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# I Hate Haters

I recently went to a party to celebrate the opening of a second outpost of Ikram, Chicago's famed clothing boutique. All of the city's fashion elite showed up, along with a huge contingent of well-heeled pretty ladies from my hometown, New York City. While I was walking around and introducing myself to interesting-looking people, I ran into an acquaintance I had met a few months before.

"This scene is really cool," I told her after we hugged hello. "I have seen so much great style here."

"I guess," the woman shrugged while glancing around at the beautiful crowd with indifference. "But these chicks are so malnourished. They should have done a cheeseburger station instead of a salad bar."

"What are you talking about? Everyone's gorgeous. Check out that tall sister in the fierce white pantsuit and feather earrings," I gestured across the room. "I'm going to go meet her!"

"Ewww—she looks like Steven Tyler with a boob job," she snickered.

"All right, well, I'm going to go over and introduce myself," I said, then walked over to the woman to tell her how fabulous I thought her outfit was. Afterward, I rejoined my acquaintance, who wasted no time commenting on what I'd done.

"I can't believe you told Steven you thought she looked good," she huffed before proceeding to point out and critique nearly every woman in the room. For every person I complimented, she had a cutting remark. Ironically, the prettiest people bore the brunt of her rant. I listened for a while, then the cattiness became too much to deal with, so I excused myself to get a drink. Then I spent the rest of the evening dodging her so I wouldn't have to hear any more of her ugly commentary.

The thing is, the more negativity you spew, the worse you look. Not only is meanness an unattractive and unsexy trait, but it's an

obvious sign of insecurity. If you feel good about yourself, there's just no need to tear anyone else down. And putting negative energy into the universe will only boomerang back onto you. Trust, no one wants to hang out with a bitter, bile-spewing [fill-in-the-blank].

My philosophy? Be open in your acceptance of others; be generous with your praise; be free with your compliments. If I see someone whose style, accent or attitude is different than mine, I take a step back and try to appreciate his or her perspective. If I think a colleague knocked a project out of the park, I'll tell that person. And if I see someone—especially a Black woman—who looks good, I'll give her a compliment. A simple kind word can make someone's day, and yours.

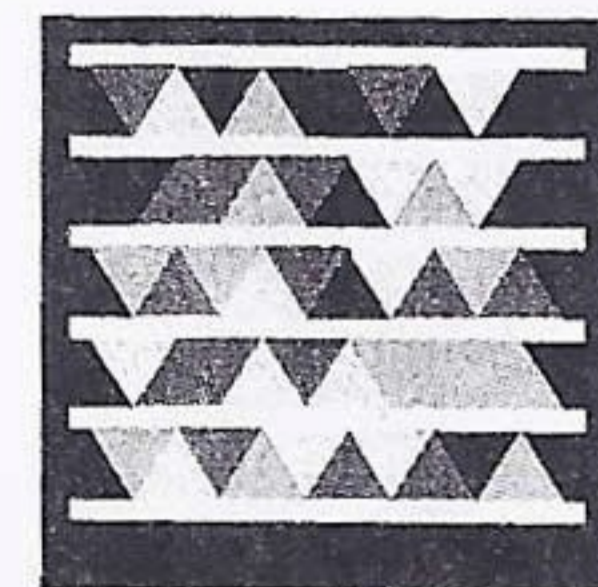
Shut down negativity, avoid haters and say something nice to a stranger today. Then watch how your own day improves.

Cheers!

Amy DuBois Barnett  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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