



A picture is worth a 1000 words.

You better believe it!

By Hilda Jerina, Image Consultant

I want you at this very moment to go and get your camera. If you have a self-timer, great. If not don't worry.

For those of you with a self-timer, position it in a place that will capture your entire face, head and shoulders. The corner or the shelf of a bookcase is great as it seems to be at the right height. Now put the camera on the shelf and angle it so that from the view finder you can see where you've positioned the shot. Now, set the timer and run into spot. Smile. Take a couple of close ups - yes... zoom in ladies and try a couple from different angles to capture you as YOU ARE.

For those of you that don't have the self-timer feature, stand in front of a mirror. Facing the mirror, hold the camera in front of you at arms length with the camera lens facing you. From the mirror, you'll be able to see what's being captured in the view finder. Just adjust and Smile. If you have someone around, ask them to take your picture - up close, from a distance and different angles.

Now, download the pictures on your computer. TAKE A GOOD LOOK . THIS IS the REAL YOU. If you are like me, you're probably only noticing your faults on your face. Stop it right now. God gave you this package. Embrace all your features. You are beautiful in your own right! However, **this is YOU** as you are right now at this moment (with makeup and/or without makeup) -- not in your fancy outfit but the 'real' you in your everyday life -- this is how your husband sees you, as the postman sees you, as your children see you, as your friends and co-workers see you. Look at all your pictures and leave the best one on your screen.

It's time for the blink test. Close your eyes and count to 5. Quickly open them and look at your picture. What is your first impression of "this woman" you see in the picture? Of course this is you ... and we all see our own imperfections immediately, but try to be objective. Imagine yourself as a stranger looking at this picture for the first time. What is your first impression of the woman in the picture? What would you say about her? Would you give her the time of day or would you ignore her?

Do you look healthy or tired? Do you look alive or worn out? Do you look your age, younger or older? Do you look approachable? Do you project your true personality? Do you represent your true beliefs morals and values? Do you like what you see? Is this the image you want to project to the world?

Whatever you do, **DO NOT** delete these pictures. **SAVE THEM.** Keep these pictures on file for future reference.

Take pictures again in 5 months - with makeup and without any makeup. Always take pictures when you get your hair cut, coloured or highlighted or while you are letting it grow long. Just take pictures of the REAL YOU throughout the year. Take it before you head out to do groceries, before doing the dishes,

before going out for a walk, when you come home from work or church or a date with your husband. Nobody else needs to see these pictures. There are for your eyes only.

Start comparing your glam shots over the months / year. You will learn a lot about yourself. You might even be amazed or in shock at how you look on a normal day and/or on different occasions. Sometimes, we believe we look stunning and are expressing our best selves. However, when we see ourselves objectively thru the eyes of another person, we just might be in for a surprise. See this exercise as a big learning experience in which you can grow in your own self-awareness and self-image. It's not a moment to bemoan your situation, but rather to become more conscious of little details that can make a difference.



If you don't like what you see, then do something about it. Don't get discouraged or depressed. Rather, go for a hair consultation, look at magazines or the internet for ideas, visit the cosmetic counter and ask about makeup application or products. Try different colours, try on different accessories or ask others for their honest opinion. If you continue to struggle and still feel that you need to change your look, why not book a session with an image consultant. A consultant will be able to show you which styles and colours will project the real you in an attractive manner.

And remember, regardless of how you look or how you feel... Smile !

"It may sound like a cliché, but beauty does start on the inside. It's like a state of mind, a state of love if you will. Then whatever you can do on the outside is all like a bonus." Queen Latifah

