

Note from the Editor....

Happy New Year, my *Elegant* friends!

I believe Zig Zigler once said, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." Perhaps our focus should lie there this year: making the most of each day, and realizing that we are the artists behind the masterpieces we're creating. Too often, we forget the true power we possess. All that we have – good or bad – are products of our thoughts and actions. My first challenge to you in 2010 is this: remain mindful of all that you do, say, and think. Write a list each day of all the people and things you're grateful for. You'll discover that emitting that positive, gratitude-driven energy will only result in increased blessings.

I also challenge you to become more 'stylishly aware'. Realize that your wardrobe tells the whole world a great deal about you. What message are you currently sending?

I do hope you enjoy and find useful the tips in this month's edition!

Love and blessings to all,

Beth



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Striking a pose as a live mannequin and JoAnn's in Sugar Land during the annual Christmas festival in Town Square.



Chaos is a friend of mine – Bob Dylan.

That’s all well and good, Bob, but did you ever consider that millions of people would take your words to heart, particularly in the area of their wardrobe habits? Probably not. That’s okay – I forgive you.

Anyhow, the dawn of a new year is the best time to spend a little time in the closet (“But I just came out!” cried my friend, Steve) – no, not that way, you silly thing! It’s time to get organized:

Eyeball it – the less frequently something is worn, the higher up it should go in the closet.

Shoe lifts – cubbies are great for storing footwear; simple shoe racks or hanging bags will do the trick, too.

Boots are made for stashing – store your boots with the opposite ends placed together to save space. Stuff them with boot inserts or folded magazines so they retain their shape.

Sweater girl – sweaters and other delicates should be kept folded so they don’t stretch or lose their shape. Stack no more than four sweaters in a bunch in order to keep them neat.

Matchy matchy – organize skirts with skirts, trousers with trousers, etc. Then sort each sort by color and fabric.

Boxing day – house rarely used items in boxes, bins, or lovely wicker baskets and place them on the closet floor.

Round and round – rotate clothing according to season. Keep off-season clothing in a spare closet, or store it in garment bags placed in the back of the closet.

No wire hangers! – Mommy Dearest was right – wire hangers are a tool of the devil. Invest in lovely cloth-covered ones. Plastic works well, too.

As you reorganize your wardrobe, you’ve most likely discovered a huge number of items you no longer wear. Get rid of them. Don’t hang on to any that no longer fit (if you’ve yet to have them altered, the odds are you never will), are of the wrong color for your complexion (if you don’t know what colors work for you, call me!), or no longer represent who you are (forty-something moms should have nothing that resembles anything in their daughters’ closets!). Donate the good stuff to charity. Throw out the garbage (items that are ripped, stained, or would cause Hobo Harry to turn up his nose)

Now, my dear, you may begin making a list and searching for one or two additional pieces to get you through the remainder of the season.

I have proclaimed 2010 as the year of Style and Fabulousness – who’s with me?



Now this is lovely, don't you think?



Reaching certain resolutions regarding your style routine might just be easier than you think:

- Realize that a good haircut and color will do you a world of good. Be prepared to spend a little money here – you’re worth it!
- Weekly manicures are a must. Nothing steals elegance quite like cracked cuticles.
- Dark wash jeans are far more flattering than any other wash.
- A few push-ups each morning and a daily walk around the block will jump-start your new fitness routine.
- Massages are well worth the time and money: they offer stress-relief, and improve circulation and agility.
- Meditation each day helps you focus on your goals, relaxes you, and generally puts you at one with the universe – there’s nothing more beautiful than that!

Take the time to always look your best – even if it’s just for a quick trip to the market. Invest a little money, too (there are most likely other corners you could cut to do this – must you really have access to 500 channels on TV?). I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again: You are worth it, darling!

Ramon’ is a stylist and regular *Elegant* contributor.



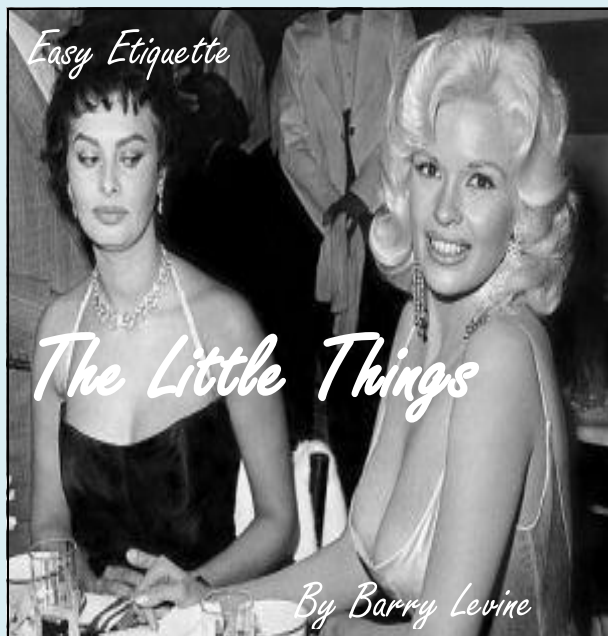


Elegant Musings

Because life’s too short not to be elegantly fabulous...or fabulously elegant!

Articles posted each Monday and Thursday

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We at *Elegant* are making a strong push for a return to good manners in the upcoming year. We start with a basic review:

1. Remember to say please and thank you.
2. When walking in public, keep to the right.
3. Refrain from talking on your cell phone in public if at all possible.
4. Smile
5. Never make derogatory remarks about someone's family, friends, job, home, taste in music, etc.
6. Avoid swearing or slang, particularly with people you don't know well.
7. Refrain from political or religious discussions at parties and in the workplace.
8. Remember that everything you post on Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc. will come back to haunt you, so keep it light and bright, easy and breezy.
9. Even if you do know it all, pretend that you don't
10. Be as nice to your loved ones as you are to total strangers.

The hardest job kids face today is learning good manners without seeing any (Fred Astaire).

Think about it.

Barry Levine is a stylist and monthly *Elegant* contributor

WANTED!

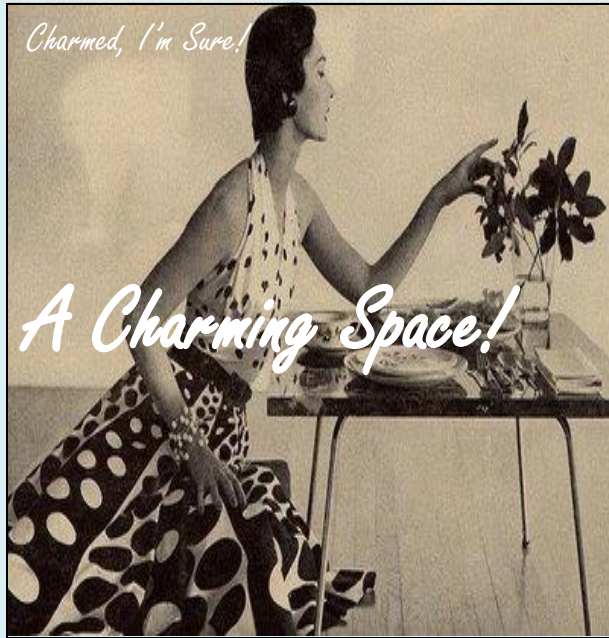
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A home should represent the *true-self* behind the owner. A home should offer refuge from the world. A home should remain clean, well-organized, and, yes, charming for all who inhabit it.

Cleaning

Clutter is the number one *Elegant* offender within the home. In order to control clutter, one must first visualize her home in its loveliest state. Imagine knowing just where everything is stored. Imagine welcoming unexpected guests without shoving magazines and ashtrays underneath the sofa.

Our society loves stuff; however, too much stuff is overwhelming and will take up space within the home. Do you really need every little knick-knack on the shelf? Get rid of anything that doesn't serve or represent you – or who you want to be.

Little cleaning spurts throughout the week save a tremendous amount of cleaning drudgery over the weekend:

Daily – scrub countertops, sweep floors

Weekly – dust, vacuum, change sheets, scour toilets and tubs

Monthly – wash windows, wipe down baseboards, flip mattresses, and launder throw blankets and pillows

Nesting


Choose sofas and chairs with maximum comfort.

Layering adds instant coziness, especially when you mix textures and styles (this concept works especially well with throw blankets on couches and beds; it also works with carpets and rugs)

Keep the colors simple – one or two hues per room. Add bright pillows for extra color and comfort


Art that you love should be fully and correctly displayed. Flowers in a vase add elegance to any room.

Your space says a great deal about you – keep it real and *Elegant!*



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She knows all, and tells most!

Dear Cookie,
My friend Midge borrowed my rhinestone encrusted flask in October, and has yet to return it. Is there a polite way to let her know I want it back?

Remember the old adage: Neither a borrower nor a lender be. However, the damage has been done, and it's perfectly fine to let Midge know you'd like to have your flask back. You can even offer an excuse as to why ("I'm visiting the in-laws this weekend, and I desperately need it."). If Midge has in-laws, she will certainly understand.

**Quandary? Conundrum?
Perplexity? Cookie McDaniel-Stein, world traveler, fashion guru, and all around devotee to tasteful living, has the answer. Contact Cookie via beth@newmanimage.com**

Dear Cookie,
My beloved schnauzer, Duke, was refused admittance to a friend's Christmas party. I took great offense at this – Duke is my life! What say you to my friend's pet snobbery?

My dear, I'm afraid I must side with your friend on this one. You seem to exhibit all the signs of pet hubris. Bringing a pet into someone else's home, no matter how beloved he may, is a huge breach of etiquette.

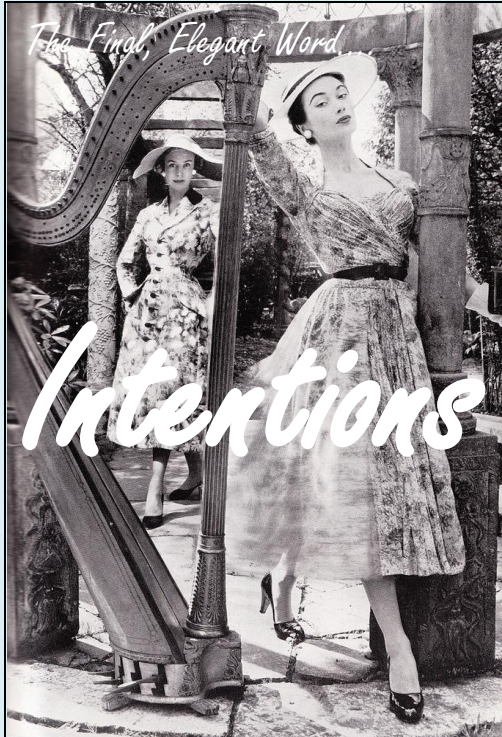
Dear Cookie,
Could you clarify what it really means to be fashionably late?

In our culture, the fashionable time to arrive is the time you've agreed to meet; however, there are a few exceptions:

Being 'on time' to events like cocktail parties or social mixers can mean arriving anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour plus after the appointed starting time. Arriving slightly late to parties makes good sense, but waltz into the bar at the distinctly unhappy hour of 8:00, and you can forget about the free buffet.

Always arrive early for doctor's appointments, weddings, funerals, and job interviews.

Don't arrive at parties earlier than the appointed time – your host is still getting ready, I can assure you of that!



*To make each day its own work of art.
(Barry)*

My goal is to finally find a hairstyle that works everyday instead of only when no one is going to see me! (Jana)

We thank you all for your contributions!

I also wish to thank you, *Elegant Reader* for a fabulous 2009. Words cannot express how much your support means to me!

Here's wishing us all much love, success, prosperity, fun, and fabulousness in the year ahead!

I don't really care for the word resolution. I prefer the word intention. Resolutions are a look back; intentions are a look ahead, a way to focus and channel positive energy as we strive to realize our dreams. We asked some of our most *Elegant* friends what their intentions are for 2010, and they've truly inspired us:

My goal is to make "me" a priority instead of always putting myself last. (Jennifer)

To glow with life (Hannah)

To learn how to meditate (Mindy)

To turn off the TV and create my own show! (Lea)

I must remember than I'm an example to my children. I want them to be good citizens; therefore I must practice what I preach. (Mitchell)

