

*Michelle's*  
**Celebrity**  
**Wardrobe**  
**Stylist**  
*Guide*



# *Celebrity Stylist Michelle Phillip's Wardrobe Guide*

## Investing in Your Look

In my 20 years working with celebrities as their makeup artist and image consultant, my job was to make sure that everyone on the air looked professional and polished. Most important, they had to project an image that was aligned with the station's goals. The morning news, which featured fun events happening in the community, was upbeat and laid-back. The anchors' attire needed to be professional but cheery. I kept their core wardrobe pieces conservative, yet I could throw in a bit of pizzazz by adding some flair in the anchorwoman's blouses or finding chic styles of jackets, buttons, trousers, skirts, and dresses. Hairstyles were polished and modern, with fresh-looking makeup. The ideal look was supposed to be lighthearted without being distracting.

When it came to the evening newscast, however, the tone was much more serious. Anchors were delivering compelling stories to viewers who had just finished a long day at work. Once again, I would base my selections on the goals of the station. Overall, the looks I put together for the nightly news were more formal and conservative, with darker shades.

So what does that have to do with your transformation? Well, I want you to understand the connection between your appearance and your career goals. There are standards of professionalism that apply to all jobs, and you need to make sure that you are aligned with them. That said, what I hope to do now is help you combine those standards with your own personality and sense of style in order to project your authentic image through your appearance.

### Dress to Impress



## What Is in Your Wardrobe?

Most people have two very different images: personal and professional. Your personal image refers to what you wear when you're not working, and your professional image is how you present yourself when you're on the clock. In this step, I'm focusing on your professional wardrobe. When it comes to your image in the workplace, you should present yourself in a way that conveys your knowledge, credibility, and trustworthiness.

Your career obviously has a big impact on your life, and your clothing and style decisions play a crucial role. If you're getting paid for what you do, it is imperative that you look the part. Once you've learned the techniques and tools in this chapter, you can easily apply them to your personal wardrobe as well.

Studies show that we have exactly seven seconds to make a first impression. More specifically, where we're concerned, we have seven seconds to make a great (and lasting) first impression. Many of us are either entering or reentering the job market, and when it comes to nailing an interview, looking and feeling our best is just as important as tuning up our résumé. No matter how much experience any of us has, we're never going to get a second chance at a first impression.



Even if you aren't looking for a job, you should still be dressing for the job you want to have one day. (And if not a job, what about for a spouse or friend, or earning more respect from those around you?) Remember, the secret to success comes from bringing all your choices into alignment with your values and dreams, and this includes your wardrobe.

## Dressing . . . Up!

I tell my clients to carry themselves every day as if they're going to a job interview. Think of it in this way: you're not getting dressed up; you're dressing to move up! Too many people are continually "business casual" and wonder why they always get passed up for a promotion or are regarded as being beneath the caliber of work they produce.

It may not seem fair, but like any good business, "brand you" needs the best marketing, and this starts with how you present yourself. Look around. How does your manager or supervisor dress? Does he or she always look especially nice? (Maybe a little nicer than you?) Remember what your goals are and that the person

promoting you wants reassurance that you'll represent the company well. In fact, it's a common business practice to promote those who already look the part, so this should be a very important consideration with respect to your everyday wardrobe selections. Consider what is and isn't appropriate. From there, I'll help you create looks you can mix and match.



Even if you don't have to go into an office every day, you are a walking billboard for yourself. Too many women let themselves go after they get into a secure relationship, have kids, and so on. To be treated with the respect you richly deserve, you have to remember to present yourself in a way that demands it.

## 1. Take Inventory

How many times have you stood in front of your closet and said, "I have nothing to wear!" Hopefully your significant other wasn't close by. Believe me, I've been there—husband staring in confusion, watching me look at a closet full of clothes as if it were totally empty. Of course, what I meant by that statement (what most women mean when they say that) is: "I have nothing appropriate to wear for this occasion," or "I have nothing that makes me feel beautiful or comfortable in my own skin."

To stop this from happening, let's take a quick look at how someone acquires a closet full of "nothing" in the first place. Do any of the following apply to you?

- I bought these shoes so I'd have an excuse to buy an outfit to match them, but then I never did. . . .
- This designer blouse was on sale—I couldn't pass up such a good deal.
- The salesperson offered me a better deal if I bought in quantity.
- I liked the way it looked . . . on someone else.
- I planned to lose weight so it would fit. . . .
- I love it, but it doesn't match anything I have.
- Once I got home, I didn't like it as much.
- I didn't realize that this color/print looked so awful on me.

- I wore this sweater when my husband proposed to me 15 years ago.
- My mother-in-law gave it to me as a gift.

## Beware of the Bargain Bin

Most of us love to buy things on sale—I know I do! We head straight to the sale rack and say, “Wow! This was \$100, and now it’s marked down to \$30! I’ve got to have it!” Then we get it home and realize we don’t have anything that matches it. When this happens, we’ve wasted, not saved, our hard-earned money. In fact, this is why so many of us have useless pieces hanging in our closet with the tags still on them.

I know a woman who practically made a career out of trying to find a top to match her designer slacks, which she said were “a steal.” (Seriously, haven’t we all been there?) A bargain is not a true bargain unless it actually gets used! The most important thing you need to focus on is a plan—not a sale.

## 2. Toss Out the Old

It’s time to cull your closet. Oftentimes, this is very difficult for my clients because they become overwhelmed by the process. Don’t worry! If you take it one step at a time, you’ll find that doing this greatly reduces your stress. Believe me, a streamlined closet will really make your life easier.

First, take out the pieces you really like and wear often. These are your Keepers. Lay them on the bed, and see how many ways you can mix and match them to create various outfits.

If you have a hard time with this, ask a trusted friend to come over and help. Offer her some chocolate or a glass of wine, and let her work her magic.

Next, with the remaining items, conduct a closet audit. You’re going to put each item into one of five piles: Keep, Donate, Undecided, Storage, and Tailor/Dry Cleaner (this pile is for items you want to keep but they’re in need of alterations, need buttons replaced, have stains that need to be removed, and so on). Take your time and be honest. If you haven’t worn an item in three years, you’re never going to wear it. Toss it in the Donate pile. Let another woman benefit from your transformation.

As you sort through your clothing, try on everything you’re undecided on or haven’t worn recently. Does the item still fit? If so, why aren’t you wearing it? Is it a garment you simply can’t part with for sentimental



reasons? Or maybe you love the outfit but need to lose weight to fit into it, or it's nostalgic because you wore it to a very special event. If you can't part with an item, but also can't wear it right now, put it in the Storage pile.

Beware, however, of "guilt garments." Just because you spent a lot of money on something and feel guilty for doing so, that is still not a good reason to hold on to it. Try to be objective (and brave), and take a hard look at the item. How would it best serve your transformation? Should you take it to a consignment store and try to recoup some cash? Should you donate it? I give you permission to do whatever is best for you, not your clothes.

Once you're finished and your piles are sorted, take a final stab at your Undecideds. Review each item, and ask yourself the following: Does it work for my job and lifestyle? Can it mix and match with any other pieces? Do I feel like me when I wear it? I've noticed that a lot of my clients tend to hold on to things that aren't really right for them. I don't put up a big fight, and neither should you. Be gentle with yourself. But do keep in

mind that the goal is to own only the clothes you feel good about—those that you wear often and wear well. Make your clothes serve your goals.



Nice job! Before you organize your Keepers, put your Storage items in the back of your closet, in a drawer, or in some other tucked-away spot. Put the Donate and Tailor/Dry Cleaner items in bags, and run them out to your car.

## Are You Trying to Lose Weight?

If you're on a weight-loss program and have a lot of clothes you spent good money on but can't fit into, set them aside for now. Put them in a spare closet if you have one, or move them to the back of your regular closet. The main idea is that your focus should be on your feel-good items. By moving aside what doesn't fit, you spare yourself the difficult feelings you'll come across while thumbing through your clothes every day looking for something to wear.

## 3. Get Organized

Time to organize what you have! Let's start by imagining that your closet has a vertical line drawn down the middle. One side is professional and the other is for personal clothing. For each section, do the following:

- Group together all of your tops. Hang up skirts and pants next; then dresses, jackets, and suits.
- Within those groups, arrange everything by color.

If possible, all of your clothing should be hung on wooden, plastic, or (even better) nonslip hangers so that things don't slide off. Wire hangers can distort the shape of clothes, giving you a pointy look in the shoulders. And never, ever store items in plastic bags, which can cause mold and stains to intensify. For delicate pieces, use cloth bags. Cut the sides of an old pillowcase to slip over a hanger to safely store your special dress or the top you wear during the holidays.

### 4. Invest in a Core Wardrobe

The most important thing a woman needs before going shopping is a plan. Start by thinking about which type of clothes you wear most often. Professional or personal garments? The average person who works an eight-hour day wears the clothes they go to work in for about 12 hours. If this is the case for you, then this is the area you want to concentrate on when it comes to shopping for new pieces.

The rule of thumb is that you should invest in core pieces for a professional, polished look. Check to make sure that you have at least one or more of the following in your closet:

- One black or brown/khaki pair of dress pants or skirt
- One black, gray, or navy-blue jacket
- One cream, navy, or gray button-down sweater (used as a substitute for a jacket)
- Solid-colored blouses and shells

These core pieces can be combined into many, many outfits; and this leads me to the secret for creating a master plan for your wardrobe. Are you ready? The secret is not to have a closet packed with clothes. It's true! When your wardrobe is streamlined, you'll have more confidence knowing that everything is flattering and works for you, not against you. Owning fewer pieces of clothing that mix and match well maximizes your outfit selections. In addition, if you go for the highest quality of clothing within your budget, you'll acquire pieces that look great and last for a long time. Over time, your "cost per wear" will be much favorable than buying several less-expensive items.



## Exercise: Create Your Core Shopping List

Now that your closet is organized, you can create a smart, efficient shopping list. In your journal, write down the core pieces you already own and make a list of the ones you need.

Perhaps right now you're thinking back to Julie's closet. "Hmm," you say, "this doesn't make sense! Julie had these core colors in her closet, and they were described as boring." Yes, they were, but it was because that was all she wore. There was no color, no embellishments, no added spark to hint at Julie's true beauty. She needed to pump up her style so that it radiated her authentic self: a bubbly, creative, bright woman.



The purpose of having core pieces is to create a canvas so that you can then add color with your blouses, shells, and camisoles; and with accessories such as jewelry, shoes, belts, scarves, and handbags. This gives you a grab-and-go wardrobe that helps you put great looks together fast. Think of your core pieces as your canvas from which you create breathtaking masterpieces for years to come.

If possible, I'd like you to also have the core-wardrobe pieces in black. Mix a couple of these items with your favorite colors, prints, and accessories to create countless looks. Give me one pair of nice black pants or a very good knit black tank, and I'll make you a hundred different outfits!

## Did You Know . . .

Every woman can wear black on her bottom half. If you want to wear black on top but don't think it's flattering for you, use jewelry or other accessories to brighten it up.

## Go Ahead . . . Mix and Match!

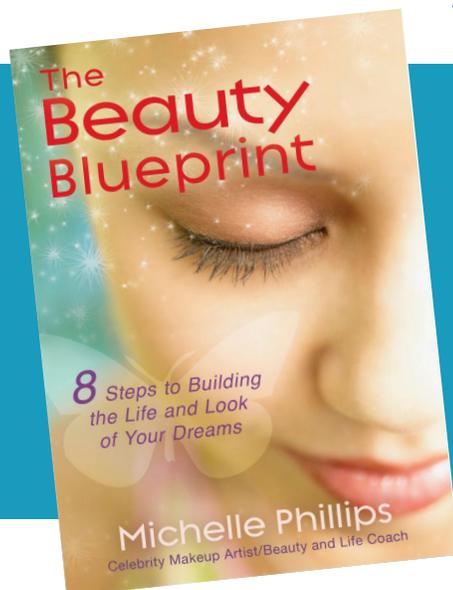
The best way to create great looks is to go through your wardrobe—and play! Hang up a few core pieces on your door frame or lay them on your bed. Then take out a couple pairs of pants, a few shells and blouses, a denim jacket (or other fun, light jacket), and a button-down sweater. Grab some accessories next: pearls, a silver or gold necklace, some bracelets, handbags, and a few pairs of really nice shoes. Make it fun! Mix and match your denim jacket with a shell or blouse and black or khaki dress pants; or try your jeans with a pair of pumps, a nice blouse, and black jacket. Add some pearls and a cute clutch, and you're ready to go.

Once I started traveling the country, this “playtime” became a vital part of my practice. Due to airline restrictions with luggage and the fact that I didn’t want to have to lug around heavy bags everywhere I went, I learned to pack light. Today, my suitcase consists of three or four core wardrobe pieces, a few blouses, a pair of nice jeans, some accessories, a couple of pairs of shoes, and my pajamas. I can make appearances on TV for five days in a row, go out to dinners, be casual on my travel days, and even work out . . . and all those items fit in a carry-on that I can stick in the overhead compartment.

The more you “play,” the better you’ll become at putting together looks. And with your scaled-down, streamlined wardrobe, you will never again worry about not having something to wear.

I look forward to staying touch with you with more tips to enhance your true beauty from the inside out!

~ *Michelle*



For more great Beauty and Life Coaching tips [click here to purchase Michelle’s Bestselling Beauty Book “The Beauty Blueprint- 8 Steps to Building the Life and Look of Your Dreams”](#).