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my *style*

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We all have to shop for clothes - whether we love it or hate it. Chances are that some of us buy garments that are hardly ever worn, which is not a useful exercise in terms of time and money. Why does this happen? In my many years of experience I have found that we have unconscious beliefs and myths about fashion, which have an influence on the purchase decisions. Lets expose the four common myths about fashion:

Myth One: Dressing to look slim

I have found that most people's objective when they look in the mirror while dressing is to look slim. This can have a negative influence to your sense of self. Where does this come from? Mainly the catwalk and fashion magazines display super slim models six foot tall; and most high fashion designers are men and use mainly T-type body shape models to display their designs, which most of you are not, and to emulate these models is simply unattainable. If you are the curvy type then celebrate your curves and utilize your shape by using style lines that reflect your basic shape which will have a balancing effect. And the same applies for the already very slender, your objective might be to give more shape.

Myth Two: Black is slimming!

We as New Zealanders love black because we see it as being practical, it is easy to co-ordinate, is available in every shop, and well black is slimming. Isn't it? It is a fact that deep colours recede and light colours are more noticeable and may appear bigger. However, if you wear black from head to toe this creates a block of one colour and the attention is on the outline of the body. By wearing a colour knit or jacket you immediately create a panel which has a slenderizing effect.

You could also use other neutral colours like:

- Cool colours – midnight (which is the 'in' colour for winter), navy, grey, charcoal, aubergine, purple, periwinkle blue.
- Warm colours – denim navy, olive, sage, jade, brown, beige, taupe.

Myth Three: Core wardrobe items

The classic core wardrobe consists of a classic jacket, white shirt, little black dress, mainly neutral colours with a splash of colour to liven it up.

This wardrobe plan does not serve you well in 2011. To create today's look there are 12 core garments that are needed.

- 3 x knits and jackets – 1 neutral and 2 of your best colours
- 3 x inner garment – tunic, dress, long top, sleeveless – 2 neutral and 1 coloured or patterned.
- 3 x layering sleeved garments e.g. merino or similar for winter, ¾ for summer – one neutral colour, 2 of your best colours
- 3 x Lower garments. Tapered trouser in neutral colour, skinny jeans, leggings, 30 – 50 denier tights for winter – either neutral, textured, colour or patterned. This will depend on your personality and how creative you want to be. And to finish the whole look some fantastic knee high boots or shoe-bootie.

The 4 principles are:

1. **Colours**. Knowing your colours will have you looking radiant every day, and co-ordination is easy as they automatically work together.
2. **Personality**. Every garment has a personality and the intention is to choose similar attributes that reflect your own values and like and dislikes. That is how you will create a 'look' that is truly you, it will be like your second skin!
3. **Select style lines** to flatter your body shape and use balancing techniques.
4. **Scale**. Proportional dressing so your height and proportion are in sync.

Myth Four: Classic doesn't date

Where does this belief come from? It comes from the 80's. Fashion has a tendency to reflect the attitudes, values and what is happening in society at the time. When we reflect back start to the 70's we would see the introduction of psychedelic colours (orange, lime green and purples), maxi clothes, hot pants, flower power, flowing clothes and hair, freedom of speech and love everywhere.

In the 80's women where competing with men in business and were wearing classic suits with large shoulders, relaxed tailoring, patch pockets, checks and plaids, black suiting with white shirt and tie, everything was big. Remember 'Dynasty' the TV series. The classic wardrobe plan appeared and became every women's desire to achieve.We had rules to go by - classic doesn't date, black and navy do not go together, matching colours with accessories and patterns was prevalent.

By the 90's women had made headway and were taken seriously in business and the classic lines softened with more defined shaping into the body with softer fabrics.

By 2000 more relaxed and creative and then 9/11 happened and the mood changed in society to 'live for today' and wear clothes that express your personality. The clothing became more feminine reflecting our heart felt sympathies.

So now we have many different 'looks' - what do you want to create? This is a question that some of you might be asking yourself and this is where the 4 principle shopping system will help you discover the journey for yourself. I created this system 15 years ago; while shopping with clients I realised I was always critiquing on these four things which became a fail safe process with fantastic results.

By using this system you will find that you shop differently and with purpose, knowing you are buying right first time. You will gain confidence and this will give you the freedom you deserve. Happy Shopping!

Chryssie runs her own style workshops and also works with individuals to help them discover their unique style.
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