

# The Personal Image Blueprint

## Lesson 18 - How Clothing Affects Behavior

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Former FBI counterintelligence agent Joe Navarro told me this story. He said that the FBI used to take from a large population groups of agents, and they would put them into separate groups, and they would give them similar problems and oftentimes just change one or two variables. In this situation, they took these groups and they said "You've got a hostage situation. How are you going to deal with this?"

They tried to keep everything the same, but these guys were faced with a very high-pressure situation. There was a time limit. They had to act, and they had to act quickly. We usually saw two courses of action, he would say. You would have a group of gentlemen who would say "We're going to bust in there. We're going to pull them out. We're going to do it with force." This is something that's usually preferred, what they call, by the knuckle draggers. Basically, a lot of us ex-military guys. But it's also something that they accounted for. They made sure they had a population spread so that you had those guys spread out across.

The problem with this is it's high-risk, and you often do lose some hostages. The preferred option was negotiation. This also was one of the two most popular choices. They would choose to negotiate. This is the route that the FBI wanted the agents to go. Now, the great thing about a negotiation, yes, it takes longer, but they usually turn out with a lot less bloodshed.

Now what was the factor that they adjusted? They had the groups that actually met in combat gear. They suited them up like they were ready to go. These groups consistently chose to go in with force. The other group that was dressed normally, oftentimes in suits and in their regular gear that they would wear in Quantico, these guys would choose to negotiate the vast majority of the time.

It was a clear indicator that the way you are dressed affected the choices and the actions that you took. We become what we wear. Think about it. Halloween, one of the big events when you're a kid. You look forward to getting dressed and to wearing that costume and becoming that person. Doesn't matter if you're a cowboy, a knight.

It affects us as adults. Did you know that there is Talk Like a Pirate Day? Yes, there are people that get dressed up and talk like a pirate. But they get dressed up and they become a role player. Actors know this.

Johnny Depp, whenever he looked and he put together the costume, he looked at people like Keith Richards, and when he would get into the costume, it was a whole change in his state of mind.

You can't tell me if you're wearing a costume like this, yeah. You're going to behave a little bit differently.

Uniforms. We see it throughout the military. There's a reason why men are put in the uniform, especially early on in their career. It's because it helps us conform.

Look who this is, by the way. This is Elvis Presley. When he wore the army uniform, people had great things to say about him. They said he was very humble, he was a perfect soldier, that he did what he was instructed, and that he had no huge ego. That's a huge thing for one of the most popular musicians on the planet to go into the service and to pull it off. A lot of it had to do with he was put into a uniform which didn't make him stand out and made him part of the team.

Now, what happened later on in the 70s, well, that's quite a costume there, but yeah. Can you imagine? I can't even imagine Elvis not in the 70s wearing an outfit. Yeah.

Northwestern University did a great study. It's getting a lot of press right now. The New York Times just put out a good article. It's from the field of embodied cognition, a new and growing field. But this has been around a while, because the focus and what made this study actually so unique it instead of focusing on how clothing affects others, it focused on the role clothing takes in the individual, the person wearing it, assuming a role and how it affects their ability.

They broke the participants up into two groups. One group was going to be wearing a jacket, and they were going to think that they were doctors. The other group were told they're wearing jackets, but they're just of painters. What happened?

The group that thought they were wearing doctor jackets, they were more careful, they were more attentive, they were more detail-oriented, and they performed on a higher scale on a standardized exam.

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Those that thought it was a painter's jacket, no change.

The important point here to remember is it's not just that we're wearing the right clothes, but we believe that what we're wearing is the right clothing. That's what's really important: that you're comfortable with what you're wearing, and you're confident.

Let's talk about how clothing affects you.

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