

After reading the book, I had a lot to think about and had some questions for Stacy Malkan, the book's author. Stacy graciously took the time to answer my questions, and here they are...

EC: How did you go from newspaper publisher to founder of Campaign for Safe Cosmetics? Was there an 'aha' moment in your life or was it a slow transition?

Stacy Malkan: For four years, I published the Summit Free Press, a monthly alternative newspaper covering politics and the environment in the Colorado Rockies. Then, in the year 2000, I moved to Washington DC to work as assistant press secretary for Ralph Nader's presidential campaign. What an experience that was! (A story for another time.) After the campaign, I stayed in DC to work on environmental issues, and was hired as communications director of the international network Health Care Without Harm. It was the best job in the world for me. For seven years, I got to work with and learn from many of the leading researchers, scientists and activists in the field of environmental health. We launched the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics during that time. In the book, I describe what we learned about the toxic chemicals in everyday products, and share stories about the inspiring people I met along the campaign trail.

EC: Why did you publish the book in Canada with a Canadian publisher? This is definitely an American book with very little reference to Canada?

Stacy Malkan: Canadian publisher – New Society Publishers has been around for 25 years printing books to build a sustainable, healthy society. I share their vision. They also have an excellent reputation so I trusted them to do a top-quality job with my book, while allowing me to have editorial control. I was especially happy with their design — the book cover is quite striking! I'm convinced that cover is a big part of why the book has been so popular.

EC: Did you come across information about Canada? Or consider discussing Canada in your book?

Stacy Malkan: While the book is based on stories that were unfolding in the United States, the topic is relevant to a global audience and includes perspectives from women around the world.

Canada faces many of the same problems as the US with chemical safety, given the lack of regulation in both countries over cosmetics and chemicals, although Canada is ahead of the US in some respects.

EC: *How did this book contribute to the change that you work so hard to bring about? Here's my story...*

My 12 year old daughter wants to wear make up and read those magazines I avoid. I read her excerpts of the book and from there we looked at before and after images of models and actresses. She still wants to wear make up but has changed from wearing anything to reading labels and choosing products that do no harm. She also knows that every time she looks at a photo of a model, that it is fantasy and not reality. Thank you.

Stacy Malkan: Your story makes me so happy! Tell your daughter bravo, she is already way ahead of the game, because she is learning to question things for herself, to do her own research, and to think about the kind of economy she wants to support with her money. In my talks, I often point out that the \$50-billion beauty industry has so much power over our lives – over our minds, our sense of selves, and even over our health. But the real story is, we have the power – we get to decide which products we put on our bodies, which companies we support with our money, and which stories we believe. My hope is that young girls everywhere will learn to see past the airbrushed illusions of the beauty industry, and learn to find their true beautiful selves, and that we work together collectively to create new economic systems that are healthy for people and the planet. I believe women are going to be the ones to bring about this change, so it is critically important for women to reclaim our power, our bodies and our health.

I'd like to thank Stacy for taking the time to give me her thoughts. Do you have a story to tell? We'd love to hear it.

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