

FASHION SHRINK

No, I'm not talking about slim suits or skinny jeans. I'm talking about putting my overstuffed closet on a diet.



Having witnessed my clothes flowing out of my closet and into the living room, my well-intentioned friends confirmed that I had an abnormal relationship with my things. Filled with heaps of clothes that had long overstayed their welcome, my burgeoning closet was crippling me. To sum it up, I'd turned into a closet case who couldn't let go of anything. Even the women of Grey Gardens would have been appalled.

But the problem amounted to more than a messy home; it was the daily trauma of getting dressed. Admittedly, I would freeze with confusion every morning, struggling amidst the chaos to pull together something suitable. And here's the irony: like many people, I owned lots of clothes but never had anything to wear. Either nothing fit anymore, or else it had sadly slipped out of style.

I realize I'm not the only one afflicted with a tendency to hoard; there are entire reality shows about it! If you, or someone you know, has a similar problem, let me share my surprisingly obvious fix—a timely closet cleaning. But to do it right, you'll need a professional, a knowledgeable fashion insider to help execute that long-overdue cathartic purge.

How I did it: I simply called my favorite store and explained my dilemma. They suggested that one of their consultants stop by to help me obtain some clarity. This consultant would act as my fashion therapist to help unravel the mystery of—to paraphrase The Clash—what should stay and what should go.

Fortunately, it's no mystery to a professional! My style-maven quickly determined which pieces were lost causes to be ditched and which could assume a meaningful new life by donating them to a worthy charity. He even took the rejected pile with him and donated it for me. What a relief!

He also removed my delusions about my baggy cargo shorts ever again looking good on me (or anyone), boldly declaring the time had come for them to take a quick hike to the trash bin, along with all those billowy button-down dress shirts. He then put his expertise to work on what remained of my wardrobe, showing me fresh combinations that never occurred to me, and suggesting a few new pieces that would modernize my look (trim chino shorts, a slim-fit polo in purple, an unlined sport coat, incredibly lightweight jeans). I felt no pressure, but the few pieces I ultimately added are the ones I wear most often, the ones that inevitably lift my mood.

And so my life has changed. A new confidence has replaced the frustration and wasted time of trolling through stuff that consumed endless emotional and physical space. An unexpected benefit: in addition to obtaining sartorial solace, I discovered my Peloton buried beneath a massive pile of shirts. With those extra minutes I gain getting dressed more efficiently, I can now allocate time to shrinking my midsection for a more comfortable fit into those new chino shorts.

I'm starting now: summer's waiting. **BY HANS GSCHLIESSER**