



The Style of Nature

by Madame Sophie

At one time, long ago, we looked to animals and nature as a source for clothing ourselves, wearing leaves, skins and feathers. For thousands of years now, we have taken our cues on dressing ourselves from humans – our societies, religions, families, friends, magazines – and now I invite you to take a conscious look at where you are and how you have gotten here. While I don't suggest we all go back to unprocessed hides and twigs, nature can be a great inspiration.

When I was young, I wanted to look like others, and I'm happy to have since then found a more gratifying quest for myself. I seek to celebrate the individual beings that we are, and the aspects that make us each unique. Just look at the flowers and trees, and imagine what it would be like if they tried to look like each other or competed for the attention of the bees, squirrels and birds. We would be deprived of their unique beauty and contributions to our lives if they became uniform in appearance and activity. Why build a public rose garden if there is no distinction from one flower to the next? What would we call cities like Aspen and Redwood City if we had only one kind of tree?

In the world of nature, the flora and fauna do not decide what to look like based on what others do or think, they fully project into the world their true natures and appearances, unhindered and with no second thoughts, jealousies or hidden agendas. We are not distracted by the shape of the leaf or width of the paw. These beings are perfect, and they do not change colors based on what is 'in' this year. Humans are able to have fun with color – and this is great news for those of us who love color – but who is the authority on what color, or look, is good for you? Your mother? Your husband or wife? Unless we stop and think about these embedded

ideas, we risk being in a trance when choosing our clothes and accessories – a trance of default patterns that may not even be ours.

Those in a trance do not realize the possible creativity and fun that await the curious fashion experimenter. If you can embrace the unique beauty in the variety that exists in nature you might open to going deeper into the exploration of your own unique and joyful expression. This is not a frivolous, mindless task but one of fine tuning your ability to know who you are and to express yourself to the world in a way that matches the whole of you.

I love the great redwood trees but would not want one in my current front yard – it would not match – whereas the peach tree completely delights me. I love the scent of the stargazer lily while a friend of mine cannot stand it. In celebrating the differences we find in nature, we have the wonderful opportunity to celebrate ourselves and others in ever-evolving ways – ways that always leave room to expand and are not restricted by unchanging limitations.

I invite you to look at what nature and animals you have around you and to ponder what you appreciate about them. It might be the shade of green the beauty of a flower or the soulful, loving eyes of your dog. I have found endless ways to appreciate what is unique and to celebrate the beauty of our differences. My ability to do this for myself and others is a gift of nature, inspired by nature and reflecting the true natures of those I work with. How can you be sensitively aware of your surroundings today and in so doing, take that awareness in and celebrate yourself?