Reading helps you be stylish, as Chloë Sevigny proves.

Eye

What makes you stylish? Well, what's important is the ability to look at things in your own way, listening to yourself, asking, 'What do I really think about this?' when nowadays everywhere, cutting through the white noise of worries and expectations by engaging with number one. This endows us immediately with authority and power. For anything to be stylish, there has to be authenticity behind it. Style is the principle of decision in a work of art,' wrote Susan Sontag. Being true to oneself means learning to know ourselves, finding our inner voice, and giving us the ability to digest inspiration and put it to use. Leave behind your fears, then you can imagine and experiment with enthusiasm, seriousness and wittiness.

Bonnie Bjurstrom stands guard: a style mountain.

Elvis, pure rock'n'roll swagger, helped along by a large mouth organ and carefully planned collar and sideburns.

You

Take a wistful dive into the sparkling ocean of your personal culture. Your own complicated sense and tricks are plenty. The traditions behind your beliefs, heritage, culture, dreams, lifestyle and community are yours to be cell-only plundered or rebelled against, rooting you either way. Jean Cocteau said, 'Style is a way of saying complicated things.' Pronouncing what you know, instinctively or traditionally, in what you wear reveals what kind of person you are and speaks to the like-minded. The stylish person cares about what their clothes articulate about them. Historical costume and local history are a great source for meaningful originality and innovation. Your interests and passions, whatever they are, offer ideas, practical or fun, for wardrobe touches and alterations that give you your distinctive mark. People with a passion or a mission tend to be more stylish.

Style's mother: Polly Humphries, child-dancing queen.

Kim's mother Nikki, on a pedestal, wearing 80's kit accessories of daughter Theodora.

Mouse

A powerful tool is remembering formative style influences. Children are perceptive about clothes. You insist certain shapes and colours pressy, and dressing up would have been an activity, with role-playing in costumes and fun with make-up and adornments. Kim's daughter Theodora, aged 2, has the genius ability to wear a set of pearls with a satin mantle as well as dip her banana into tomato ketchup. You watched and admired what your mother wore and it formed some place in your imagination, with a magical, believing grasp of what clothes might say. The memory of this in later life becomes a basis of your style. Federico Fellini said, 'Style is what unites memory or recollection, ideology, sentiment, nostalgia, presentiment, to the way we express all that. It's not what we say but how we say it that matters.' Flash back to yourself as the most appreciative style observer that you were as a child, and see that same fresh eye now.

CHLOË SEVIGNY

What do you think of the stylists' dressing celebrities that is so large now?

I can understand that girls are too busy to do it themselves, but the way that they are celebrated for being amazing for throwing these looks together, when a lot of a stylist took four hours to actually put it together — that kind of bit bites me. I feel like people are getting credit when it is not really due, whereas with me, I go on line to look at all the collections, to see what is available to red carpet events.

Does celebrity make being stylish easier?

I don't necessarily think so. I have some friends who are quite small, for example Mia Wasikowska. She is one of the most stylish women I know. She looks better than a clothes model model because she knows how to put herself together. She points herself up. I love pretty little pictures. I love to look at her because she dresses her something in a teaching pattern, a brand to her coat, or the texture of a dress. That's what I love about looking at people who take pride in how they look, and who are in style. They are like eye candy. I love to look at beautiful things.

What do accessories mean to you?

Accessories are always hard for me. I'm a bit baffled by them. I always say myself as having a very big face, and strong features, so if I do accessories I tend to pile them on in quite a big way. I always actually want to wear something delicate, but it just doesn't feel right on me. I'm still trying to figure out my territory.

What do you think of the white T-shirt?

I do like the white t-shirt. It's a classic — especially if it's a bit worn and thin. I have a problem in that I love boots and sometimes that's hard with the white T-shirt. I do think it looks better to dress with boots, jackets and clothes seem to look better with my body — the clothes just hang more beautifully. White T-shirts always look great on girls who don't have to wear bras.

Chloë with Anthony Kiedis.

How important are fit and quality to stylishness?

I think you can never go wrong with natural fibres. You know, like a nice cashmere sweater, or cotton pants or shirt... a weird rayon blouse is just not going to look so good. I think that is a good tip for starting out, to always look out for nice natural fibres. 100 per cent cashmeres, wools and silks.

Do you think you can acquire style? How do you think it works?

I've never seen someone that I thought had bad style all of a sudden have good style — so I think it is probably something you're born with, and maybe it is about being exposed to things that you weren't before... but, I do think you're probably born with it. Many times I think a lot of people who are very stylish are creatively minded, you know? They think about things in different ways than people who aren't.

Chloë.

MISCHA BARTON

More than ever, it seems actresses get press coverage just for being stylish? What do you think?

Yes, there's a lot more media attention on actresses and their style now and the strange thing is, they decide if you are stylish. I don't agree with that decision. My style is always changing. It's never been constant; you can't box me into a sound in a second, and be thrust into the spotlight. It's not about your acting. They just think that you're stylish... or not...

Are clothes an outlet for your self-expression?

They are the personality on your body? I never understood that. People define what is my style. I say eclectic. One day I'm punk 'n' roll, the next I feel hippie. My style changes through stages. For a long time I was into the Lolita look and sweetie vibe. There are so many things I want to be. One episode a 1930s Dietrich homme, the next a Gothic Lolita girl. I wanted that look for a long time, really pale with dark lips and too much jewellery. It doesn't suit me, but you try everything, cool? Well, I do...

What do you think of the Hollywood stylists?

If people are always styling you, you can become feel unable and you can get a certain confidence but it's always a little bit more forced coming from that direction. It's not a real exploration of you — somebody's putting upon you. Many young people are afraid of being true to their own style. Life is a blending bit of place — there is a vibe out there in how to look hot, trendy, of the moment and very Hollywood — people get sucked in to that, and they look successful and fashionable, because of course the result is that they end up looking like everyone else. People just copy without a single thought for themselves.

Mischa in Hell's Kitchen.

Lo British Punk Princess.

Who were you inspired by when you were growing up?

I was really into the whole English punk thing. It was my way of rebelling when I was growing up in the USA. I started much more to pictures of English girls than to American women; Americans rebelled. I just related to and I always had a picture of Sarah my wall. I felt I knew where she was coming from. I loved her style, particularly that pretty tartan look that she did so well. Tough but pretty. When I looked at pictures of Madonna I would feel more like her than, say, Marilyn Monroe. I didn't want to be glamorous and sexy. I wanted to be cool in the true meaning when the word was invented — sassy, glamorous, cool rebellion by rock. I think I fell in love with the '70s from looking at images of my mother in the beach mid-early 70s. I look exactly like she did when she was my age. Her style was so natural. She carried so '70s look into me. She was the reason I became interested in fashion, utterly inspiring to me in every sense. She was never conventional, I think she'd sewed some of her wonderful clothes.

Are you into accessories?

I love them, although I only wear jewellery that's meaningful to me. I'll have to wear moon, but it really has to mean more to me than just the necklace. I love bags. I'm obsessive about them.

What are you into at the moment?

On one hand I'm into that rebellious kind of look. I love unpolished things, but the flip side is almost my favourite look: the plainer and simpler, the better. I don't think there is anything sexier on a woman than a pair of jeans and a big white T-shirt... and jewellery. To say it's not about it's doing that sexy or making you look thin... it just looks so great. Nothing sexier than laid-back style. I love things being unmatched. A Chanel chain bag with a dirty clothes look. That's why I love Chanel — it's always classy and classic. 'They fit into my pressiness.' I love the whole thing of pretty, but not, you know what I mean? You want to play with that with Chanel.

How important is you to fit that something Off?

When I buy things I don't fit Chanel on. It's like something I just buy it. It just doesn't occur to me to get things altered. I don't care if it doesn't fit perfectly, if it's the idea that I want to feel, then that is enough for me.

Do you think stylists are important?

It's not that important in a lot of people's lives, but I do think that clothes are a form protest.

Cecil Beaton's eye for colour and the refined passion for fashion that comes across in his books is a rich source of inspiration.

Archetypes

There's so much symbolism in the clothes you wear: representations of archetypes that people pick up at an unconscious level — the level a magician or hypnotist works on.

> 'Walk on a rainbow trail; walk on a trail of song, and all about you will be beauty. There is a way out of every dark mist, over a rainbow trail.'
>
> Navajo song

> 'The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself.'
>
> Henry Miller

Iris as The Nomad:
Tight black dress or suit, a splash of red lipstick, red or shocked and a cool, reverse-bugging mirror eye.

Hanna Duck as The Hippie Drummer.

Tara as The Dolly Dancer.

The 80s Bitch Warrior Girl.

Francesca as The Office Seductress.

The Madonna.

The Dreamer.

Nina as The Artist's Muse.