



## GREEN IN THE CITY

### Nine Words that Transformed My Life (& Help the Planet!)

By Annette Racond  
RNN Green Columnist

It's 10:30 on a breezy night in April, yet Sephora Times Square is bustling with women of all ages – and sizes – each determined to nail it on the beauty front. Hey, every day is another opportunity to glam it up and Sephora is well stocked to help its followers achieve this goal. Aspiring models wander aimlessly around the palatial store with its blinding lights seeking just the right beauty regimen to lift their spirits and cure life's woes. I love Sephora! It's Disneyland for adults.

#### WILL URBAN DECAY CHANGE MY LIFE?

I wonder if *Urban Decay's Perversion Mascara* can transform my life? My self-esteem hasn't been at its peak lately, so this might fill the void. Or, am I better suited for *Too Faced Better than Sex Waterproof Mascara*? At least I won't fall victim to smudged mascara if a future date goes awry. In these days of online dating and Facebook, shouldn't waterproof mascara be mandatory?

Keeping this in mind, I throw both brands of mascara into my cutesy basket provided to me by one of the Sephora-ettes on the sales floor. One of my girlfriends swears that *Yves Saint Laurent's Deep Strawberry Red high-shine lipstick* was the key to

securing a second date from Match.com. At \$37 a pop, she claims it's a steal. How can I argue? After all, she did make it past the first date.

Yves Saint Laurent's titillating makeup display is just a few aisles away. After sampling the lipstick tester (on my wrist, not my lips!), I agree it's good as gold. I can only imagine how much better I'll feel about myself after applying this luscious lipstick.

As I pass the adjoining cosmetics display, *Philosophy's Renewed Hope in a Jar* tempts me. Maybe it really is that easy. Why reinvent the wheel when Philosophy already has it all figured out?

*I can only imagine how much better I'll feel about myself after applying this luscious lipstick.*

#### IT'S A WRAP

As I snake my way to the register, the cashier with curled eyelashes so long they touch her eyebrows, carefully wraps each product in the company's signature lipstick-red tissue paper and then throws bunches of extra tissue paper on top. She then tosses handfuls of samples into my shopping bag containing over \$150 of hope – and a lot of packaging. The packaging is often humongous when compared with the size of the product inside. I guess they go by the theory that bigger is better.

Exiting the store, I already begin to feel agitated and disillusioned despite my promising purchases. What if my new and

nifty Yves Saint Laurent Lipstick doesn't offer me a sense of empowerment? What then? Would another product have afforded me a greater sense of self? I did skip a few beauty aisles.

#### SUGAR HIGH

I make a pit stop at nearby Dunkin' Donuts. After eyeballing the menu, I am craving a medium Hot Chocolate Frozen Drink. At this point, I don't care that the Hot Chocolate Frozen Drink is 590 calories with 110 grams of sugar. I wasn't aware that a single item could even hold 110 grams of sugar, but I decide not to dwell on that reality. What's a Hot Chocolate Frozen Drink without the perfect accompaniment: their Apple-Cheese Danish at 400 calories and 29 grams of sugar? Hopefully, the country will secure better healthcare when I get diabetes.

As I consume my 139 grams of sugar, I ruffle through my Sephora bag containing products to both enhance my beauty and my spirituality. I muse that the guy at the donut counter has already witnessed plenty of customers go into sugar shock, so he'll know what to do if I slip into a coma in his presence. I thought I would feel a lot better after shelling out over \$150 at Sephora and consuming 990 calories at Dunkin Donuts. Although I am actually a big fan of Sephora and Dunkin Donuts, I begin to realize that I can't depend on everything external to feed my soul. Plus, there is considerable waste involved in buying things I don't need.

I trek back home on the A train and wonder what to do now that I'm back at headquarters. I sift through my Sephora shopping bag



tossing out the sexy packaging from my purchases, product samples (inappropriate for my skin type) and handfuls of pretty tissue paper stuffed inside the bag. I envision unnecessary landfill, especially since I already own makeup from Sephora I haven't even opened. Maybe I'll add moderation to my to-do list.

These concerted efforts to cheer myself up and feel better about myself are now faint memories. Should I have slipped into Forever 21 for some glitzy earrings? Might that have made a difference in how I feel?

*“I sit on my couch taking deep breaths, closing my eyes as I focus on each inhalation and exhalation. I think about the Earth. It is Earth Day!”*

#### DEEP BREATHS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

I sit on my couch taking deep breaths, closing my eyes as I focus on each inhalation and exhalation. I think about the Earth. It is Earth Day! Keeping my mind fluid and flowing

– and not fixating on a barrage of obsessive thoughts – is challenging. Although I am a Certified Health Coach who writes about meditation and wellness, I often forget to practice what I preach.

I say out loud after each exhalation: “I am strong. I am worthy. I am powerful.” A sense of calmness begins to flow through my body. I feel calmer, more centered and even more at one with the universe. I contemplate my circumstances and reflect upon my life. Although make-up has its place, it now seems silly for me to pin my self-esteem on a new shade of lipstick to fuel my self-esteem.

With each repetition, I embrace every word without rushing through it. I begin to feel lighter. My body relaxes as I begin to realize I deserve happiness and am worthy of love. All of this emerges from inside-out. It doesn't require buying unnecessary products and engaging in wasteful consumer consumption in an attempt to fill an internal void. Racing around the city searching for inner peace is futile. All I need is within.

#### STRENGTH AND BEAUTY IN SIMPLICITY

There is strength and beauty in simplicity. Sitting still requires patience and practice - and it's worth the effort. Consumerism has its place in society, but retail therapy only provides fleeting moments of happiness and fulfillment. Affirmations are a true and lasting source of empowerment as long as these words resonate. Thinking about what we can do for Mother Earth is a much better way to spend time than searching the Internet for new lipstick shades. Taking an hour to seek ways to help our planet is a much more worthy goal.

These nine simple words - I am strong. I am worthy. I am powerful. – have transformed my outlook on life, as long as I tune into these words regularly and whenever I'm in doubt. An occasional trip to Sephora, however, is perfectly acceptable and lots of fun, too. The employees are awesome and welcoming, so it's nice to make that human connection. And, I do recommend *Better than Sex Waterproof Mascara*. It may not save the planet, but it does eliminate smudges on those not-so-great date nights. ■