

Laura on Life "Dressing for success"

by Laura Snyder

I looked at myself in the mirror. Passable, I thought, but I wish I looked a little more something. Maybe I should change my clothes again. No, this is crazy. I've already changed three times.

Am I wearing too much make-up? Not enough? Heels or flats? Do I look intelligent? After all, aren't my brains more important than my looks?

No, I don't have a date. I have a parent-teacher conference today. Why am I so worried about it? Because the teacher's perception of me will indirectly relate to how she treats my child.

If I walk in the classroom the way I'd dress for a day of sweeping floors and cleaning toilets - in sweatpants, my cleaning t-shirt, and a pair of slippers - the teacher would not only think my child needed remedial math, but guidance counseling as well. On the plus side, she might sign him up for free lunches.

If I show up in a business suit and heels, the teacher might feel that I spend way too much time at the office and maybe more homework would keep my kid off the streets.

Sure, I want to know how my child is doing in school. I want to get his report card as well. They hold the report card for ransom, so that they can be assured that we parents will show up.

I have gone to many parent-teacher conferences. Always, without fail, 100% of the time, they will start with "Your child is doing great. I've loved having him/her in my class." It's something they learn in teacher-school, most likely.

What you want to say is: "Yeah, right. That's not what he says." Instead, you simply say, "Thank you" and wait for the bomb to drop.

"Mrs. Snyder, your child will be getting a low grade in reading because he hasn't brought in his signed reading log."

"Well, it's in his backpack when he leaves every morning."

"Yes, but it's not signed."

So basically he's getting a low grade because I didn't do my homework, right? Alright, this means war!

"Well, you know, I noticed a couple of words on his spelling tests that weren't wrong that you marked wrong." Take that!

"I assure you, Mrs. Snyder, if I marked them wrong, they were wrong."

Okay, I shouldn't have worn jeans. Maybe my black slacks would've conveyed the proper amount of intelligence required to convince her that I do indeed know how to spell.

I looked down and checked my white shirt for spaghetti stains. Nope, it wasnâ€™t the shirt. Definitely the pants.

â€œHere is a picture journal that your child made last week,â€• she continued.

â€œIs that what I think it is?â€•

â€œYes, I believe itâ€™s a dog doing his business on the hood of your car.â€•

â€œBut we donâ€™t have a dog and our car is red!â€•

She looks at me skeptically. Is my hair in a style that subliminally transmits â€œmoronâ€• to her? â€œI think Iâ€™m going to recommend that your child see the school psychiatrist.â€•

â€œNo, really, heâ€™s fine. He just has a good imagination.â€•

She raises her eyebrows. Maybe my mascara has clumped. â€œMrs. Snyder, I know the difference between a good imagination and a warped imagination.â€•

Maybe it was the cranberry lipstick. Darn! I shouldâ€™ve stuck with the clear gloss.

You can reach the author, Laura Snyder, by email, or visit her web site.

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