

Wellbeing & Style by Body Map

23 MAY 2015 BY [MARY GOLDSMITH](#)

An interview with Donna & Nadine Cameron, Founders Body Map

Melbourne born and bred sisters Donna and Nadine Cameron want women to be happy and healthy, and confident and comfortable in their own skin.

As owners of the boutique consultancy [Body Map](#), Donna and Nadine believe in the transformative power of working with both the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ body, to help women to find a sense of wellbeing and establish a unique style. Their personalised wellbeing and style strategies are designed to help clients to get their eating, exercising and relaxing right, and to feel confident about the way they present themselves.



Donna Cameron & Nadine Cameron

I asked Donna and Nadine about their background, business philosophy, and how they worked individually and together with their clients.

Tell me a bit your childhood and early career

Donna: We were both very creative children, although in different ways, and this was encouraged at home. Nadine was an avid writer at a very young age and loved acting / performing. I loved to design and create things – pictures, clothing designs and 3D models. Being older, I recall Nadine's strong intuition and concern for individuals' wellbeing, even before she could speak! We were both very interested in social justice, Nadine attending her first political rally when she was only 13, and me at 15.

Nadine: I pursued these related interests in tandem. As an adult I majored in fine art theory in my BA and later attended the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) but also completed a degree in social work and eventually a PhD in the same.

Donna: I took longer to work out what I wanted to do. I developed administrative and project management skills, travelled whenever I could and eventually started working in film, television, corporate video production and multimedia design.

Nadine: Writing a PhD on mental health had given me great interest in how we can achieve wellbeing through thinking about and working with the body. I decided to learn more about the body from an experiential perspective and attained qualifications in personal training. At the same time, I undertook meditation teacher training. I then knew I had a unique set of skills and knowledge I could employ to helping women find maximum confidence and wellbeing.

Donna: Following multimedia design I became more interested in making a difference in the community. I developed skills in user-centred design and facilitated government projects of social benefit. But I yearned to have more direct influence in people's lives so I began working on a personal level with marginalised people in the community and mentoring young women. It was then I began combining my love of personal style with helping people work on how they present themselves to achieve their goals.

How and when did you decide to work together?

We were each immersed in community-related careers, and pursuing creative work and past-times away from our day jobs. Independently, we had become aware of women experiencing a crisis in wellbeing and self-confidence. Everyone we met seemed to feel very drained and to have lost touch with their sense of selves and their excitement about life.

We knew that with our particular passions and skill bases we each had something to share with other women. We then had an exciting conversation about how much more powerful

our work could be if we worked together, allowing our clients' boosted self-confidence and wellbeing to inform their creativity and development of self-identity and vice-versa.

We realised we were both wanting to work with the body: Nadine, with the 'inside' body, ie all those psychological and physiological processes that are linked to health and Donna with the communicative body, how women expressed and represented themselves sartorially. So the name, Body Map seemed perfect.



How do you describe Body Map's philosophy?

Body Map is underpinned by a unique understanding that as feeling and appearance are mutually informing, the best way to help clients is to make it easy for them to move between services related to the 'inner' and 'outer' body.

We neither treat concern about presentation as 'just a trivial thing' women shouldn't worry about, nor an inability to achieve wellbeing – to control eating, to exercise regularly to relax or love your body – as unusual, let alone pathological.

We support women to be their best selves in a way that demonstrates a realistic and nuanced understanding of contemporary women's motivations and concerns.

What differentiates your Wellbeing and Style offerings from others?

In their own right, the main aspects of our business are innovative. Our wellbeing services are based on a strong understanding of the interplay between psychological and physiological health. Nadine's PhD in mental health together with her training in physical modalities gives her an especially rich understanding of this relationship.

Our wellbeing services also work with clients' personal concepts of wellbeing rather than imposing on them how and what they should feel. Our personal style services work with nuanced understanding of identity and communication as well as an understanding of aesthetics informed by design principles and proportions, textures, colours and shapes as they apply to the body.

Our services together create a business that is wholly unique: we understand how wellbeing and an expressed sense of identity inform each other, and we give women valuable opportunities to develop self-knowledge and skills related to both these areas concurrently.



How does your approach differ from stylists?

Many stylists advise clients only on what's physically flattering according to mainstream media's very narrow view of beauty. They assume all women want to (or even must) strive

to look taller, slimmer, younger. Of course I can advise on all that, but as an image consultant I also understand that many women have other presentation goals.

I listen carefully to my clients' needs before making any assumptions. They may not be interested in 'looking good' at all, or they may already know how to do that and need something else.

Women come to me for advice on adapting their unique style to their workplace, deciphering Australian dress codes and sartorial culture, simplifying their wardrobe, dressing economically, deciding what easy wear clothes to take on a long trip to gain confidence in presenting themselves or for numerous other reasons. Some may think my work is about encouraging women to look glamorous but it's almost always practical information women are seeking.

It's vital to me that I ascertain what's important to a woman – what she values in the world and what inner beliefs she wants to express.

Regardless of what a person wears, clothes always convey messages about the wearer and provide powerful insight into a person's priorities. And it's when the inner values and external expression are congruent that a person feels and therefore appears confident and comfortable in their skin. I'm very interested in twentieth century fashion as well as contemporary styles. If I'm working with a woman who identifies with a particular era or sub-culture I take enormous pleasure in helping her craft a look that echoes that but that she can still wear to the office for example, if that's what she wants to do.



How you work together?

We have the capacity to really get to know clients and what they need. Clients can come to our studio for a low cost ‘mapping’ session when we can have a tea and a chat, and we can provide some initial advice on the kinds of services we think they would most benefit from. Whether clients start working on areas of their wellbeing or in relation to their personal style or presentation we can guide them to the next service they will need to become strong, confident women. Sometimes clients zig-zag between style and wellbeing services, where others find they want to complete work in one area before moving into the next. We enjoy working together to work out the details of what each client needs.

What are your most popular services, and why?

Stress management: There is an increasing understanding amongst clients that working with emotions and emotional tolerance will not only have huge benefits in and of itself for their wellbeing but will also greatly impact their success with implementing other healthy changes they wish to make.

Positive body image/concept: Because in this society, it is absolutely normal for women to be uncomfortable with their bodies; a fact that, at Body Map, we are super determined to

change. And because women have confidence that we know how to work with them to change how they see themselves for the better.

Colour analysis: I think this is an area people know they can't guess at on their own. It takes an objective and trained eye to really analyse a person's skin, hair and eyes to see the inherent colours and values. And without an understanding of colour theory it's difficult to know how to apply it to the body.

Style Direction: We're fortunate to live in an era when almost anything goes, sartorially. But this can also create great confusion for people who genuinely can't decide either what suits them physically or how to express themselves, and therefore what combinations of clothes will do that for them. Sometimes women have a fairly good idea of their own style but are seeking permission or reassurance to allow themselves to feel really confident.

What are your top well-being tips?

- There is nothing more instrumental to wellbeing, including a sense of physical wellbeing, than the mind. Take time every day to 'practise' particular positive perspectives – just as one might take time to exercise or water the garden, for example – as this will allow you to 'sculpt your brain' in a way that increases your satisfaction with life and yourself.
- *Eating well is not just about physical health (heart health, immune response, etc.) it can affect your mood and, in fact, whole personality. Change your diet to change your perspective. All you need to do is make the majority of your diet natural (unprocessed) foods and drink an optimum amount of water. A cupcake here and some chocolate or a glass of wine there is not going to kill the average person.*
- A sense of perfectionism can undermine your ability to retain good habits in your life, such as exercising regularly. Allow yourself to make mistakes and to lose focus on occasions, remembering that making a small amount of positive change is better than trying for a huge amount and getting discouraged/ throwing in the towel when it doesn't happen.
- *Liking your body is essential to making healthy exchanges, but getting to like it is not always about trying to make yourself love physical features you've grown to dislike. Instead, it is sometimes about learning to conceptualise your body in new ways (such as, as the vehicle of your whole experience!)*

- Developing your BQ (body intelligence) – ability to tune into your body’s subtle messages – together with an understanding of your own personal bodily history will make implementing healthy changes so much easier.



And your favourite style tips?

- Learn how to use colour. Colour makes an enormous difference to a person’s overall look if they understand the colours that harmonise with them. It can really enhance your complexion and help you to glow. If someone’s wearing a colour that clashes with them it fights against every other effort they’ve made with their appearance.
- *Understand fit. Many women seem not to know if something fits them – it’s not just a matter of being able to do it up. A garment should follow the contours of your body and move with you not against you. Shoulder seams should sit where your shoulder joints are. The waist should sit where yours does. (Unless something is deliberately oversized or high/drop waisted.) You’ll be so much more comfortable and look more cohesive in inexpensive clothes that fit than expensive clothes that don’t.*
- Proportion – wow! Just play with the proportions of your clothes to discover the difference it makes. Visually dividing your body into thirds instead of halves and dressing it accordingly makes an enormous difference. As in art and architecture, the golden mean (thirds) principle also applies to outfits.

- *For women who feel under enormous pressure to continually fight against the way they look: less is definitely more. Less hair colour, less makeup, less teeth bleaching, less lasering, less precision grooming. Softening your look rather than hitting it with everything you have will give you back more freedom, more money, more calm and more head-space to do the wonderful things in life. You'll also look more radiant and more energised.*
- Embrace your style! Don't wear something just because everyone else is. Have fun with what you wear. Be confident about who you are and don't be afraid to express that in your look. Be aware you will be sending messages regardless of what you decide to wear so you may as well send ones you value.

Which part of your business gives you the greatest joy?

Nadine: I truly love my strong, brave, smart clients and helping them work out how to make sustainable changes in their lives. I never leave a session with one of my clients without feeling that little bit more inspired about what I do.

Donna: I love working with my clients and finding out what makes them tick. I love hearing their stories and learning what motivates them and seeing their faces light up with renewed confidence when they've discovered something that will make a difference to them. I rarely meet a client I don't think about later and want to befriend!

What does Body Map have in store for 2015/2016?

Aside from continuing to work with individual women to help them develop self-confidence, a positive sense of self and a great sense of health and vitality, both in our studio and via Skype, we will be implementing more exciting retreats. Our retreats are a great opportunity for women to get together with others to discuss what they need most to feel good about themselves again and to learn a whole raft of strategies that will keep them inspired and healthy. Drop us a line if you're interested in attending either a one or two day retreat.

What do you hope Body Map will be doing over the next 5 years?

In the next year or so we hope to have a variety of publications out under the Body Map banner and in five years we hope to be hosting retreats in more exotic locations. But we will always love working with our individual clients!

How can people find and follow you?

Check out our website: [Body Map](#) to sign up to our newsletter and read our blog. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Google+ for more news.



SPECIAL OFFER

Donna and Nadine are offering Certain Women readers a 15% discount on single consultations and 10% discount on strategies until September 2015.

You can contact [Body Map](#) as follows:

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