PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS: IMAGE AND PRESENTATION

Women candidates and political activists are subjected to a lot of scrutiny about their appearance (for mostly irrelevant reasons) by both their friends and strangers. Accept this as a reality and prepare yourself, even if it bothers you.

You will not get a second chance to make a first impression
First impressions are made quickly and a negative impression is difficult to overcome. In a split second, people will form opinions about you in terms of your economic and educational background, your social position, your experience, your trustworthiness, your moral character and your success at your current or previous work. Accept that your audience will form an impression of you based on their assumptions. Ensure that their assumptions give you an advantage.

The key is to develop sensitivity and awareness of the image you present. Wear what you must to have your audience accept you. The way to do this is to find the balance between comfort and creating an image that reflects your style of leadership. People can tell if someone feels uncomfortable or their appearance is unnatural.

Plan your wardrobe ahead of time
Your clothes reflect you. Because of this, plan your wardrobe with the same diligence you give to your other political activities.

How and Why
The colors you wear are very important. You want to wear colors that make you seem healthy and alive. Avoid colors that make you appear pale, show dark circles under your eyes or otherwise unhealthy. Colors are traditionally associated with different qualities. Black, dark gray, dark blue, dark green and deep red often mean "strong and dependable." Think about the message you want to send. Use color to show yourself at your best.

Color for the media
The color of your clothes is very important if you go on television. For example, if they use a dark backdrop and you are wearing dark clothing, you will not be very visible. Color comes out differently on television and video. Too many dark colors, black in particular, will affect visibility. Black, white and red will appear very stark to the camera. Pale colors, like pink clothing, will appear faded. Patterns such as checks or lines will also appear stark. But sometimes larger patterns can be effective although solid colors are usually better.

Accessories
Accessories that are interesting and stylish can add to your appearance. Use them but sparingly. Dangling earrings and bangles can distract audience attention from what you want to say. You want the audience to pay attention to you, not your accessories.