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FALL 2007

Capturing the Real You

One Woman's Journey to
Rediscovering Her True Beauty

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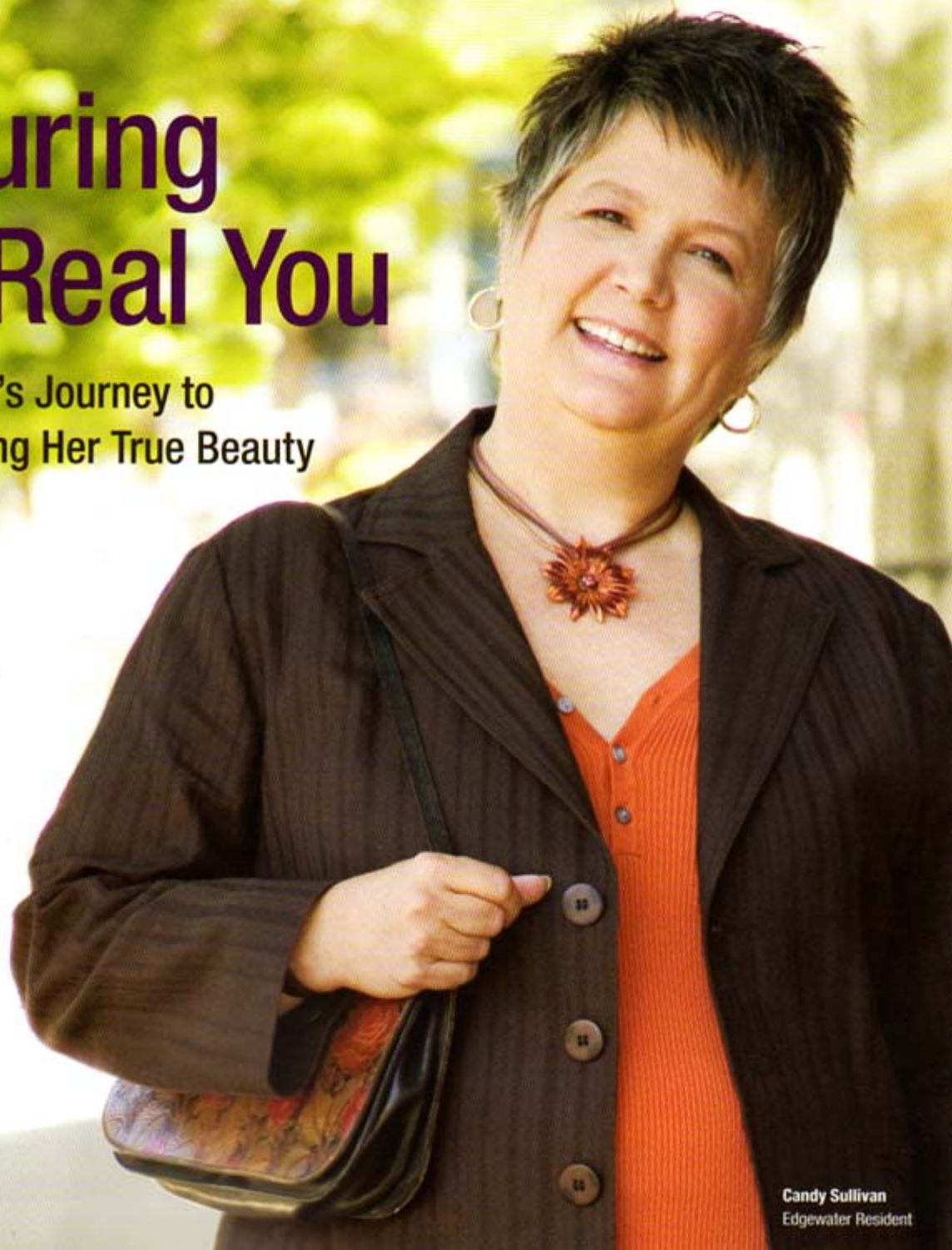
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Candy Sullivan
Edgewater Resident

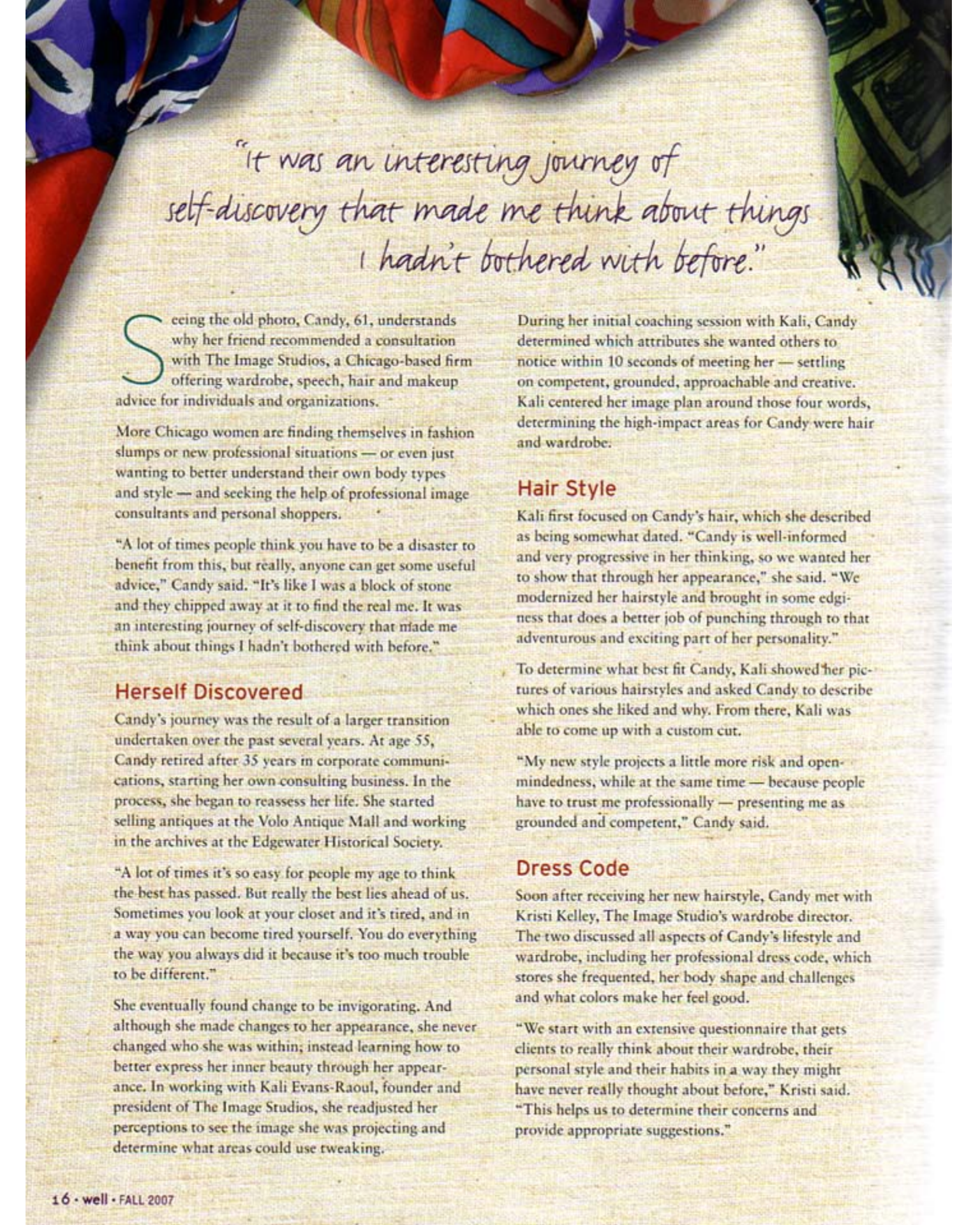


capturing the real you

*One Woman's Journey
to Rediscovering Her True Beauty*

In a picture taken eight months ago, Candy Sullivan is wearing a baggy, blue patterned T-shirt with jeans and black clogs. "I look like a frumpy, middle-aged woman," said Candy looking at the picture. "Those clothes make me look small, square and chunky."

Today, Candy, an Edgewater resident, looks a lot more herself – dependable and approachable with a creative flair. Clothes like a light pink cardigan topped with a decorative pin over brown pants and a fitted brown top achieve her desired look. Her hair is shorter and spiked. And her glasses have a hip metallic mauve tint to them.



"It was an interesting journey of self-discovery that made me think about things I hadn't bothered with before."

Seeing the old photo, Candy, 61, understands why her friend recommended a consultation with The Image Studios, a Chicago-based firm offering wardrobe, speech, hair and makeup advice for individuals and organizations.

More Chicago women are finding themselves in fashion slumps or new professional situations — or even just wanting to better understand their own body types and style — and seeking the help of professional image consultants and personal shoppers.

"A lot of times people think you have to be a disaster to benefit from this, but really, anyone can get some useful advice," Candy said. "It's like I was a block of stone and they chipped away at it to find the real me. It was an interesting journey of self-discovery that made me think about things I hadn't bothered with before."

Herself Discovered

Candy's journey was the result of a larger transition undertaken over the past several years. At age 55, Candy retired after 35 years in corporate communications, starting her own consulting business. In the process, she began to reassess her life. She started selling antiques at the Volo Antique Mall and working in the archives at the Edgewater Historical Society.

"A lot of times it's so easy for people my age to think the best has passed. But really the best lies ahead of us. Sometimes you look at your closet and it's tired, and in a way you can become tired yourself. You do everything the way you always did it because it's too much trouble to be different."

She eventually found change to be invigorating. And although she made changes to her appearance, she never changed who she was within; instead learning how to better express her inner beauty through her appearance. In working with Kali Evans-Raoul, founder and president of The Image Studios, she readjusted her perceptions to see the image she was projecting and determine what areas could use tweaking.

During her initial coaching session with Kali, Candy determined which attributes she wanted others to notice within 10 seconds of meeting her — settling on competent, grounded, approachable and creative. Kali centered her image plan around those four words, determining the high-impact areas for Candy were hair and wardrobe.

Hair Style

Kali first focused on Candy's hair, which she described as being somewhat dated. "Candy is well-informed and very progressive in her thinking, so we wanted her to show that through her appearance," she said. "We modernized her hairstyle and brought in some edginess that does a better job of punching through to that adventurous and exciting part of her personality."

To determine what best fit Candy, Kali showed her pictures of various hairstyles and asked Candy to describe which ones she liked and why. From there, Kali was able to come up with a custom cut.

"My new style projects a little more risk and open-mindedness, while at the same time — because people have to trust me professionally — presenting me as grounded and competent," Candy said.

Dress Code

Soon after receiving her new hairstyle, Candy met with Kristi Kelley, The Image Studio's wardrobe director. The two discussed all aspects of Candy's lifestyle and wardrobe, including her professional dress code, which stores she frequented, her body shape and challenges and what colors make her feel good.

"We start with an extensive questionnaire that gets clients to really think about their wardrobe, their personal style and their habits in a way they might have never really thought about before," Kristi said. "This helps us to determine their concerns and provide appropriate suggestions."

BEFORE: Candy is wearing a baggy, red shirt and shapeless skirt. The two distinct colors cut her in half visually, appearing unflattering on her frame.

AFTER: Candy looks a lot more herself, dressing in a more fitted, monochromatic outfit that is slimming and draws the eye to her friendly smile.

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Keeping in mind the words Candy chose to describe herself, Kristi began planning how to best portray them through clothing.

“We address ‘approachable’ and ‘creative’ through the use of color and accessories,” Kristi said, explaining that Candy could wear a basic navy, black, brown or beige outfit and jazz it up with accessories or accent colors. “‘Competent’ and ‘grounded’ can come across in your attention to detail. Remembering to put in your earrings and having no holes, stains or missing buttons really says a lot.”

Acknowledging that most clients don't view themselves as objectively as others may, Kristi always puts them before the 180-degree mirror. When faced with the full view of themselves, she said most will analyze themselves completely differently than she does. For instance, looking in the mirror, Kristi observed that Candy's face was rectangular in shape, so she should wear opposite shapes in her jewelry and necklines — V-shaped or rounded — to avoid a draining affect.

Candy's biggest lesson came when Kristi suggested she focus on being monochromatic — wearing the same color pants and shirt or jacket — and avoid belts or details in her hip area so the focus would be taken away from her middle and move toward her face.

“This works well for all body shapes if you want to appear taller and slimmer,” Kristi said. “The look is more striking, sophisticated and classy when it's all one color.”

Candy, being the eccentric, creative type, was worried about getting bored with one color, but she learned she could spice it up with accessories or a colored jacket to really express her personality.

“The accessories are what make people approach you and strike up conversation,” Kristi said.



Tips for Transformation

- **DON'T DISCARD ACCESSORIES** – unless broken or worn. You may find something to match and they tend to come back into style.
- **PINSTRIPES SEND A MESSAGE** – of authority and professionalism.
- **AVOID SHIRT SLEEVES HITTING THE MIDDLE OF YOUR UPPER ARM** – downplaying attention to the largest area of the arm.
- **IF PETITE, STEER CLEAR OF CAPRI PANTS** – as they cut the leg and make it appear shorter.
- **AVOID PATTERNS** – as they go out of style quickly or may bore you. Dress up solids and with accessories.
- **WEAR THE SAME COLOR ON TOP AND BOTTOM** – to appear slimmer and taller. Wearing different colors can draw the eye toward your middle.
- **GET FITTED FOR A BRA** – every six months.
- **SPEND SMARTLY** – with the majority of your wardrobe budget going to pants, jackets and skirts. Spend least on tops and accessories.

"I just know that I feel great and
I feel it's worth getting ready
in the morning. I do it for myself."

Colorful Impact

Although Candy had previously shrugged off the impact of color on her appearance, she quickly changed her mind following her color analysis, which involved draping different shades of colors across her shoulders and assessing how they affected her face.

"Poor color choices have an aging affect, making you look pale by draining the color from your face," Kristi said. "They make your skin look uneven and bring out lines and wrinkles. Good colors clear and smooth your skin and make your eyes pop."

The analysis revealed Candy was a "soft autumn" — the colors that best suit her are a soft and washed out, such as browns and creams. White, black and jewel tones are too harsh for her.

These lessons became even more apparent when Kristi came to Candy's home and assessed what was hanging in her closet. Kristi explained why certain clothes were making her look heavier than she is. To illustrate her point, Kristi photographed her in an outfit of her choice and then in simple brown pants and shirt. Candy realized the monochromatic, fitted look is slimming for her.

As the two went through the closet, Kristi showed Candy how to mix and match her clothing for more wear and variety. The best part of the review came when Kristi discovered Candy's extensive collection of pins, broaches and jewelry.

"That's her personality — she's very artsy and she had some really different accessories to play with and show off her fun side."

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LEFT: Candy looks for interesting fall fashions with Jenny Flynn at *Glam to Go*, 2002 W. Roscoe Street.

RIGHT: Candy's wide collection of treasured accessories often spark conversation and always bring out her personal style.

Personal Shopping

Shopping put Kristi's advice to the test.

They centered their search for unique items at various boutiques in Lincoln Square, Andersonville and Roscoe Village. However, for her basic and classic clothing, Candy often shops at Carson Pirie Scott in the Lincolnwood Town Center.

"Working with a personal shopper is convenient and less frustrating for the client," Kristi said. "Many of my clients hate to shop because they're not sure of their style or are uncomfortable making decisions. If they don't trust their own eye, they'll often trust mine."

Personal shoppers take clients out of their comfort zone by breaking old shopping patterns and picking clothing items they may have never considered. And Kristi advises holding out for "wow" pieces. She told Candy she shouldn't buy something just because it's on sale, because it basically fits or because she needs something in a hurry. Buy pieces you know work for you and that you know you'll wear. When



