



 Marla Tomazin

# Marla's Style File

## **Your Wardrobe Wish List: Six Style Solutions for a New Image This New Year**

*As another new year dawns, it's time to break out the resolutions. And if you feel like your image is anything less than sparkling, then it's time for a style intervention.*

*You may be surprised when it's your confidence, and not just your closet, that gets the makeover in 2010.*

By Marla Tomazin

These days, everyone's a fashion expert. From Fashion Week to celeb sightings, we're being constantly inundated with updates on the latest trends. If you're like most of us, your own personal style may be due for a little pick-me-up. Whether you're short on time, pinching pennies, or just plain clueless, having an image that doesn't work for you can make a big difference in how others perceive you, and even worse, in how you think about yourself.

As a New York-based image consultant, I use my 20 years of fashion expertise to help my clients look fabulous by combining their "inner glow" with the way they dress. It's a well-known fact that 80 percent of communication is non-verbal and that means that the way you dress speaks much louder than anything you actually say. People don't realize how much of their confidence and personal success is tied to the image they are portraying, so they don't take the time to take care of themselves like they should.

Creating a new image for yourself is easier than you may think. And you don't have to break the bank or hire a famous designer to do so. Read on for the six style resolutions you should make this New Year:

**Solicit your personal style icon.** It can be easy to get into a personal style rut. And if leaving the house wearing a clean shirt and socks that match constitutes a good style day for you, then it may be time to ask for some help. Think of a friend or acquaintance whose style you admire and whose opinion you trust. Try on a few of your favorite outfits for that person and ask for her style opinion. And better yet, take your stylish friend with you when you hit those after-holiday sales!

We all know someone who looks great all the time. That friend who always seems to look so put together, from her hairstyle right down to her accessories. You may not be the

best judge of how you appear to other people, so it's a good idea to ask for some outside help.

**Don't fall victim to the runway.** Don't be so quick to buy clothes that look great on the runway or the mannequin in the store. Not all styles of clothing are suited for all body types, and certain colors just don't complement every complexion. Just because green is the "it" color of the moment or because those skinny jeans looked great on that model in the sales ad, it doesn't necessarily mean that they are going to be right for you.

It can be tricky to know what styles and colors are best suited for you, but once you figure it out, it can make all the difference in the world when it comes to your wardrobe. If you're having trouble deciphering between the fashion dos and don'ts for yourself, then hire a stylist. While it may be a little costly at the onset, it's a great investment in the long run. Most large department stores offer a personal shopping service to customers as well.

**Resolve to buy quality over quantity.** If your wardrobe seems lacking but your budget is small, then it can be tempting to buy trendy pieces at bargain prices to get you through the season. The problem is that you'll find yourself back to square one when the next season rolls around. Instead, invest in foundation pieces. You will wear these clothes more than once per week, and the money you spend is worth it.

These items should be made of quality fabrics and should be a base color that works for you. Black is easiest to find, but it does not flatter everybody. Consider other options such as navy, chocolate brown, or a darker gray.

**Get more bang for your buck.** One of the best ways to get more for your money is to find ways to make your work clothes go the extra mile. Having wardrobe staples that can transition from the conference room to cocktail hour will make your life easier and your wallet happier. The key to dressing up your work clothes for a cocktail party or dinner out on the town is in having the right accessories and a few playful pieces to mix and match.

A lacey camisole or a sheer blouse paired with long dangling earrings or a necklace can dress up an outfit and is the perfect way to transition from day to evening. Something as simple as open-toed shoes can change the look of an entire suit. Invest in pieces like a leather jacket that can work with a skirt at the office or a pair of jeans when you go out.

The same rule applies to men. They can wear a suit with a turtleneck or shirt sans tie for an after-work party. That functional navy blazer will go great with trousers for a day at the office, and will look just as distinguished with a sweater and jeans on the weekend.

**Take a picture (It will last longer!).** If there's one thing we could use more of, it's time. And rushing through your morning routine—including dressing yourself—can mean spending your day looking as harried and frazzled as you feel. A great way to eliminate the stress and guarantee you'll look great on a daily basis is to plan ahead. Take the time to try on an assortment of outfits: put it all together from the clothes and accessories right down to the undergarments that particular outfits require. Come up with five looks you like and take a photo of each one. When the alarm clock rings, you'll already be one step

ahead of your morning routine, and you'll feel good the rest of the day knowing you look great.

Place the photos somewhere handy—on your home computer or on your wardrobe closet. You can refer to your “looks” and choose your outfit in no time. I've used this process, which I call Picture-U-Perfect®, with my own clients, and they love it. It's a great time-saver, and you can rest assured knowing that each look has been carefully put together instead of thrown on at the last minute.

**Get rid of the Ghost of Wardrobes Past.** Admit it: you're still hanging on to that little black dress you wore in college and that perfect pair of jeans that fit like a glove—five years ago. If an item has become too tight, don't hang onto it for when you “lose 10 pounds.” Clean out your closet and make space for clothes that fit who you are *right now*. Having a wardrobe that complements your body will do wonders for your self-esteem and your image.

Your body is okay the way it is right now. Keep clothes that make you feel good. When in doubt—throw it out, or give it away! Hanging on to who you were, instead of who you are, will only cause you to feel stressed. Instead, focus on being proud of the person you are today.

Above everything else, there is one accessory that no wardrobe should be without this season. If you buy one thing for yourself this year, buy a full-length mirror. Take the time to look at yourself from every angle before stepping out of the house. Try to see yourself as the outside world sees you, and you'll be well on your way to a fabulous new image in no time.

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### **About Marla Tomazin:**

Marla Tomazin established her image consulting business in 1990 with the goal of helping clients identify an authentic image and develop its effective expression.

Through her successful career in the fashion and retail industries, Marla has gained invaluable expertise in retail buying, merchandising, sales, and marketing. She began with May Company in Denver after earning a B.S. in Marketing from the University of Denver. Marla moved to New York where she worked with several well-known Seventh Avenue design firms. As she developed her business skills, Marla made a serendipitous discovery—an innate sense of style and facility for working with fabrics and colors to maximum advantage.

The progression to Certified Image Consultant was a natural transition. Marla utilizes her abilities in evaluating body shape, movement, and coloring as well as synthesizing optimal cuts, lines, colors, and textures. This results in balance and proportion that accentuate attributes and conceal flaws. Her clients include women, men and corporations seeking external revitalization that mirrors their internal development.

She has lectured at The Learning Annex on “How to Become an Image Consultant” and at The American Women’s Economic Development Corporation on “What Does Your Image Say About You?”

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