

## According to the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, noise pollution is second only to air pollution in terms of public complaints and criticism.

I called our on-duty property management staff and politely expressed my concern. After a few moments, the couple turned off the light, shut the door and went home.

Similar instances of neighborly communication abound in my neighborhood and throughout the city. Indeed, Shanghai has developed many model communities known for their lush landscapes and peaceful surroundings.

### Why a quiet environment?

A quiet environment is good for people's health. A noisy one, on the contrary, could cause physical and mental problems.

According to an article posted on the official website of the International Noise Awareness Day, exposure to noise can not only damage hearing permanently but also take a toll on physical and mental health. For example, it explains that there is a link between noise exposure and an increasing risk of Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

The International Noise Awareness Day, which was on April 27 this year, was founded in 1996 by the Center for Hearing and Communication in the United States to educate the public about the dangers of noise pollution. It is now a worldwide phenomenon.

The Institute of Acoustics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences once published a special report on the event's history and impact, while also urging public awareness of noise pollution.

The campaign slogan for World Environment Day this year is "Only One Earth," with a focus on "Living Sustainably in Harmony with Nature." This naturally necessitates the establishment of more quiet areas free of artificial noises, as nature heals through silence.

# Learn to let go and trim the bulging closet

**Eve Wee-Ang**

WHEN people learn that I am a tidying consultant, they are surprised that I do not have a minimalist wardrobe. Tidying does not imply living in spartan conditions and wearing three sets of identical clothes unless this brings you joy.

But not for me.

I have no qualms about admitting that I love and appreciate beautiful things, particularly clothing. Putting together my daily outfit is a form of creative expression that I take very seriously. When the right colors and silhouettes click, it instantly lifts my mood and puts a spring in my step.

It's my unconventional method of consuming art, except that I prefer to wear it.

If you love clothes but your closet is overflowing and you still feel like you have nothing to wear, it's time to tidy up!

### Which clothes make you feel the most YOU?

I used to follow every fashion trend, even if it made me look ridiculous. When I saw a certain fashion editor strutting down the street in her signature style of sheer blouse tucked into a tight pencil skirt with stiletto heels, I copied her entire outfit. Instead of strutting, I got blisters and hypoxia from sucking in.

I put them at the back of my closet until I mustered the courage to face the truth: No matter how long I kept them in the hope that I might wear

them again, the outfit never felt like me.

Have an honest conversation with yourself when you tidy your clothes. Which items in your wardrobe bring out the truest, most comfortable, and beautiful version of yourself? You already know. These are your most hardworking clothes, which you reach for again and again when they've been freshly laundered.

They are the ones who understand, respect and embrace your body. The moment you put it on, it charges you with positive energy, like good friends. You do not have to compromise or abandon yourself in order to fit into the clothes. It allows you to be YOU. These are your gold star keepers.

### Keep experimenting different styles until it clicks

For seven years, I wore only skirts and dresses to create a signature uniform, narrowing my preferences to make shopping easier. But lately, I find myself trying and loving linen pantsuits that cover my cold knees and frozen shoulders, a TCM prescription order from my Chinese doctor. My point is that your style evolves as you go through life. Circumstances, budget, health, age, influencers, and so on can all inspire and sway our style.

We only have one life.

Allow your curiosity and open-mindedness to guide you as you explore, play and experiment with various styles. Before you fill your closet with fashion tchotchke, consider whether

the styles you admire are appropriate for your current lifestyle.

A fashion editor might look stunning in a tight skirt and stilettos, but it's not practical if you're a stay-at-home mom with a newborn. When you put on clothes from 20 years ago, they may feel out of place.

You used to enjoy yoga, but now you prefer cycling. Wearing full makeup was once your jam but you now prefer to go barefaced.

As you experiment with different styles at different stages of your life, become your own lifelong editor by keeping what works and discarding what doesn't. Many people get stuck in the letting go stage, which explains their overflowing-closet-yet-nothing-to-wear predicament. If we don't let go, we won't be free of our past regrets, which are over no matter how hard we try. As we gradually detach, we will gain the confidence and courage to dress, unapologetically.

### Wear what you love every day

During my 65-day lockdown in Shanghai, I dressed like I was going out every day. I would put on a nice outfit, perfume and tinted lip balm followed by my kitchen apron and gloves as I psyched myself up for another day of chores, cooking and nucleic acid testing. There would have been less laundry to do if I had spent the entire day in my pajamas. But lockdowns had already restricted my freedom, and I refused to let them take away my enjoyment of dressing up for myself.

As you edit your wardrobe and distill it down to keep only your favorite pieces, wear them with pride every day. Show off your love for prints and colors if that's your style. Take that massive hat that's been sleeping in your wardrobe out for a spin. If you feel most comfortable in neutral shades, wear them proudly.

To boldly own our personal style is an artistic expression of ourselves. Finally, please don't save special things for special occasions. Wear them whenever and wherever you wish because every day that we are alive is special.



(The author is a certified KonMari tidying consultant from Singapore and resides in Shanghai.)