology relates to how well we take care of our physical machinery. Are you rested, well hydrated, well nourished, getting exercise, reducing stress?

Our mental energy is affected by the relationships between each of these variables. What we *do* affects our thinking in a positive or negative way. How we *feel* impacts what we do or how much we take on. Our negative thinking patterns can make us *feel* less effective and as a result we *do* less. All of these variables are greatly impacted by our physical health and wellness. If the machinery is breaking down (i.e. you're tired, stressed, dehydrated) your productivity will take a dive. It's important to take care of all of these areas *and* understand how they impact one another.

As a fitness leader, personal trainer, educator, and professional speaker, most days my schedule makes me glad that I'm fit and healthy. Aren't you? Helping others, being on you're

A-game is an energy draining proposition some days. Even still, / can say that most days I'm thrilled to be doing whatever it is that I'm doing, and when my schedule runs rampant, I have the resources to get myself through the maelstrom. Day to day it's important to take care of *you*, the caregiver. Strive to be an individual that feels good on the outside *and* the inside so that no matter how you dress as you enter your day, your energy will resonate to the outside world and you'll be projecting your REAL Power Suit.

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Life Balance *is* possible, even with your busy schedule! Michelle makes you think, laugh, and implement REAL change. With a Masters in Kinesiology, a BA in Psychology, and a specialization in Health and Exercise Psychology, Michelle not only walks her talk in life balance and fitness, but she knows a lot about it! She takes that credibility seriously in an industry where *anything goes*. She has built her career since 1990, as a college educator, personal trainer, fitness coordinator, and author. As a professional speaker, she shares her experiences in a humorous and realistic way with delighted audiences across North America. Michelle knows her energy has fueled her business success! Today, through her seminars and products, she helps people overcome big challenges through a start small solution that really works!