

Dress the Part

This sounds like something your grandmother or Sunday school teacher might say. The truth is, it really does dictate not only others' perceptions, but our behavior as well. I am sure most of us would be concerned if we entered our dentist's exam room and saw our dentist looking like a current rap star; baggy pants, gold & black teeth, lots of *bling*. Wow. What a thought. "Okay, open wide and relax" Right. Or how about the police officer who writes you a speeding ticket in his speedos?! What?! How serious is that ticket. Okay, those are pretty far out there. Why is that? Those seem outrageous because we hold professionals to certain standards. I am not going to pay a premium to a professional who does not instill his professionalism to me by his actions, including his image, and most others won't either.

So, where am I going with this? Well, I see a lot of school dances. I mean, a LOT of school dances. I see students who are respectful, polite & well groomed. I see students in trendy, baggy, ripped clothes who lurk in corners with their sloppily dressed, slouching buddies. I see students showing more skin than Janet Jackson on Super Bowl Sunday....okay, that was tacky. But you get my point. Many of these kids get dressed for the dance twice; once for when their parents see them leave home, and a second time with their friends as they dress to 'make a statement'. They have no idea why this would possibly reflect poorly on them, and have no life experiences to know how their image will dictate their behavior. That's why kids have parents, and why students have teachers. It's also why schools have certain rules and dances have chaperones.

As an adult, it is our responsibility to set guidelines that will mold and shape kids for the future. We can set an example with our actions. Every contact with these kids is a learning experience, whether you are teaching or not. Wow. Pretty thoughtful coming from a DJ. You see, even as a DJ, we can have an affect on where these kids go with their life. When a student requests a song, I have never, and will never tell them their request is stupid. Why? Because it isn't. Not to them. We may not play it for any number of reasons, and being the adult of the situation, use our judgement and discretion in that decision. But, the bottom line is respect in the process.

Now as a DJ, I can't set or enforce guidelines for what attire is appropriate at your school events. But I can encourage you to look at what image you want your school represented in, and how you want to send your students out into the world down the road. I can tell you what my folks told me: "As long as you live in our house, you live by our rules", and I'm sure many of you have heard similar lines. The same can be said for your school. As long as students are in your 'house' they can adhere to the standards of your school. Some day, later, they might thank you for it.

So, while image may be nothing short of a gimmick for those in the spotlight, it is, for the rest of us a reflection of who we are inside. When we dress up, we stand up straight, we carry ourselves with pride. So, students and faculty alike, I send out this challenge: Dress how you want to be perceived.

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