

What Does Green Look Like?

Heard on EnergizeGreen – August 8, 2009

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I have to confess - as a kid, I guessed what people did for a living, based on what they wore and their hairstyle. If they donned a uniform, I guessed their hobbies, what their home environment looked like, the kinds of food they ate. It's not my fault, really, society has conditioned us to do this -- commercials and movies and TV shows -- they go to great lengths to create characters that are drawn from real life. Every nuance, every movement is detailed, and we get it stuck in our heads. Nurses, for example, in that silly hat they used to wear, were, in my mind, rigid and serious. I mean -- come on, tell the truth, when you think of a doctor's kitchen what does it look like? How about a park rangers? A police officers? It's superficial I know, but we do become conditioned to judge people from the outside in, not the other way around.

If at 15, you'd asked me to close my eyes and describe what a teacher wears, I'd have said, oversized scratchy wool suits that smell like mothballs, and dark rimmed glasses. There was a poster made famous in the 1970s that spelled out in complete detail what a nerd looked like - Are You a Nerd? It asked. There were more copy-cat posters that followed for geeks and preppies. Crunchy granolas were malnourished, tree hugging, shower-needing liberals. You get the point.

Today's young people are luckier -- they're growing up in a time when being an individual is embraced -- when it's cool to be different and cooler still, to be green. Even movie stars are getting into the act: Leonardo De Caprio, Gwyneth Paltrow, Orlando Bloom and Sting to name a few.

The way I see it, it's time for a new poster -- an electronic version we can download, that serves to remind us this earth is ours to take care of. Are You Green? it would ask. And instead of one stereotypical human providing the image -- there would be an endless series of faces -- movie stars and regular folks like you and me, all unique in our own way -- different on the outside, but with a common mindset on the inside, making this a greener healthier place to live for a long time to come.