**How to Become a Fashion Icon**

*By Kathleen Gasior*

So, you want to be a fashion icon? Oh, to bask in the glow of the paparazzi and be adored by the masses. Used to be, you needed a talent like singing, acting or fashion design to become a fashion icon. Thanks to the concept of branding, in which you become the product, all you need is your own darling self, a cutting-edge look and the moxie to put yourself in the mix. If Kim Kardashian and Tyra Banks can do it, why not you, kitten?

**Step One**

Decide who you want to be. This will inform the look that you are selling to the public. This should be as close to the real you as you can get so your inner light can shine through. What do people notice about you? Is it your flaxen, girl-next-door hair, your retro-punk clothes or your tattooed pin-up girl vibe? Do people stop you on the street to ask where you got your jewelry, clothing or that cool haircut? Maybe you have a witty, edgy attitude that people admire. Whatever your thing is, turn up the volume and work it out. Think Lady Gaga, Gwen Stefani or Rihanna – and channel that fierce and fearless energy.

**Step Two**

Put yourself out there. Once you know the image you want to project, consider socializing your new job. Attend any glamour-ridden event. Try art openings, parties, charity galas, fashion shows, designer store openings. Make friends with a publicist, agent or hotel concierge, and don’t be afraid to pick their brains about the hottest events. Attend these events in your most amazing outfit, best hair and makeup, and highest heels. Work the room with grace and vitality, not desperation. Mix, mingle and introduce yourself. If you can, create a one-word name for yourself, even if it’s not real. “Hi, I’m Ink,” is so much more memorable than “Hi, I’m Jennifer Jones.”

**Step Three**

Connect with the right people. When you’re networking, talk to artists, actors, playwrights, filmmakers and musicians. Get invited to their openings and events. When asked “What do you do?” make sure you have a great snappy answer like “I collect people,” “I’m a cultural tourist or “I sculpt hair.” Don’t lie, just be interesting. Cultivate your persona. If you’re know for your amazing collection of vintage hats, wear them everywhere, and offer your expertise as a resource for others. For example, if you meet a fashion designer, offer a loan of your collection for her next runway show. If it’s a film student, offer to style his actors for free if he’ll include you in the credits.

**Step Four**

Keep your day job – for now. Fashion icons are rarely created overnight. Becoming widely known takes time and perseverance. So, work hard, pay your rent and pour all of your creative energy into creating the most fabulous possible version of yourself. Try to notice others and their special gifts and help them achieve their dreams. This ensures that the people you meet will want to return that positive energy. Remember, fashions come and go, but icons uplift, inspire and endure.