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Her product is an improved you

Jamie Yasko-Mangum coaches clients in how to dress, speak and behave for success.

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PHOTOS



['Look, Speak & Behave'](#) (DENNIS WALL, ORLANDO SENTINEL) Apr 30, 2007

You are what you wear. That has long been the mantra of image consultants.

Jamie Yasko-Mangum, president of Successful Style & Image in Casselberry, goes two steps further. In her opinion, you also are what you say, and what you do.

She details her philosophy in a pair of books published this week, *Look, Speak & Behave* (Skyhorse Publishing, \$19.95). One is aimed at men, the other at women.

But for a moment, forget looks, speech and behavior.

"The foundation of a positive professional and personal image is self-esteem," says Yasko-Mangum. "You must believe in yourself, or you're simply putting on a mask" -- and fooling no one.



Because she thinks a genuine sense of self-worth is fundamental to success, she devotes the first segment of her book to the subject.

What are the signs of low self-esteem? She lists almost a dozen. Among them: You are unwilling to take risks; you are unwilling or unable to set and achieve goals.

How do you develop positive self-esteem? She examines a number of approaches. Validate others, giving praise where praise is due, she suggests. Accept differences in opinions and ways of doing things. Value self-motivation over a sense of entitlement.

She doesn't get all mushy when discussing self-esteem. Her approach is straightforward, her advice succinct, her examples concrete. As a multitasking business owner, wife of an attorney and mother of two young sons, she knows how to stay on point -- whether doing one-on-one coaching, conducting workshops for school and college students, or seminars for corporations such as Darden Restaurants and Estee Lauder.

And she pulls no punches in summing up her philosophy: "If you feel bad, look sloppy, speak crudely or act rudely, you will doom your chance for professional success."

Projecting confidence

In projecting a positive image, "appearance is extremely important," says Yasko-Mangum, 38.

"When you're wearing the right clothes for the right occasion, it gives you confidence. And when you're confident, you project credibility."

Personally, she chooses strong colors and tailored styling to add heft to her trim, petite figure. But her look is just part of the total package. Her voice is strong and she speaks with authority. Her manner is brisk, her gestures expressive. She looks you in the eye, listens intently, smiles often.

In other words, she practices what she preaches.

When Yasko-Mangum graduated from Rollins College in Winter Park with a degree in communications, she had never heard of image consulting. But it is actually something she's always done, doling out dress-to-impress advice to her brothers, to classmates, and to colleagues in the law office where she got her first job as a paralegal.

During the mid-1990s, when she owned a legal-staffing service, "The feedback I got was how well our people presented themselves," she says. "Legal administrators told me, if I ever wanted to change jobs, I should become an image consultant. That was the first I knew such a thing existed."

In 2001, she completed the certification program at the Iimagemaker School in Chattanooga, Tenn., opened her image-consulting business and began developing her "Look, Speak & Behave" seminars.

Many image books focus on dress, she says. "But even if you look great, if you're not intelligent when you speak and don't behave with pride, you negate your positive appearance."

Intelligent speaking means being focused, articulate and knowledgeable, sharpening your electronic skills, and being a good listener, she says. And because actions often speak louder than words, she trains clients to behave assertively: making eye contact, maintaining good posture, being poised, treating people with respect and keeping an open mind.

"I want to show people how to remove self-doubt," she says. "To empower them to be their best."

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