



Designer Labels

inside yourself



Deborah Marshall-Warren muses on the currency of designer labels – labels that can lead us to focus passionately on the exterior mantle to the neglect of the interior. But what about designer labels of the spirit she asks?

I was recently on a London bus travelling along the Brompton Road to my monthly clinic in Beauchamp Place, casually glancing through the sound-bite reportage of *Metro*. 'Posh is in high spirits'. I read on... 'Victoria Beckham claims her spirituality has helped her overcome her low self-esteem.' How quite amazing and validating for the piece I am about to write I wonder. The 'empress of new clothes' has designed her own inner label at last! Self-esteem!

Imagine designing your own label. Imagine designing a label that suits who you really, really are. A label that does not change with the vagaries of fashion, but honours who you are in your successful life today. This label celebrates you, and does you justice. It resonates with your inner caché, so when you adorn yourself with the latest fashions and step out with the latest handbag, the designer labels that you wear on the inside of you still fit congruently with the outer self.

You possess many gifts and talents. These gifts are like the facets of a diamond, expressions of a whole. Yet, do you feel whole? How many of us are whole beings? Were you to go to Selfridges, a large and glamorous fashion

emporium, you would be forgiven for believing that here is the Land of Oz, where you will gain self-confidence for Selfridges is self-confidence or so their advertisements would have you suppose. If you fly into Oxford Street today you can be sure to walk out with bags of self-confidence and with your credit cards truly crunched!

Merchandisers of all kinds know our gaps intimately. Most of us seek to fill these gaps, with our work, with our social lives, and with our things be they clothes, handbags, perfumes or gadgets. And, as much as we want to fill up the gaps inside ourselves, the gaps just seem to grow bigger. The more you spend to fill the gap, the wider the gap seems to grow. Why?

You can begin to design labels in your inner mind that enable and ennoble your life, and begin to wear on your mind labels chosen with discernment and detachment rather than with the ravenous desire that is fed by persuasion from the outside world. Wake up! Advertisers know that you are blissfully unaware of the seeds being nourished inside your fertile mind. These seeds can potentially grow and manifest in your buying products that have played with your emotions, your insecurities, and your fears.

Like your desire to be happier, to be more successful, to feel more secure, and to have more self-confidence and more self-esteem, are all stirred into action. Suddenly you find you have acquired the latest gadget or gizmo that enables you to continue working whilst on the holiday of your dreams.

And do you ever wonder whether your latest purchase was a mindful one? Was it made from a position of clarity? Was it made from a heartfelt desire to take care of yourself and set boundaries for your work-life balance? Were you fully respecting your health, your well-being and your freedom 'to just be'? Or was it a subliminal choice? Did the adverts make you do it? Were you following other people's expectations? Which gap are you trying to fill? Think about this and think before you buy!

We work longer hours than were possibly worked by our ancestors. Is it any wonder that we often ask ourselves: what is missing in our lives.

Perfumes are for many women, and men, delicious and sexy and alluring and we love them. Why? We love them for the gorgeousness of the smell. And as women perhaps too, we love the feminine and luxurious presence of the precious bottle amongst our other lotions and potions? So far so good.

Marketing companies however, seek to focus our attention on anything but our true selves and our essential qualities. The notion of the free gift has a very different meaning for them. We are bombarded with pictures of many 'things' that make constant reference to the 'inner you' and yet only the outer you is touched by a splash of whatever the elixir is on sale.

The creatives in the advertising arena seek to endow perfumes with qualities, feelings, personality, language, and an identity which seem to fill the gaps, and give us an identity, which we feel we lack, especially when personalized by celebrities. Yes, celebrities have always been slapping their names on new fragrances although for some individuals the incongruence between their 'inner' and their 'outer' is so regularly on display in their *Hello*, *Okay* and *Now* life dramas. Although their

'Fantasy' and 'Mystery' is a confusion we buy the 'Fantasy' and the 'Mystery' and say "Hey, bring it on!"

The advertising industry is a great observer of gaps, particularly emotional gaps. Having found a gap, they create a product tailored to the gap. They then give the product the same name as the gap. In exchange for paying a price that is worthy of the real quality itself, the product that pretends to offer the missing quality can be yours. Joy is yours! Splendour is yours! True Love is yours! Happy is yours! You can be Still. That seemingly, elusive, exclusive, expensive feeling you can't quite sit down and rest upon! But for how long? Of course, when it



runs out you can buy some more!

Advertising inspires desires. But spiritual teachings cite desire as the cause of great unhappiness. Indeed, advertising does not just identify the virtues. Advertising also identifies the vices, and cloaks them with a sense of acceptability. You can buy perfumes with such perverse titles as *Envy*, *Envy Me*, and *Envy Me 2*.

We trick ourselves when we buy into the advertising gap. We carry the handbag that fills the gap for a time at least, and then we search for another, because it does not suit the new season or it no longer suits our seasoned selves. Our gaps are deep and wide and take endless filling!

When will we stop, and see that we have within us the power to design our own labels in our inner minds? We

have the power to plug into and switch on a resource within ourselves, giving ourselves the power to adorn ourselves with labels fashioned for us and by us.

It diminishes us to think in terms of the labels that were thrust upon us, often through what we were told when we were children: Failure, Shy, Stupid, Guilty, Hopeless, Greedy, Fat, Thin, Clumsy, Lazy, Unworthy, Unlovable, Bad, Ugly. It hurts because these labels deny acceptance and understanding of ourselves.

Just imagine one of your true and free special gifts. Love, Joy, Light, Peace, Wisdom, Knowledge, Confidence, Power, Trust, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Loyalty. Choose one that you personally can find in yourself. Now, close your eyes and just imagine your chosen virtue as a mysterious potion in a bottle. Imagine yourself packaging your potion in a way that is to your taste and represents you. Design a fitting label for it. Now attach the label onto the packaging. Could you now mass-produce and sell this essence of you? Of course not!

Now open wide the arms of your vocabulary to embrace all of your virtues. Broaden your consciousness to create even more inner understanding and acceptance. We are beings of spiritual light. It is our natural inclination to be delighted.

Yes, we can design and create more labels, and we can manifest those labels of which we desire more in our lives both for ourselves and for the benefit of the people around us, our families, friends and communities. Love, Joy, Light, Peace, and Acceptance. Design these labels like banners, tall and broad, and made of a strong fabric, so that they always speak to you through your thoughts and in your actions. They are priceless expressions of your unique, wholeness. These are just some of the qualities and virtues with which you can truly fill the gaps.ii

• The writer is a hypnotherapist living and practising in Malta. Contact Deborah by email: deborah@marshall-warren.com or call 7927 6611 www.marshall-warren.com