



From The Judges Seat: 10 Things to Keep in Mind By Jackie Schiffer, Founder, Commit to the Crown

1. What You Wear DOES Matter.

No, you don't need the most expensive designer dress. However, what you wear onstage does matter.

- Make sure that the wardrobe you select fits and still fits 1-2 weeks before competition.
- Plan your undergarments accordingly. You can easily check this under your bathroom lights or other similar bright lights.
- Make sure you can move in it and pose easily. No one wants to worry about a garment ripping or pulling.

2. Quality over Quantity

This goes for paperwork and submissions. Instead of listing every place you've ever volunteered or every photo you've ever taken, choose the items for your paperwork and photos for the photo contest that serve as the best representation of yourself. Too many items clutter the judge's mind and distract from allowing you to stand out.

3. Shoes. Shoes. Shoes.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU CAN WALK IN YOUR SHOES. If your shoes are uncomfortable or hurt to walk in, choose a different pair. If you are in pain, it shows on your face. The judges want to see you at ease and comfortable onstage... not uncomfortable.

4. Don't Make Me Worry.

The judges want you to do your best. Please be careful onstage. Avoid cartwheels or other physical movements where you might get hurt if you are not a gymnast, etc. The last thing a judge and audience wants is for you to end up injured in a moment that is intended for you to shine.

5. Research the Brand of the Pageant.

As you prepare your interview and wardrobe, make sure you understand the brand of the pageant. Is your presentation "age-appropriate" and aligned with the brand? For example: if women competing in swim have always worn a one-piece, this might not be the ideal time to rock a string bikini.

Additionally, understanding the organization's mission and "the job" of the queen is essential. In order to define your "why" you need to know what you're signing up for.

6. Be Mindful of Jokes/Commentary.

A pageant interview is an interview. What might be funny to your friends, might offend a judge. For example, a contestant told a judge how boring and awful school was for a lengthy period of time. The judge was a teacher.

7. Play Fair.

This should be common sense but please do not approach the judge's table when it is not your time on stage or try to read the comments/scores of the judges. Don't have mom/dad/your sister/your friend approach the table. If a pageant shares scores, you will receive it after the pageant. Keep your head in the game!

8. Invest in Hair/Make-Up

If hair/make-up services are offered at the pageant, this is a game changer! If services are not offered, invest in a class or sessions with an HMUA so that you can learn to do your own glamorous pageant look.

9. Practice your Poses.

While it is important to be able to adapt your routine quickly on stage, make sure you are using a mirror to practice your posing. Seek to create "windows" with your posing to create visually appealing illusions.

10. Be Yourself.

There is room for everyone to succeed and shine onstage. Don't feel the pressure to adjust your routine or posing based on the contestant in front of you. I cannot say this enough- DO NOT COPY THE CONTESTANT IN FRONT OR BEHIND YOU. Be yourself and own your moment in the spotlight.