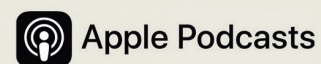


KORN FERRY

Briefings Podcast

A new deep dive
into leadership



PURSUITS

The Resale Revolution

A vintage aesthetic is redefining the fashion industry—and how leaders express themselves. *By Meghan Walsh*

Dr. Aisha Mays grew up going to the thrift store with her grandmother, who was always well-styled in slides and A-line skirts. They'd spend hours pawing through rack after rack to find that one piece that rang out in potential. She loved to mix and match different styles, new and old, and to configure unlikely arrangements that

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couldn't be found on a mannequin at the mall.

When, later in life, Mays became a physician and medical professor, she questioned whether she'd be taken seriously if she expressed her fashion sense, so she suppressed that part of herself. But as she ascended the rungs of her profession, and particularly when she founded the Dream Youth Clinic, a health organization that serves adolescents, Mays began to realize that the more she expressed her aesthetic through what she wore, the more she was able to connect with her patients—and herself. The ingenuity that she'd cultivated in her closet all those years directly applied to starting a business, to imagining new ways of delivering medicine, and to summoning the confidence and authenticity required of being a leader.

"Thrifting is a way of seeing beyond what is in front of you and building something new," the 49-year-old says.

Long considered to be a means to an end for broke college students and those without options, thrifting is increasingly seen as a choice that both expresses and reinforces personal attributes of people of all income and professional levels. The secondhand apparel mar-

ket in the US is booming, which Pam Danziger, a market researcher who focuses on influential consumers, explains is in part due to affluent shoppers opting to

"Thrifting is a way of seeing beyond what is in front of you and building something new."

buy used instead of new. "It represents a paradigm shift for luxury consumers, and it's only gaining traction," Danziger says. The market grew from \$28 billion in 2019 to an estimated \$56 billion in 2025, and is projected to reach \$74 billion by 2029.

In an era when shopping has become defined by fast fashion, decreasing material quality, and convenience, people are seeking intention and originality, both from their wardrobe and their leaders. A study published several years ago in the *Journal of Business Research* that looked at how daily dress affects perceptions of Fortune 1000 CEOs found people gave higher approval ratings and perceived leaders to be more charismatic if their clothing contrasted with the organization's culture. If the broader environment provided structure, workers wanted a leader who embodied flexibility. Or the opposite. Vintage fashion, like leadership, is all about finding the exact approach to fit the moment.

Of course, as is the case with so many trends of today, the pandemic, tariffs, and social media played crucial roles in influencing interest in thrifting, including for Mays. In 2020, at the height of the online-shopping craze, one of Mays' friends suggested the fashionista try a "no new clothes" challenge. Mays went on to document the experience of not buying anything new for an entire year on Instagram. "It really uncovered a deeper part of my creativity," she says, adding that it continues to shape how she thinks of fashion, as well as of health and leadership. "I'm always reminding my patients, we are enough, we have enough, and we can create new realities with creativity, passion, and drive." //

3 LESSONS ON LEADERSHIP FROM THRIFTING

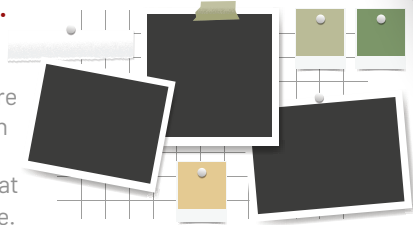


INNOVATION.

Creating new outfits with old pieces and contrasting styles teaches the mind to think expansively, while utilizing the resources at hand.

VISUALIZATION.

Thrifiers often create mood boards to capture an essence, then go in search of the wardrobe that will bring it to life.



AUTHENTICITY.

Vintage is all about individual expression. What is your aesthetic and how are you communicating it?

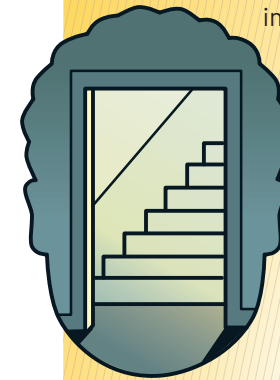


A: Mokhtari, Lena Berezikina, Maci/Vector/Getty Images

THE ART OF

The Art of Attunement

Attunement is similar to but distinct from empathy. Both an action and an outcome, attunement describes the ways in which we sync with one another in order to relate, which then allows for connection and the creation of secure, collaborative, and generative workspaces.



1 Go inward. To connect with others requires first attuning to ourselves. Ask yourself, what is here with me now?

2 Practice full presence. Listen to yourself and colleagues using all of your capacities: mental, physical, and emotional.



3 Expand the aperture. Take into account how personal and cultural history may affect how one relates.

4 Set aside judgment. Openness, without criticism or demand, allows for empathy, which then creates the potentiality of attunement.

