

Image

In the dictionary, image is defined as “a representation of the external form of a person”, which basically just means that our image is how we come across to other people. We all go to great lengths to make sure we have the image we want, the “right” one or the “coolest”, but why? And how important is it really? Let’s talk about it...

How image-conscious would you say you are? To whatever extent, everyone cares about what other people think of them, so one way or another we are always thinking about image. It could be how you dress, how you wear your hair, the way you talk to people – we are constantly making adjustments to fit in with our surroundings. So, in an interview you might dress smartly and speak Queen’s English, and then later that day meet up with your friends in a totally different outfit. Some people even go as far as saying that an image change is a major event in life. Is that true?

Often people see being image-conscious as a bad thing; they think it’s shallow and pointless, but the reality is that it’s not a bad thing – sometimes you have to be aware of how you’re being perceived by other people. The downside to it is that it can take over some people’s lives – how many people are obsessed with having the right phone or the coolest brand clothes – Jack Wills, anyone? There was an article in the news the other week about a kid in China who sold one of his kidneys just to pay for an iPad... how crazy is that?!

The thing is; it is important to understand that you can be aware of your image without having to sell a kidney just to fit in. So often, especially in school, people are afraid to be themselves because their image might not fit in, and that makes them feel vulnerable, so they adjust their image to suit the people who they consider to be cool, and they risk losing sight of who they really are. The fact is, although it’s fine to care about how you’re seen by others and take a little pride in your appearance and all of that; it’s so much more important to simply be yourself. When you know that your friends know the real you, with no pretending; that’s when you know that friendship is true, and you can’t deny that those are the best friendships. Life feels better when it’s genuine.

So, if you want the latest hair style or a Jack Wills hoodie, go get ‘em... but do it because it’s you, not just because everyone else has. Remember – the respect you get for being true to yourself is far more long-lasting than you’ll get for having cool trainers.