

Give voice to your ties

Duff Watkins and Jean Woo

Are you an experienced public speaker? You are if you wear a tie. That's right; every time you don't wear you give voice to your personality and make a visual statement. So, choose your ties as you choose your words— thoughtfully.

Problem is, many men select ties thoughtlessly (or worse, let someone else choose their ties). That's bad because you need to be consciously aware of the signals that you send subconsciously. The psychological reality is that your ties always broadcast messages about you and those messages are always received subconsciously by your audience. So manage those messages.

Your tie has a single function: to transmit quickly and visually signals about your values, attitudes, characteristics and socio-economic standing in the world. It may feel like a noose around your neck but the humble necktie is actually a mini-billboard advertising you. A well chosen tie is a well chosen signal. It communicates who you are and where you're going.

A good tie is like a good speech: it makes a point. A good speech reveals much about the speaker, and a properly chosen tie speaks volumes about its wearer. A good speech persuades listeners, and a proper tie persuades viewers. Unlike a speech, however, a tie speaks even when you're silent.

Smart choices make smart ties. Consider these when selecting — or buying — a tie.

Choose ties consciously

That means look, think and pick. Give thought to what your tie says about you and what the pay off will be if you wear it. That blue tie with the pink teddy bears may make you look cute and cuddly but is that the image for which you strive? Maybe. Just make sure that your ties say what you want and means what you say.

Fit your face

Don't argue with Mother Nature. Work with what she gives you. Look at your jaw line and nose. If you see angles and straight lines (eg square jaw, pointed nose) then choose ties with angular patterns and straight lines. If you see ovals and contours (eg a round face with smooth contours), pick ties with circular patterns and curving lines. If you see a mixture of angles and rounded contours, then let the shape of your jaw line determine your choice. In short, let your tie's pattern mimic your physiognomy.

Eyes & ties

The slickest way of picking a tie is to have one of the tie colours match your eye colour. But if you are dark skinned or have an olive complexion, be careful with yellow and gold ties as they may make you appear sallow

or jaundiced. If you have a ruddy complexion or broken capillaries, avoid red or limit it severely unless you want to look like a road map. You want your tie to complement your face.

Speak, don't shout

Make a statement, not a scream. Loud colours make bold statements. So do not boldly go where no well dressed man has gone before. Ensure that your tie's bright colours attract rather than distract your audience. Above all, make sure that your tie isn't louder than your personality. Choose and use bright colours judiciously.

Shoot for symmetry

Symmetry means excellence of proportion, the proper and due relationship of parts to one another. Symmetry is when your clothes all hang together and combine to make you look good. Never choose ties in isolation from your shirt and suit. You wear them together so choose them together. You achieve symmetry when your face and clothes have a positive visual relationship. But you never achieve symmetry without the right tie.

Plan your payoff

Ask yourself, "What do I wish to convey?" for that is the simple yet powerful purpose of the necktie. Your tie will communicate a message instantly, subconsciously and non-stop to an audience that will infer things – good or bad – about you. So if your ties are not working for you, they're working against you. Hence the need to manage the message you send by planning your payoff in advance.

Bottom line: choose your ties wisely so that when they speak, they'll always refer to you in glowing terms.



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