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## Images and Models

MM: My grandfather was a farmer in eastern Canada. I have a snapshot of myself taken when I was two and a half, sitting on a feed trough in his large chicken pen. I was terrified of the chickens because when I entered the pen with my grandpa, they all flew up clucking loudly and flinging feathers and dust in my face. One day Grandpa taught me to simply stand still and wait a few seconds until the chickens subsided and went about their business. Indeed, I saw that although they still fluttered up in my face, they soon settled down and resumed their pecking in the dust.

The snapshot was taken the day I learned to wait for them to settle. I remember feeling very proud of myself as I sat among them. That image and the feeling it evoked has been very useful to me. Before I gave my interview lecture at Harvard, I feared that in the discussion period after the lecture, the very intelligent and knowledgeable people there would attack my argument. So I determined that I would breathe calmly until the questioners subsided. Indeed, there was a flurry of questions, but since I was not frightened, I was able to answer thoughtfully. This was my first job interview, and I got the job.

HS: What a great story! It reminds me of an episode when I was ten years old. In a music class one day, pupils were taking turns singing one note of the scale. When it was my turn I sang “la,” and my la came spontaneously and carried well. I surprised myself. It felt great! I still remember

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so vividly where I was sitting in the classroom when the la came out of my throat. It encouraged me to become a member of the school chorus, a rather prestigious choir that always won first prize in choral competitions. I had no musical training, as most members of the choir did, but I sang soprano and enjoyed it greatly. It was one of my first experiences of spontaneity and serendipity.

I was chosen to participate in a famous national children's singing contest. When it came to my prefecture, Yamaguchi, it was held in the largest hall in the town. My parents were so proud! My father told everyone, "My daughter will be the third to sing. Don't miss it!" He had no doubt that I would be one of the best. But alas! I did poorly, partly because my music teacher had required me to change my song only two days before, so I did not have enough practice. My poor father! I felt so sorry for him. The girl who sang after me won first prize, and she went on to become an opera singer in Italy!

My early models were the Spanish Catholic nuns I lived with during my freshman year at boarding school. They came all that way to educate Japanese high school girls, trying to create the best educational environment possible. Their efforts, passion, and devotion to us were tremendous. They were strict, but sometimes they were so playful. I especially admired the headmistress, who was very intelligent and had an irresistible aura. She was very different from my teachers in elementary school and junior high. She saw the school she established grow into a solid operation, and once the system was running smoothly she decided to go to a remote area in the Philippines, a place with no public transportation that takes a full two days to get to from the nearest town.

When I was in my late twenties I found another role model. She was an author who left her husband in Japan and went to Spain with her young daughters to study. Her example gave me strength later, when I decided to stay in the United States while my husband returned to Tokyo.

MM: Because women are inhabiting new roles, there may not be a single model who has the combination of skills and attributes we need; we may need to put together several models.

HS: Yes, I put together several models, one of whom helped me through one of my worst years, though he didn't know it. In 2004, I had

to close my former company. The whole year leading up to that had been like going from heaven to hell; in January my mentor died, in April my business partner died, in May I had to undergo major surgery; and then I realized that I had to close the company. At that point Matthew became my inspiration.

Matthew Carter is one of the world's foremost typeface designers. Some of his more well-known fonts include Bell Centennial, Georgia, Tahoma, and Verdana. I met him when I was a volunteer interpreter at the 1988 International Graphic Designers Conference in Tokyo, and I've had the pleasure of working with him on a number of projects. He has lived through three generations of typeface design, from hand-carving, to phototypesetting, to computers. He started by working alone creating typefaces by hand. Then with phototype he learned to work with a factory. When computer design appeared he mastered that too. He was the vice president of a font foundry and graphics company for ten years, but because of all the administration the work required, he only managed to design one typeface during all that time. He became frustrated knowing that what he did best was designing, so together with Cherie Cone he started his own studio. With the technological advances, all that was needed to develop a new typeface was a computer, good software, and a printer. He became far more creative and much happier.

Although our fields were different, he inspired me to do a similar thing. I closed my company and started a new company with one assistant. I invented a new work style, which gave me more freedom, both creatively and financially. It has been working very well. Rather than maintaining a large company, I put together a team of the experts as needed for a particular project. Thanks to my laptop and mobile phone I can communicate with my clients from anywhere in the world.

When it comes to producing cultural events, almost everything I know I learned from a man named Ikko Tanaka. Ikko was probably the greatest Japanese graphic designer of the twentieth century and his work is known and respected around the world. We worked together for the last fifteen years of his life. He taught me everything, from the essentials of organizing exhibitions, to how to interact with people, to how to build team spirit, and he showed me that producing a project could be a lot of fun.

I happened to sit beside him at a dinner at the 1988 conference of graphic designers in Tokyo at which I met Matthew. It was difficult to

become a member of that prestigious organization, and Ikko was one. As his work became more international, I helped him as an interpreter and coordinator. From then until his death I was always with him on international projects, including retrospectives of his work shown in Mexico City, Milan, New York, Sao Paulo, and Hangzhou.

Aside from producing exhibitions of his own work, he arranged shows for other international design figures, including the shoemaker and brand founder Salvatore Ferragamo. It was a huge project, starting in Milan and traveling to Tokyo. Through assisting him, I learned the full range of tasks involved in an exhibition. I took the skills I had learned and went on to produce a range of events on subjects such as Audrey Hepburn, Chinese ceramics, historic Japanese woodblock prints, modern Italian photography, and contemporary Finnish art, to name a few. I don't have any particular field of focus when it comes to exhibitions. Whenever something interests me, I work directly with the curators and museums to make an exhibition happen.

Wherever we were, he always made time to enjoy the moment and the place; he shared that with everyone around him. One of his lessons was that when one gives a gift it should be the very best, specific to the person, occasion, and the best that one can afford. Similarly a restaurant meal should be thought of as honoring the invited friend. I value this approach for business as well as personal relationships.

Through Ikko I met Lou Dorfsman, a graphic designer, art director, and type designer in New York. Lou's work as an art director is well known in the industry, but what most impressed me about Lou was his charm. His way of interacting with people made everyone around him feel cheerful and cared for. And he told hilarious jokes. Whenever I was near him I felt that the world was wonderful. I worked with Lou on some of his lectures and coordinated his trips to Tokyo. It was a minor involvement but I had many chances to see him and he had a great effect on me. He was fully established in his field but he showed no arrogance and he never manipulated people. Once when I was in New York just before Christmas, Manhattan was covered in decorations and the city was full of festivities. After a great lunch with Lou, I actually sang on the way back from his office to my hotel.

Lou was Ikko's *sensei*, or teacher. Ikko, Lou, and I had great times together; because of Lou I met David Levy, who at that time was the dean

of Parson's School of Design in New York. David contributed greatly to building a globally recognized design school. I later helped set up its affiliated institute in Japan. These people gave me extraordinary encouragement and endorsement. I was not a designer; I had no art or design background, and no credentials, but Ikko and Lou and David trusted me and gave me opportunities and support whenever I needed them. Thanks to Lou's recommendation, I became an adviser to the International Design Conference in Aspen. It was one of the world's most important design events. Subsequently we created a Japanese version, which ran for seven years. I was looking for a great project that I could be part of and those people gave me that opportunity. They introduced me to the world of design.

MM: That is a remarkable story. You had no training in the field of design, but they recognized that you had the eye and they gave you the rest of what you needed—a network of top designers in the world.

HS: I have other inspirations as well. I have a friend who is an artist in Sao Paulo. Her husband died when she was forty and she started her career as a painter while raising her two sons to be happy and productive adults. Now she is ninety-three and still very active. Recently when someone tried to commission a painting, she said maybe. When she was asked to make a sculpture, she said yes, but when she was recently asked to make a large piece of outdoor public art, she said *Yes, yes, yes*, with a big smile. She readily accepted a completely new challenge at the age of ninety-three! Isn't it amazing?

I also know a ninety-year-old Italian woman who is very elegant. During World War II, she was in Switzerland, carrying a handbag she had designed. It was so admired that she decided to become a handbag designer. We met when I organized an exhibition of her innovative handbags. Together with my team, I spent a week with her in Venice, trying to choose which handbags to exhibit. She was full of energy and so excited about the exhibition, but at 5:00 in the evening she said, *Let's call it a day. That's enough for me*. So she had a Campari and sent us off to dinner, saying that she had made a reservation for us at one of her favorite restaurants, and that she needed her rest.

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MM: We are so dependent on inspiration from people who love what they do, and do it with their whole heart and mind.

HS: Absolutely, Margaret, even if I am having a hard time, I think of one of those people and it gives me the strength to keep moving.

MM: It is also important to know that there are people who work well even when they lack youth, health or other advantages. You have to *see* this, not just know it abstractly, in order to be able to learn from it. There is so much courage in many ordinary people's lives.

HS: Yes, they don't have to be famous people.

MM: We need them, and I like to think that we also help them by *seeing* them, by recognizing their courage. People of courage are all around us but we seldom see them; they are seldom encouraged by anyone's acknowledgment. Even if we don't say anything, I think that they recognize our acknowledgment.

HS: Another friend, the director of a museum in Florence had her first baby at the age of fifty. She wanted a baby so badly. People told her that it was impossible to have a baby at the age of fifty, but she thought differently.

MM: You've told me about some inspiring men in your profession; do you know of inspiring women who are in your profession?

HS: I've made many great women friends who also have their own careers, often in art-related fields, and it's so much fun to work with them. In 1997 I began a very big project with some Finnish organizations. Our exhibition focused on city planning and featured cultural events and performances. We organized twenty-three venues in Japan, from Hokkaido to Kyushu. The event continued until 2000, which coincided with Helsinki's 450th anniversary and its award of being named European Capital of Culture. We brought festivals, cultural events, exhibitions, and seminars from Japan to Helsinki, celebrating the fantastic exchange between the two countries. All the major organizers of those events were women, and

the camaraderie, and our celebrations and sense of bonding, were wonderful. I still maintain those relationships.

An amazing woman whom I think of as a role model retired after a career directing several museums. Because she is now free of management and budget concerns, she is happy to remain very active in the art scene. I learned a great deal from her; she has a great sense of humor, curiosity and creativity, and is independent, smart, and talented as well as being charming and inspirational. I visited her two years ago. She and a longtime artist friend bought a small schoolhouse in the country. It was close to a lake and had one hundred-year-old sauna. She spends every weekend there. We had a great time together one summer day, going back and forth between the sauna and the lake. We were like fish. The memory still makes me smile.

I would say the same about you, Margaret. Before I visited your home in October 2007, I had no idea what kind of person you were. I was a little daunted: you had been a professor at Harvard and the academic Dean of the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, so I expected somebody very “establishment.” But you welcomed us and served tea and cookies and I thought, what a beautiful person, speaking so softly, so full of intelligence, thoughtfulness and inspiration, and offering us such hospitality. I could see you also had great fashion sense because what you wore fit perfectly. You contradicted my image of you! I felt so happy when you agreed to write an essay for the Buddhist art catalogue, and I wanted to know more about you.

Yes, an effective model is usually not a heroine from movies or books, but someone known, or even glimpsed.

MM: Teachers can also play very important roles in shaping aspirations. But teachers were not particularly powerful for me, perhaps because I was in my late twenties by the time I went to college. Actually, what I learned was not to rely on teachers! All I needed in a course was a good bibliography that I could investigate on my own. I also learned that I did not need to like a teacher in order to learn from him. I learned a great deal from one teacher that I did not like at all. That was a very valuable lesson.

Finding a model within my profession has been difficult for me and for academic women of my generation because not many women older than ourselves have had academic careers. Those who did, often thought

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they should behave and look like honorary men. They thought that in order to look serious to others, they must look plain and dour. So I had to splice together several models in order to have the encouragement I needed *both* to do serious academic work, and to enjoy dressing attractively.

Sometimes role models appear in unexpected guises. When my daughter was little and we were out somewhere eating an ice cream cone, she often got chocolate, her favorite flavor, all over her face. So I would lick a tissue and wipe her mouth and cheeks with it. She *hated* having that done to her, but I thought, okay, wait until you have a child and you will do the same. So I waited to see that day, and it came, but with a significant difference. My daughter held the tissue for *her daughter* to lick, and then wiped her daughter's face!

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