

Texture - The Secret Weapon

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All right, gentlemen. Today, we're going to talk about texture, the secret weapon. I call it the secret weapon because most people, when you think about style, texture is something that never comes up.

I want to take you to a couple of experiments. These were done quite a while ago when actually working with animals and stuff that basically Harry did at the time was perceived as groundbreaking, not cruel and unusual punishment, which I now look at it and feel like, wow, they just really treated these baby monkeys really bad.

Basically, his name is Harry Harlow. He did, I think, a lot of this research at the University of Wisconsin, which is just a few hours down the road from me in Madison, Wisconsin, but he went to Stanford. Throughout his research, what he did is he studied primates and their reaction to relationships with others.

The big study that he's known for or at least I know him for is when he took two surrogate mothers, and these were not real monkeys. They took a baby monkey just minutes after being born and they introduced it to a wire mesh, which didn't even really look like a monkey, but it had milk on it. Then they had one that was more cushioned, I thought looked a little bit more like a monkey and had actually milk with it.

Consistently, the baby would choose -- when the baby had to make a choice, it would go with the cuddlier mother that had milk, but here is where it gets interesting. When they removed the milk from the cuddly mother and only the wire mesh mother had milk and they both had a heat source within them so it's not like neither of them were cold, the baby would come over very quickly to eat at the one, but then would return and spend the vast majority of its time with the cuddly textured mother, would hold onto her.

Here's a little bit of a back story. When I ran a nonprofit in Ukraine, one of the issues with a lot of the orphan children, the orphan babies is that they literally didn't have enough hands to rock them. I remember seeing these rocking machines. It's incredibly just sad. I remember just seeing these babies in these rocking machines so that they felt that they were getting some type of attention.

It's a very innate thing that we want to grasp, that we want to grab onto something, that we want to be cuddled. We want attention. We are social beings. What's interesting is that texture sends that signal of people literally want to touch something.

Now, men do a pretty good job of holding off of touching other men's sweaters, touching their jackets, but oftentimes if you wear something that has texture with it and it's a friend's, he'll

say, "Hey man, that looks good," and they'll come up and they'll touch that leather jacket. That's a bit cooler than going up and patting your chest usually and saying, "Oh, that's a nice sweater." Well, some guys like that. But in any case, the point is if you want someone to touch it, if you want someone to engage with you, you want to give off a soft, almost you can't resist kind of feeling, then start to bring texture into your wardrobe.

Now, I'm going to go ahead and I'm going to give you guys some examples. We get into it a lot actually and do a better job if you go into the article. You can click on the pictures. They'll get really big and you can see the texture. There are a few rules though. I want to explain a few key concepts.

One is that you're going to hear, "What is texture?" Texture is a surface. Weave is actually the way the fabric is woven. When I say a napped surface, it's got a three-dimensional surface and it's actually a bit softer, and that's what we're going to see in wools and flannels. There are going to be other types of weaves such as a herringbone that's going to be much more glossy. Glossy weaves don't have as much texture and therefore, don't attract as much to be touched. Now, fabric, that's actually the cloth itself and that's what we'd cut to make into a clothing.

Now, in general, these are very general rules, but I'm going to say the more texture you have, the more napped the surface, the more casual it's going to be. And then what makes that even more casual is bringing in pattern. Flannels are going to be more casual than worsted wools. They both have texture, but the flannel's softer and more napped surface is going to make it a little bit less formal, but it's also going to mean people are going to want to touch it and it feels good against the skin.

Again, like I said, texture equals less formal and texture is also going to give us softer colors. Softer colors are oftentimes going to be less formal. This is where you can have something that maybe is a harsher color, but one that has the napped surface. All of a sudden, it's going to look a little bit -- basically, the napped surface oftentimes uses a lighter color fabric. The way the light reflects off it, it just softens it quite a bit, and again, softer colors, softer fabrics versus sleek colors, sleek fabrics. Those are going to be more standoffish and they're going to be more formal than ones that want to be touched, that want to be cuddled, that want to be held.

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Specifically, how can you add this into your wardrobe? Sweaters are the easy ones. A lot of guys, they've got maybe some clunky sweaters. Look to upgrade your sweaters. Look at cashmere. Look at lightweight wools. Those are going to be the ones -- especially cashmere, angora, those are going to be the ones that really can be more lightweight, can be layered with clothing, and are going to look great under a sports jacket or just worn by themselves.

Next, let's look at jackets and all types of jackets. Leather jackets -- and I show this in the article -- they've actually got different types. You can have ones that are really textured, have a lot of folds in it, rougher leather. Those are going to be more casual. A sleeker, cleaner-looking

leather, that's going to be more formal. Leather still overall generally is casual, but you'll see in the example there's actually a dressier leather jacket.

Now, we can also talk about sports jackets. We can talk about suit jackets. So anytime you start to bring in the texture, again, it's going to become less formal. A great place where I love to see texture, sports jackets. You're going to see it in tweeds. You're going to see it in flannels. You're going to see it in all types of different materials that are brought in, any type of sports jacket that you can bring in texture is a great thing and something that you should be looking at.

Let's talk about shirts. Now, shirts, most of them are made from cotton, aren't going to have much of a napped weave, but you can start to see some flannel shirts. You can see some that are actually made with a softer weave, that have a rougher texture such as chambray, so those are going to become, like I talked about in the rules earlier, less formal.

Then we have trousers, so gray flannel trousers is one of my favorite examples. Jeans actually have a little bit of texture and that texture makes them, besides the actual material used, makes them informal. Again, with the gray flannels, those are never going to be as formal as gray worsted wool trousers.

Last thing, shoes, shoes are fun. In shoes, do I have texture? Suede. Look at bucks out there. All of these things, you can bring in a little bit of texture to them and that texture is a great way to spice up a wardrobe. There are a few other ones that I probably forgot. Corduroy, that's a great example as well with trousers.

Guys, I look forward to seeing you in the next video. Bye-bye.

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