



Rebbetzin Faigie Horowitz

Binah Yeseirah

Outfits for Dummies II

If you're a regular reader of this column, you know that I recently vented about my current struggles with wardrobe selection, which has lately become an arts and crafts project. I noted that without a resident teenager, dressing is not easy today. You have to put together several pieces that are coordinated but at the same time contrasting in texture, color, and style, and flattering to boot! Nothing whatsoever may be matchy-matchy. And the accessories have to work too.

Gone are the days when suits and

outfits could be bought together, when shoes and bags matched, when sportswear collections gave you options of what to wear with what. Today you have to do it all yourself.

And even if you try hard, as I did, investing in a couple of trendy necklaces and chains, you can be brought up short by a discerning daughter who recognizes that scarf as 20 years old, though you did twist it creatively into an Infinity-scarf lookalike (or hoped you did...).

I've heard of swap meets where women who want new clothes but don't

want to spend money on them get together and trade. They contribute dresses, jackets, skirts, tops, sweaters, belts, shoes, bags, and costume jewelry and spend a few hours trying things on. They leave without the things that have been sitting in their closets, coming home with pieces new for them. But this didn't sound right for me.

Another option for many women seeking cost-free wardrobe updates is shopping in their sister's closet. But my sister lives in Eretz Yisrael, and anyway it's been years since we were close

enough in size to switch around.

That's where things stood between me and my wardrobe — until the recent Jewish Woman Entrepreneur 2014 Business Conference.

When I sat down at the start of a workshop session I was delighted to find an acquaintance, Henya Storch, sitting behind me. We first met at a weekend retreat a few years ago. Henya introduced me to her seat-mate, whose business is shopping in other people's closets, and quickly set up a mutually convenient time for the beautifully dressed and accessorized young woman to make a house visit to me later in the week. Henya herself had used Eve's services, and she told me what to expect in a wardrobe makeover.

Eve and I had a fun and busy afternoon as I tried on piles of clothes. Jackets and sweaters old and new were paired with some surprising choices of skirts. From the array of accessories I had laid out in advance on a dresser top for easy selection, Eve chose scarves, necklaces and then earrings to complete the looks. She selected shoes from the rows I had set out. She gave a quick analysis of why an ensemble worked, and then it was photo time; I posed in each completed outfit.

Gone were the questions and the dilemmas, along with the outdated clothes. A give-away pile began to collect, as well as a to-be-tailored group. Best of all, there were numerous new combinations from my own closet, completed with my own accessories, in a photo gallery that reminded me of how to wear them. A collection of Shabbos outfits, special-occasion outfits, and weekday outfits was assembled for me without my struggling in front of the

mirror.

When we broke for lunch, Eve's interesting story emerged. She grew up in a Reform Jewish community in northern New Jersey, graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology, and worked in designer houses in Manhattan. At one point she moved to Chicago, opening a gift and home-accessories shop in an upscale neighborhood. Given the owner's professional eye, the shop was quickly transformed into a fashion boutique. Then the recession hit, and Eve made her way back to New York where she was hired as a personal shopper at a major retail store.

It was during her New York phase that she became *frum* through Aish HaTorah. She learned for years with her Partner in Torah, Goldie Cohen of Passaic. She eventually took off for Eretz Yisrael, where she studied at Rebbetzin Dena Weinberg's EYAHT Seminary. She married Jay Cantor, a social worker originally from her hometown (same high school, same Reform congregation), a *shidduch* that was facilitated by two *shidduch* organizations serving the Jewish community.

It was during her year of *aveilus* for her late father that Eve's current business was born, since she was not permitted to shop for and wear new clothes. One day she hung her clothes on rolling racks and started to re-assemble what she already owned in different combinations. Pleased with the results, she mentioned what she had done to a friend, who passed the closet magician's name on to her friend. Photography was soon added to closet curating, and necessity combined with creativity turned into a full-time business for this Passaic resident.

Eve says that many women appreciate having someone objective whose style is



compatible with their own to help them update their look and purge their wardrobe of its no-longer-works components. Ever practical, she takes into account ups and downs in weight; some clothes are not relegated to the give-away pile, but placed at the back of the closet and tied up with a ribbon until you get thin enough to wear them again, when, she suggests, you might hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

I am a case in point. I certainly appreciate no longer having to be uncomfortable in my clothes (and expressing my angst to my readers). In my previous column on this subject I asked for compliments and *chizuk* when you see me "put together"; I needed validation for my ongoing effort not to look dowdy and dated. These days, though, when you see a well-coordinated me, you know who gets the compliments: Eve, of Shop Your Closet. **B**

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