

Is It Possible to Try This One On?

By Nancy Mann

About a third of time shopping is spent in a fitting booth. In the booth, you are not alone. High hopes accompany you – to find something that fits and looks good, for work or a party, let's say. Less than twenty percent of everyone will be satisfied with their mirror image...

Harsh lighting destroys some hope. M. Tiggerman, Australian social scientist, noted: "Physical presence of observers is unnecessary."

(Store lighting is designed to shine appealingly on bright shirts, and clothes on the rack.)

Target is the worst store for mirrors in the retail world; it has been called "The Haunted House." One shopper referred to Target's rooms as "Body Image Nightmare Capsules," as the mirror there reflected back "a she-beast, with questionable iron levels in that body..." (J.A.'s tweet - October 10, 2014). Huffpost writer, Baker warned "Those Who Try on Clothes," "Everyone has fat rolls when they bend over. Everyone."

Future marketers will change lighting outside in the main store area and lighting inside changing booths. A \$20.00 item decided on in the booth adds up to \$7,300 yearly, nearly \$40,000 in five years...

We purchase toys, perfume, electronics, costume jewelry from better-lit displays. Forever 21 tilts their dressing room mirrors away from you at the top to make you appear thinner; perhaps they read Georgia State University's study about shopping environments and good lighting by Dr. Bellenger, which also suggests better, seductive music.

Nordstrom will lead; in Seattle and in San Jose, a woman in dressing rooms will be connected to items on the web, with a touch-tone mirror, to accessories such as shoes, lingerie, handbags, perfume, and professional photographers... Nordstrom expects to spend 1.2 billion dollars for technology in the next few years.

What can one do? Accept ourselves. Oppose the merchant's and advertiser's call to buy, buy, buy! and the need to fit "an image." Follow fashion, not. Read no magazine ads.

There's a distinct possibility we've gone too far...