



EPISODE NO. 341

5 Signs It's Time for a Closet Cleanse

If your closet could talk, what do you think it would say about you? In this episode, we are talking about the five signs that it's time for a closet cleanse. So let's dive in.

Welcome to the School of Self-Image, where personal development meets style. Here's your hostess, master life coach, Tonya Leigh.

Hello, my beautiful friends. What's going on? How's everybody doing? How are you feeling? I hope you're happy wherever you are. I want to say thank you to all of you who have taken the time to leave me a review on iTunes. I got the sweetest review. I've had so many, but there's one from this 12-year-old girl and she was like, "I'm a 12-year-old girl and I personally love her. I've never been a people pleaser probably all my life, and I have stopped putting myself first. I never watch podcasts. I mean never. But this is really uplifting and she has found a new follower." I want to give her a shout-out. Thank you so much for leaving me this review. I wish I would've had this work when I was 12, or dear Lord, middle School. It would've been such a game changer.

I mean, think about it. If we knew then what we know now, how our life would've been totally different. But then again, I feel like you always learn when you're supposed to. So we don't have to regret anything. We learn this stuff when we're meant to learn it. And so I'm just grateful that I finally discovered it and I continue to discover things and learn and grow. And so thank you for leaving me a beautiful review. And if you haven't left a review and you love this podcast, I would greatly appreciate it. I don't know if

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I've... Yeah, I'm sure I've said it on this podcast, but my personal vision, goal, what I am after is I want to support 5,000 women in creating their after story.

And me and my team, we talk about this all of the time. We're like, "How are we going to do this?" And I feel like in our membership it's already happening, but I also believe that there will be after stories from women who never do one of my programs. Maybe you just listen to this podcast and you take it and run with it and you create incredible results in your life. And I want to hear from you if that is you. And one of the best places that you can do that is to leave a review and just let me know how this podcast has had a positive impact on your life. And so I just want to say thank you for all of those who have, even this one woman, she was like, "You are being heard in a little old country town in Austria." That makes me so happy. And so for all of you, thank you for leaving these reviews and thank you in advance for leaving one in the future.

Also, next week we are going to be starting the SLIM Self-image course within the School of Self-Image membership. If you want to focus on a completely new and refreshing and effective and maintainable way to create your happy weight, come and join us. I'm going to be teaching this alongside our community manager, Laura, who's also a weight loss coach and has her own incredible weight loss before and after story. And we are just so excited to support the members who want to make this a focus, who have this as a goal, and they're ready to be done with it. They're ready to have tools to help them stop the yo-yo dieting, to stop the obsession, to stop the lack of wellbeing because there's nothing healthy about being caught up in a cycle of self-loathing and frustration with your body and really being at war with yourself. And that's what we're going to be focused on, completely transforming.

This is the exact process that I went through that helped me not only to lose over 70 pounds, but to completely reinvent myself so that I could think, feel, and be a slim woman. And the results came from that. And so when I use the word slim, it does not mean skinny. It simply means to let go, to shed what is weighing you down. And what's on the other side is going to look so different for all of us. I have had women go through this process when I was focused on weight loss coaching. Some of them would settle at a size 14 because that felt true to them, that felt at their best. They felt healthy and strong and vibrant. And so it's not a dress size, it is a feeling of knowing that you are showing up in the most healthy, vibrant, and beautiful way possible and trusting that your body will acclimate to that new self-image.

And so if you want to join us, all you have to do is go to schoolofselfimage.com/slim and join the School of Self-Image membership as an annual member because this course is only available to those members who commit for a year. And so when you join, you not only get the SLIM Self-Image course, but you are also going to be getting all that's included in the School of Self-Image membership. It is such a great

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investment. There's so much value there. I know deep in my heart when you get in there, you're going to be like, "Wow, this was well worth my investment." And so come and join us, schoolofselfimage.com/slim.

Now, one of the pillars of the self-image work that we do within the membership is style. The other two are mindset, which is everything, and then surroundings. So surroundings and style are two of the areas that we work on to help us change our mindset. I don't believe in just sitting around trying to think your way to a better life because there are way too many factors involved. We get triggered. There's trauma. There's people that we are around at this just keep re-triggering old thoughts and we can't seem to get out of it. Or maybe there's something that you're looking at every day that just throws you into that loop.

So as much as we can, I believe in shaping our surroundings to give us a fighting chance of changing our thoughts. And the same goes with style, because every day we are looking at ourselves in the mirror and that reflection is telling ourselves a story. And a lot of times what happens is we're looking at the same thing, telling ourselves the same story. And so we just keep perpetuating a self-image that may or may not be working for us. I hope that makes sense.

And so as you are elevating your self-image, it's so important to change what you are seeing because when you change what you're seeing, what you see changes. I'll say that again. It's important to change what you're seeing, because when you do, what you see changes. So during the SLIM Self-Image, I'm going to be encouraging you all to shake it up, to change where you go, to try new foods, to wear a new dress. Because when you begin to shake up your outer world, it can start to shake up your inner one. And so, one of the pillars is style, and we're going to be talking about this within the SLIM self-image, and we talk about it a lot within the School of Self-Image membership.

And so in today's episode, I want to address that pillar of the self-image method. And we're going to talk about specifically your closet and five signs that it's time for a closet cleanse. So right now, I just want you to think about your closet. Or if you're at home, go into your closet and ask yourself, "What does my closet say about me?" And what I have found to be really helpful for me is to pretend that I'm a reporter, so I'm not even me, I'm a reporter, and to look at my closet or any area of my life through the eyes of someone who doesn't know me. And what would they say that my closet says about me? My traits, my personality. They may even have an idea of what kind of work I do, what my hobbies are, maybe how much money I make, or how in debt I am because you never know with a closet. It may look like somebody has a lot of money, but in all actuality it's a lot of debt. But what would that person maybe think?

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It's a really fascinating exercise because your world is just a 3D reflection of your mind. And I have found our closets to be such an intimate window into our soul because our closet is a part of our homes that not many people see. So it's very personal and very intimate. Sometimes we can stuff things into our closet because we can close the door and no one sees, but we see. And what does that represent in our own lives? What are we stuffing back and hiding in our own life? What does that represent? And so being curious about what your closet is saying about you is such an interesting exercise.

In fact, I am running the Style Experience right now, and we are having so much fun. And we spent a whole month on this one topic. On the month of editing, we focused on figuring out what does our closet say about us? What do we want it to say? And then we did a big closet cleanse, and it was so cathartic. I even went through it myself again because I like to do this at least once a year. And I realized for me how much I've grown in a year, how my closet is not keeping up with who I'm becoming. And so I got rid of 50% of my clothes. And there it was. There she was, just half full, lots of space, which to me represented space for introspection, space for reinvention, space for a future. And that's what I saw that space representing. It's like this is your future that you get to decide.

Sometimes we can become very uncomfortable with space because we're so used to filling up every nook and cranny of our entire lives. That space can be very uncomfortable, but space is exactly what is needed for your reinvention, for your self-image revolution. You have to be willing to have space to figure it out. And that's why it may seem like, "Oh, I'm just cleaning my closet." But no, you're literally cleaning up your life.

So let's look at the five signs that it's time for a closet cleanse. Sign number one, your closet is too full and you cannot find most things. When we go unconscious, when we don't stop and assess and have some moments of introspection, what can often happen is we just keep spending and buying and over stuffing. It's no different than food. Oftentimes we go unconscious and we think that the answer is just to overeat, to soothe ourselves with food. And for other people it's like, "Let me soothe myself with buying more because that's going to be the answer." And so we wake up one day and we have these closets that are stuffed with so many things and it feels like we can't breathe.

I've personally had this issue where I literally could not put one more hanger into my closet. And then we think the answer to that is, "Well, I just need a bigger closet. It must be the closet because it certainly couldn't be me," which isn't true. I'll never forget seeing a French woman's closet for the first time. And I was flabbergasted because this was a woman that had come to know, and I thought she was so stylish and chic. And so when I imagined her closet, I imagined this dream closet that was two

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stories and had a whole wall of shoes. My imagination went wild. And so when I went to her house and I was in her bedroom, she literally had an armoire. That was her closet. And I realized at that point, I'm like, "Okay, I clearly missed this lesson growing up."

How do you look that good with that amount of clothing? And that was over 10 years ago. I remember just being amazed and wanting to figure out how. And that sent me on this whole journey of learning about style. I took courses on being a personal stylist. I studied color theory. I learned about accessories and body types and all of the things that help to create great style. What I've come to understand is that style is about knowing yourself, knowing what you want to communicate, and understanding how to translate that through clothing and accessories. And the truth is you don't need a lot of things. And that's the mistake that we make. We think that we need tons of shoes, tons of accessories, tons of clothing.

And when you believe that, when that is a belief that you hold to be true, you just end up buying so many things. But the question becomes, have you taken time to really get to know yourself? Know yourself on the inside and the outside, know your body type, know your skill, know what colors flatter you, knowing your style personality and then knowing how to translate that through clothing. Because if not, you're just going to be wasting a lot of time and a lot of money and you're going to be super frustrated and you're going to have a closet full of things with nothing to wear.

And that leads me to sign number two that it's time for a closet cleanse, you struggle to get dressed. When your closet is too full or you haven't done that deep work of figuring out who you are, the way that shows up is you have a hard time choosing your clothes. And maybe you don't have clothes in your closet that align with who you want to be, but because you haven't really defined it, all is that you are pretty much discontented most of the time with your clothing. And so if that's you, it's time to get rid and do this work and get rid of the things that aren't serving you, that don't feel right, that don't belong in your future, and have that space of discovery.

It's been said that we wear 20% of our clothes 80% of the time, which means our closets are full of things that we don't even wear. They're just sitting there taking up space with no love, no attention, no real home. I love to think of our clothes are like people and they need homes, and they want to be in homes where they're loved and they get along with other people. And the way that looks in your closet is if you have a traditional style, a classic style, and then there's like a neon dress hanging there that for whatever reason you bought years ago and you never wear and you don't even like it, that dress does not belong in the same family as the rest of your clothing. They're from two different families. That neon dress wants to be with her family. So selling

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her, donating her is one of the best things that you can do for the person who will enjoy this dress as well as the dress.

I know. Sometimes I feel like my clothes are living things. It's a weird thing, but it helps me. But if you're struggling to get dressed, you need to clean your closet. You need to get rid of the things that you know don't fit, and again, create that space of mystery, of the future, of who you're becoming. Now, it is true that nature abhors a vacuum, meaning that empty spaces will want to be filled. And the work here is to be in the discomfort of the empty space, not to want to fill it up immediately.

I saw this during the Style Experience. We spent a whole month of just space. Everyone was so eager like, "When are we going to start shopping? When are we going to start filling up these spaces?" I'm like, "Take a breather, you all. Take a moment. We don't have to fill it up immediately. Can you be present with space to see what unfolds in that space?" And that's exactly what we did and had so much self-discovery in that space. And so when you do your closet cleanse, I encourage you not to go out there and do the same things that you've been doing and fill it right back up, but to set up some guidelines and some rules for yourself about what you're going to allow in and allow yourself a moment to breathe with this space that you've created.

Okay, sign number three that it's time for a closet clean is your clothes don't fit. How many of you are holding onto clothes that don't fit you, hoping and praying that they will? Now, I've been here many, many times and I understand the psychology of not wanting to waste and of wanting a goal of weight loss and thinking that hanging onto clothes that are too small is the answer. And for some of you, maybe it's clothes that are too big. You've lost the weight, but you don't want to get rid of these clothes because maybe you have a deep fear that you're going to put it back on. And so you're holding onto the larger clothes just in case.

Either way, here is my rule around this. Your closet should only have clothes that fit you beautifully now. We are not going to hold ourselves hostage. We're not going to punish ourselves by denying ourselves a feeling of beauty and love and care in the bodies we have right now. Now, you may be wondering, "But what about all of these other clothes that I'm really hoping that I get into one day"? Well, we have options. I say never hold onto clothes that are more than two sizes from where you are now. And if you can alter them... So if clothes are too big, take them to a tailor and have them custom altered for your body right now.

If you want to hang on to clothes that are smaller, you need to box them up, put them away, and have a rule, like, "If I'm not wearing these clothes in the year, I'm getting rid of them." But don't put them in your line of sight so that every day when you're looking at them, you're telling yourself, "I'm not there yet. I'm not there yet" and beating yourself up over some clothing. I don't believe in that ever, ever, ever. I want everything

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in your closet that you're seeing every single day to send a message to you that is deliberate and on purpose and supportive. "I am worthy. I deserve beautiful things. I love taking care of the body I have right now. I love dressing the body I have right now beautifully." And so if your clothes don't fit, it's time for a closet cleanse.

Sign number four that you are in need of a closet cleanse is you have evolved, but your closet hasn't. How many of you can relate to this one? I hear this a lot within the membership because women will come in and they'll start to have these big shifts internally and they feel like a new person, but they'll say, "But my clothes don't feel right anymore." If that is you, it's time for a closet cleanse.

We've done this before, and someone would be like, "I want to be naked because literally nothing fits, nothing is fitting my new self-image and maybe nothing fits physically." And so if that is you, I encourage you to have some basics to get you through this period of discovery with your style. Because yes, you're going to need to wear some things. So pick your five best outfits and then let go of other things because as I said, nature bores a vacuum. You're going to fill that back up, but I want you to fill it up with the things that really serve and represent the you now.

I see this a lot in women who are in transition. Maybe you've retired and you're leaving corporate, and now all of a sudden you're like traveling and hanging out with the grandkids and you're at home and meeting girlfriends for lunch, and you realize that your wardrobe does not accommodate this new lifestyle. It can bring up a lot of emotions when you start to let go of an era, of a time past that will no longer be. And so don't be surprised in this process if you don't cry, if you don't have to grieve a little bit because you're letting go of an identity. But guess what? I love to believe that your future is going to be better than ever. That it just keeps getting better. And so yes, grieve the old you, but I want you to be so excited about what's over the horizon about this next chapter.

I see this with moms who are going back into the workforce and they look at their closet and they realize, "Oh, this has not caught up with where I am now." They have a lot of yoga pants and t-shirts with stains on them, and so they're going to have to get their closet to match what currently is.

This is even common in my life. As I said when I went through this with the Style Experience, I've realized how much growth I've had just in the last year and how certain pieces of my wardrobe don't represent who I am now, where I'm living now, who I've become. And so even for someone like me who's doing the same things and I'm still in the same career, with growth comes this new version, this new level of you. Don't be surprised if there are certain things you used to love that no longer resonate with the version of you now.

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Sign number five that it's time for a closet cleanse is you're ready for a reinvention. Maybe you're someone who just feels like you're stuck, like you're in a rut. It's the same old, same old, and you are tired of it. You are done tolerating it and you're ready to shake things up. You're ready to do things differently. You're ready to step out in a whole new way. Style is one of the most effective ways to do that. Chanel said, "A woman that changes her hair, gets her hair cut, is about to change her life." And I've seen that to be true. When women go out there and buy the audacious dress, wear the shoes, wear that bold lipstick, get the haircut, color their hair, it's a sign that I am ready for a new identity because the identity that I've been in is not working anymore. She's holding me back. I am needing that injection of passion, of feeling, of excitement, and me sitting around just waiting for it to happen is not working any longer. And so they go out and they do something audacious and bold with their style.

And so if you feel like you are in a life rut, notice how your closet just reconfirms that. Maybe you find yourself wearing the same things over and over and over. And therefore you keep thinking the same thoughts about yourself over and over and over and you just keep perpetuating the self-image that makes it feel like you're stuck. But all that is required is one step in a different direction. And so to me, cleaning out your closet is this symbolic gesture to the universe that "I'm ready for change." Have a beautiful week, my friends and I will see you in next week's episode. Cheers.

Hey, have you grabbed your free copy of the School of Self-Image Manifesto? If not, what in the world? Head over to schoolofselfimage.com/manifesto and get a copy that teaches you how to think and show up in the areas of mindset, style, and surroundings so that you can transform your self-image.