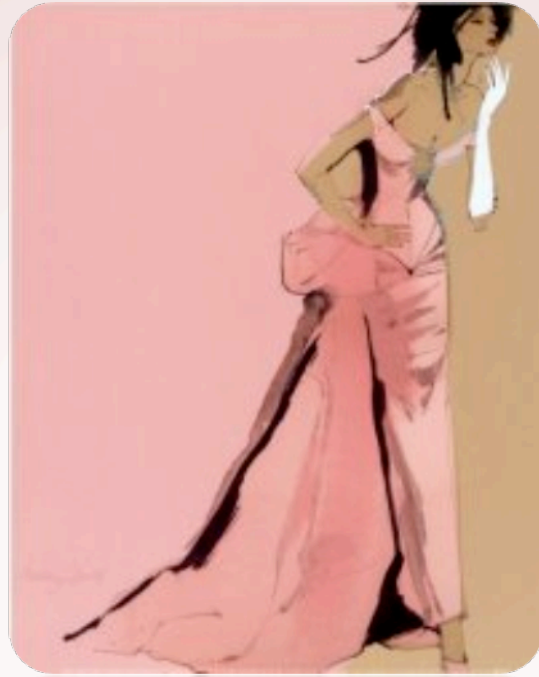


# SECRETS OF ELEGANCE



THE TEN STAGES TO BEING ELEGANT



EUNICE TAN

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction To Becoming Elegant.....</b>	<b>5</b>
The Starting Point.....	5
An Outline Of the Book .....	6
First, Congratulate Yourself.....	7
Slowly But Surely, We'll Get There .....	7
<b>Why You Should Not "Try" To Be Elegant .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Keep The Desire to Be Elegant Burning .....	10
<b>Who then, is Elegant?.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Case Study: Audrey Hepburn .....	11
Every Part of Her Communicated Elegance.....	12
She was not perfect. ....	14
You Can Be Elegant, in Spite of Our Human Flaws .....	14
<b>PART 1 – Start on the "Insides" .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Your First Baby Step 1: An Excellent Heart .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Start From The Inside .....	17
Elegance is Graciousness In Action .....	17
How do we be gracious?.....	18
Spend Some Time Daily Feeding Your Soul with "Good Quality Food" .....	18
Baby Steps 1: Schedule for An Elegant Spirit & Heart.....	19
<b>Baby Steps 2: Be Authentic.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Authenticity: Discovering Your True Self .....	21
Get rid of 'What Is Not You' .....	22
Remember How To Be Confident.....	22
An Elegant Woman's Personal Inventory .....	22
Authenticity Gives You Confidence And Are The Beginnings of Elegance .....	24
<b>Baby Steps 3: Do Not Lose Your Peace .....</b>	<b>26</b>
Don't Lose Your Peace.....	27
A Beautiful and Elegant Countenance .....	27
Do You Have A Pleasant Countenance? .....	28
What Do You Wear On Your Face? .....	29
Elegant Countenance Triumphs Over Pretty Faces.....	30
<b>Baby Steps 4: Guard Your Heart .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Whatever is in Your Heart Eventually Turns Up On Your Face .....	31
Guard Your Heart .....	31
<b>PART 2 - Working On the "Outsides" .....</b>	<b>32</b>
Focusing the "Outsides" To Be Elegant.....	32
<b>Baby Steps 5: Taking Pride = Loving Yourself .....</b>	<b>33</b>
Taking Pride In Your Appearance: An Elegant Look .....	33
Basic Principles of An Elegant Look.....	34
Your First Steps To A Timeless, Elegant Look .....	34
Skin Care, Make up And Hair.....	35
The Way Of Elegance In Make Up .....	35
Colours of Elegant Make Up.....	37
Should You Wear Make Up?.....	37
<b>Baby Steps 6: Impeccable Grooming.....</b>	<b>38</b>

So where do we start? .....	39
Personal Grooming for Face .....	40
Use Make up For A Fresh Healthy Appearance .....	40
Clean, Neat Hair .....	42
Body Maintenance .....	42
Facial Hair .....	43
Hair Removal .....	44
Grooming for Nails .....	44
How to Ensure Your Clothes Are Groomed .....	46
Smells .....	46
Your Elegant Woman Grooming Checklist.....	46
<b>Baby Steps 7: Valuing Quality .....</b>	<b>48</b>
Valuing Quality over Quantity and Price.....	48
<b>Baby Steps 8: Building A Quality Wardrobe .....</b>	<b>50</b>
Build Quality Into Your Wardrobe.....	51
Building A Wardrobe That Works .....	52
First, Acquire Your Basics .....	52
Next, Analyze Your Wardrobe .....	53
Paying Attention to Details .....	54
How To Build A Quality Wardrobe.....	55
<b>Baby Steps 9: Matchmaking, a Principle of Elegant Dressing.....</b>	<b>57</b>
Matchmaking Your Clothes.....	57
Practice restraint.....	58
Pick solid colours .....	59
After You've Acquired Your Basic Clothes In Solid Colours .....	59
<b>Baby Steps 10: A Commitment To On-Going Education.....</b>	<b>63</b>
*Eunice's Personal Inventory List.....	66

“To live content with small means; to seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion; to be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy, not, rich; to listen to stars and birds, babes and sages, with open heart; to study hard; to think quietly, act frankly, talk gently, await occasions, hurry never; in a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow up through the common - this is my symphony" - William Ellery Channing

## Introduction To Becoming Elegant

Just like you, I am in a lifelong journey to increase my elegance. I admired the self-confidence that came with it, simply from knowing what to do in every situation and performing with ease. I loved elegant living, the style of dressing and its way of life.

### The Starting Point

Many books write about elegance, taste, society, class, etc. But where do you go if you don't know where to start? It feels very strange and overwhelming to learn about which fork to use, where to go, how to dress, and kind of hairstyle to wear. You worry about not having enough knowledge, money to buy 'elegant things', time to travel, or learn French.

I'm here to reveal to you that while all these things have manifested out of elegance, and are good things, they are mere 'fruits' of elegance. Doing all these things will only give you a temporal feeling of confidence but never real security about yourself.

*So how will you ever obtain an elegant self-confidence?*

This book will walk you through starting from ground zero. Together, we will explore how true elegance roots from a sense of self-assuredness, a result of an inward security of knowing who you are.

### **An Outline Of the Book**

We will first explore what elegance is, and what it is not. We will discuss demystify many common myths of elegance. We will then study some shining examples of elegant women.

Most importantly, we will establish how to get to know 'you', taking more than some random moments of "Me time". We will work through elements of elegance that you already have, refining them to standards. We will work on acquiring other layers of elegance, bit by bit.

Then we will explore the different types of elegance and ease you into finding one that matches your style. This book is all about you. I've written it in a way, which you can personalize it. It will not be a book that merely "tells you".

If you feel overwhelmed, don't. The feeling of being overwhelmed stems from wanting to everything today. So I urge you to take baby steps. Use this book like a workbook. Work everything out slowly

### **First, Congratulate Yourself**

First of all, congratulate yourself on your desire to become elegant. That is something innate and can't be taught. You can't make someone want to be elegant. It needs to be inspired, hungered. If I could, I would make it mandatory for everyone who boards an airplane wear clean socks and proper clothes, not pajamas!

You can tell when someone wants to refine their tastes, style, life. They want to get better at what they do. They don't have a 'can't be bothered' attitude. The fact that you've expressed your desire by searching for elegance, by buying this book or logging on to <http://elegantwoman.org>, you know that you're on your way there.

I don't know about you or your lifestyle, but I hope to, through this book. No matter how busy you are, you can attain your idea of elegance, maybe slowly but surely. You have what it takes to become who you want to be.

### **Slowly But Surely, We'll Get There**

The truth is elegance can't be taught all in one book. It is a process that needs tuning and honing. However, I can highlight some principles and guidelines that help you get there. Hence I've formatted my book like a workbook, which engages you to do self-reflection. In other words, I hope I've helped you learn how to fish.

If you only have ten minutes today, I would like to leave you with a summary, which encompasses the whole book. Feed on it, use it to brighten your day, give you a beautiful hope to start your day.

True elegance starts from within.

It starts from knowing who you are.

It is also about not being someone you are not.

Therefore we thrust ourselves into a lifelong journey of self-discovery.

Halfway through that journey, when we start to get a clear idea of ourselves, this self-assuredness sets in.

Elegance comes from a refinement of that process.

It is that simple.

But that self-discovery journey, then refining our tastes, interests, talents and skills does require some effort.

The good news is that because you already know who you are, what you love – getting better at being you is something you will enjoy to do tremendously.

The journey never ends. But the pleasure and enjoyment derived from it keeps you wanting more. Just like an old friend whom you love meeting again and again, finding out more about her life, or favourite book you want to read over and over, I hope this book will be that lifelong companion to you.

So let's get started!

## Why You Should Not “Try” To Be Elegant

Everybody knows someone whom we think is elegant.

We admire them, try to follow what they say, wear, or buy. She could be someone in your workplace. She could be a celebrity. She is that girl who seems to have it altogether. The one who has all the designer clothes and purses, or perhaps you admire that soft-spoken lady who radiates intelligence and knowledge whenever she enters into conversation with anyone.

Most people don't quite get how to obtain elegance. They hope to be elegant and they express this hope in many ways. They buy the nicest things, dress their best and carry designer goods.

They also study cuisines and visit restaurants and talk endlessly about food, hoping to appear sophisticated. Can a woman be elegant and sophisticated? Is a sophisticated woman an elegant one? What is the difference with being classy and elegant?

**Truth:** Designer clothes, purses, sophisticated taste buds do not make you elegant.

While all the above does help improve their image of elegance, which they hope to portray, one does not become entirely elegant by external efforts. It is like putting make up over a dirty face. At some point, the make up wears off, falls off the face to reveal the real deal.

We've all have people in our lives whom we secretly know they are pretending. Their façade falls through the cracks when their real self speak or act out, revealing their true colours.

Thus, we should not “try” to be elegant by focusing on the outside layers, accumulating possessions, memberships or skill etc.

To obtain true elegance, the type that does not fade away and naturally flows out of your heart, is by starting from within.

That means getting more in tune with YOU. Unique and beautiful you.

When in tune, elegance will eventually flow naturally.

You'll find yourself saying and doing, as you are. You'll be confident and know what to do in every situation. You'll realize that you have more than you think, existing deep within – which we'll help you discover a little along the way.

Other elegant ways you'll learn and pick up on our own journey. The good news is that it gets easier and will become more natural to you.

### **Keep The Desire to Be Elegant Burning**

For now, we can just start with your desire to be elegant. That is what it takes to spur you on to be the person that you want to be.

So whatever or whoever it was that inspired you to, keep it going. It will help you get more out of life, out of this book and <http://elegantwoman.org>.

## **Who then, is Elegant?**

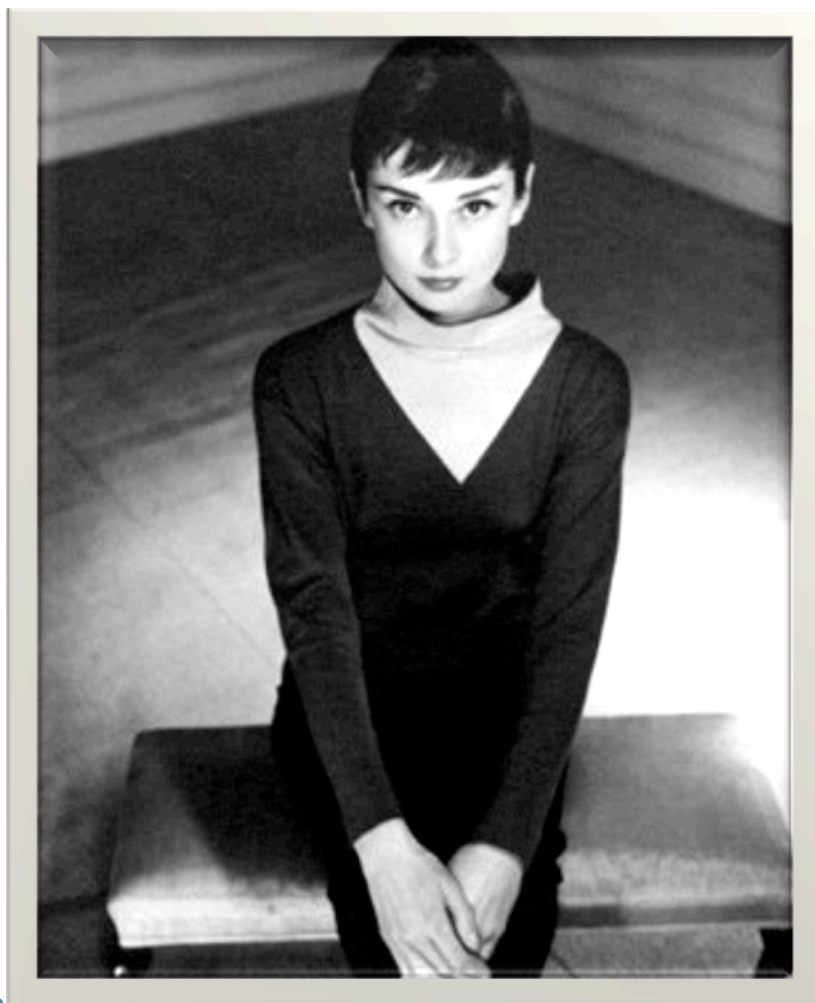
So we're beginning to discover who is the truly elegant. It is always wonderful to have a few women we can admire and be inspired by.

Who is the elegant woman?

An elegant woman is not necessarily rich, or sophisticated. It does not matter where she is from, what kind of home she lives in, or the car she drives.

Previously, we've already established that the truly elegant is from someone who is rich from within.

### Case Study: Audrey



### Hepburn

Used with permission from <http://audreyhepburn.com>

For me, that woman is (but not limited to) Audrey Hepburn.

She moves gracefully, is never sloppy. She never looks tired, is always bright and sparkly, yet pleasantly quiet and thoughtful. She is full of love, graciousness and compassion.

She is always on time, works hard at whatever she finds in her hands to do, whether it was coming to the film set with all her lines memorized or to give a speech at UNICEF.

She is thrifty and saves her earnings but enjoys luxuries for what they are.

She has deep-rooted family values. She was a devoted mother. And when she married, she wanted to be very married.

Despite her influential life, her heart and values were always in tact.

She enjoyed fashion and good clothes, but they were never a priority over the feelings of others. She preferred a quiet life but worked hard to provide a comfortable and normal life for her children.

She had the potential to earn more money but she was not greedy. When she felt she had enough, she stopped work and relished in her role as a mother, only on occasion flying into New York to give an interview and flying out the next day to return to her home in Switzerland.

### **Every Part of Her Communicated Elegance**

Her very elegance essence could not even escape the movie characters she portrayed in movies.

In one of her most famous movies, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, Audrey depicted the protagonist Holly Golightly. In the original book, which the movie was based on, Holly wasn't exactly a virtuous woman. She was a social climber, who often used wealthy men she meets for their money and connections.



Audrey as Holly Golightly in Breakfast at Tiffany's. Used with permission from <http://audreyhepburn.com>

Yet when Audrey played that character, she took it to another level convincing her audience that she was simply an innocent, naive lost country farm girl-orphan. She caused them to have great compassion for her character, Holly.

She did the impossible. She made Holly Golightly a tasteful character (whereas in the script and book, she was not).

I believe with her voice, her eyes, her stance, her posture, poise, and the way she embodied her clothes, she communicated the height of refinement and epitomizes the example of elegance, even through the lens of a video camera.

It made the whole world fall in love with her. It made everyone want what Audrey had.

I've studied many women from the past and present, from all ages, all walks of life. Grace Kelly, Jackie Kennedy, Jessica Alba, Autumn Reeser, Ashley Judd all had very strong elements of elegance but nobody resonates elegance like Audrey Hepburn.

Before I continue our study of attaining her kind of elegance, a very freeing fact I would love to draw your attention to:

**She was not perfect.**

I've read every possible book and documentation about her to uncover the roots of the elegance she had. Who was she? Instead of finding someone with a charmed life, I've stumbled upon a woman with imperfections, insecurities and troubles like the rest of us.

Despite that, she had an iron resolve to remain true to herself.

She knew who she was and was not stumbling to and fro from one fad to another. She was not constantly trying to keep up with anything. It sounds like a paradox, but despite her imperfections, insecurities of her abilities, her failed relationships, she was at ease with herself. She knew who she was, and who she was not. She refused to be anybody but herself.

“Elegance is not about perfection. It is knowing that no one is perfect, realizing that we'll never be perfect and being really calm about it.” – Eunice,

elegantwoman.org

**You Can Be Elegant, in Spite of Our Human Flaws**

Many people have documented that Audrey had an unwillingness to fake anything, from her body image insecurities and publicly failed marriages. She

struggled with her relationships before everyone. Yet she remained strong, positive and gracious as much and whenever she could. She focused on others and it became more intense as she neared the end of her life.

Whether or not she was happy, I can't say. Nevertheless, she was the most elegant.

She probably no idea how much her elegance has influenced and inspired us all.

She has shown us that elegance is not about becoming perfect. This gives all of us hope, especially all of us who are extremely self-conscious with a tad of low self-esteem. Audrey, in truth suffered from extreme self-consciousness. In many interviews, she talked about how she dealt with her fears head on, with a steel resolve to overcome it.

Her own very words also tell us how she was brought up with good old-fashioned manners.

"It's that wonderful old-fashioned idea that others come first and you come second. This was the whole ethic by which I was brought up. Others matter more than you do, so 'don't fuss, dear; get on with it.'" –  
Audrey Hepburn

She has shown us that every person who struggles can learn to become elegant.

It is not about etiquette, memorizing rules of doing everything, or a certain surefire look, or about the things we buy, drive or possess.

This is one of those moments where you can say obtaining elegance is not about the destination but the journey. Let's begin that journey.

## PART 1 – Start on the “Insides”



## Your First Baby Step 1: An Excellent Heart

"To be elegant is first of all to know oneself, and to know oneself well requires a certain amount of reflection and intelligence." - unknown

"A truly elegant taste is generally accompanied with excellency of heart." - Henry Fielding

### Start From The Inside

I believe in what the Bible says in Matthew 23:26

*"...First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside will also be clean."*

We have to start with the inside, and once that is dealt with, the rest of it is easy.

Despite what dictionaries say, I would like to define elegance as "graciousness in action".

### Elegance is Graciousness In Action

I've seen people try to be elegant by wearing pearl necklaces, social climb, become food connoisseurs, speak Prada amongst a number of things.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with that. While all that is personal preference, one is not truly elegant that way. She may appear elegant; know

the entire lingo but is far from elegant. Her real ungracious self comes out when put in hot water.

A woman is like a tea bag- you never know how strong she is until she gets in hot water. - Eleanor Roosevelt

An elegant woman is a gracious woman. She is gracious till the end. She never shoves others out of her way in a crowded train. It doesn't matter if she looks elegant, speaks the part but fails terribly in her everyday life. The truth eventually finds its way out.

### How do we be gracious?

Love others, value and esteem others. Have the view that every person you meet is the same as you, regardless of social status, looks, speech or education.

"I laugh, I love, I hope, I try, I hurt, I need, I fear, I cry. And I know you do the same things too, so we're really not that different, me and you."

- Colin Raye

Genuinely care and put others first. When you meet them, ask about them and let them talk about themselves. Be happy listening. Audrey Hepburn often told how her mother often told her that "I" is boring.

When you are gracious, you move with an elegant self-confidence. You suddenly find that you know what to do, what is appropriate to say etc. Your words are kind and seasoned with salt.

Sometimes, being gracious is hard to do. You know that it is best; you know that you should do it, but you find yourself struggling to "be good."

Again, trying to be good is tough, because it is not from the 'inside'. Here is how to be gracious naturally and easily:

### Spend Some Time Daily Feeding Your Soul with "Good Quality Food"

I find it easier to be gracious when you have a heart full of love, when you are rid of hate, bad news, stress, panic, and busyness.

How do we get a heart full of love?

When we love others. When we put others before self. I must say though, we are human and we are born with natural tendencies to be self-absorbed.

Loving others is a taught and trained behaviour.

In some cases, loving yourself also does not come naturally. How can you tell if someone does not love himself or herself? When they do not seem to make themselves happy. They sometimes try to make everyone happy but them. They do not make themselves pretty; indulge in buying things for their pleasure or invest in their personal growth.

Thus, I find it helpful to spend a certain amount of time investing in good spiritual food.

This means, reading your bible, listening to a sermon tape, going to church, reading your devotional etc.

We can organize this into weekly and daily tasks.

### **Baby Steps 1: Schedule for An Elegant Spirit & Heart**

For example, here is mine:

#### Daily:

- Reading an email devotional when I check my email
- Listening to a sermon message my Pastor
- Reading a novel or biography before I go to bed at night
- Serving my family by making my home better or help out at errands.

#### Weekly:

- Attending Church on Sundays
- Becoming a volunteer, which involves serving or helping others at a charity organization and at church.

- Replying to emails from <http://elegantwoman.org> whom need encouragement
- Studying an personal area which I want to get better at

And you can start now by brainstorming some ideas on feeding your soul daily for a gracious heart.

Daily:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Weekly:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

If you have done it, well done! Good job. I'm so proud of you.

Now, just focus on getting this baby steps into a habit before going on to the next chapter. This is important because it is the foundations of elegance.

The important thing is not to rush. Rushing is never elegant.

## Baby Steps 2: Be Authentic

Are you ready for step 2? Remember step 1 is the foundations of elegance. Do not continue until you have taken steps to strengthen your foundation.

All right, here we go!

Another secret to elegance is to look at the deeper meaning of “Elegant”, which roots in Authenticity.

### Authenticity: Discovering Your True Self

Many women have secret struggles with self-confidence and self-esteem. There are many causes, which are too long to discuss here.

While I am not a psychologist, it is best to keep things simple.

I believe gaining an elegant self-confidence has lots to do with authenticity. It is a matter of discovering who you are, what God has given you in talents, aptitudes, aspirations and dreams.

Look what you have, or what is in your hands!

In other words, take an **inventory of yourself**.

Take time to discover your likes and dislikes

What are your strengths, talents, and dreams? God put them there for a reason.

What do you think about all the time? It is your passion.

What is in your hand? What can you do? Assess the opportunities around you.

When you work on these questions, you embark on a quest for an on-going discovery of yourself. It is self-revealing and you would weed out the 'impurities'.

### Get rid of 'What Is Not You'

These impurities include the unnecessary, the time wasting, the things that are not authentic, which includes the things you do for the wrong reasons. They could mean things that you think might impress others, solely for money, or because you think people will think badly of you if you don't, or because everyone is doing it.

We also discover our strengths. We then realize what we have. We fine-tune and refine ourselves to our fullest potential.

Everybody was created and born to do something great. This level of greatness is by your own standard, and you do not have to compare yourself and your progress with anybody else. That's because we are all unique.

### Remember How To Be Confident

Bookmark this quote! Whenever you are feeling a little low on the confidence side.

“Our confidence stems from getting better at what we are already good at.” – Eunice, elegantwoman.org

So pay attention to what you can do best!

Take some time to do the following. Bring this list (or book) on a trip. Have a solo afternoon tea on your own and reflect this. Go back into your past, your childhood and explore the fun you had, what you love to do, play, what you have found interesting. \*If you need to see an example, please refer to the last page to see mine.

### An Elegant Woman's Personal Inventory

My interests: e.g. singing, dancing, writing, cooking, gadgets

1.

2.

3.

4.

If I could spend all day doing just a few things, they would be:

1.

2.

3.

If time and money was no object, this is what I will do all day:

1.

2.

3.

I like

1.

2.

3.

I dislike

1.

2.

3.

My dream job would be \_\_\_\_\_

Or it would consist of \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

What do I think about all day?

1.

2.

3.

Single out one that you think about the most! It is your passion.

Could the thing you single out be your passion?

Let's get creative here and see if you can expand your passion.

Name four ways which you can develop your passion.

1.

2.

3.

4.

Name three ways you can turn your passion into how you make your living.

1.

2.

3.

### **Authenticity Gives You Confidence And Are The Beginnings of Elegance**

Voila, you have no time for low self-confidence. You suddenly realize you know a lot about something – your passion – you speak with pride and self-respect.

Look through the list over, and try to let it sink in. Welcome the new possibilities that zoom in your head.

Mark those actions down in your diary, for e.g. “Will enroll myself in that cooking class to get better at French cooking”

**Biggest Tip: Work on your Strengths, Your Interests.**

Do you feel the excitement in your belly that you are going to learn more about French cooking? Because maybe you are already good at it, and now you just want to work on your strengths?

If not, maybe you are just learning French cooking to impress someone. It is not really you. However, if you are truly excited, or feel that yes you have sufficient interest, go for it!

The confidence grows as you pursue your interests with a new surge. You will be in your zone, your element.

Soon, you will find yourself drawn to like-minded people and likewise, those similar will be drawn to you. Your confidence builds! A certain authority develops, a secure, quiet, self-assurance will be yours to possess.

You are not just becoming more of yourself, but you are growing into your fullest potential. That is how God envisioned you when He first made you.

To be true to yourself is to be authentic.

We become comfortable in our own skin. We can stop being self-conscious and focus on others. This is one of the fundamental roots of an elegant gracious woman.

“A gracious heart and authenticity are the foundations and beginnings of elegance.” – Eunice,  
elegantwoman.org

## Baby Steps 3: Do Not Lose Your Peace

The Bible is filled with hidden truths and gems, we just have got to find it!

In John 14:27, Jesus says,

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

We’ve got to hold on to this peace. If we don’t have it, pray and ask for it. If we know what is causing us to *not be peaceful*, get rid of it!

Ever noticed how an elegant person is never rushed or hurried? She is always unhurried and calm. That is what makes her look like she’s got it all together.

We’ve got to treat PEACE with preciousness once again. In our over achieving world, we’ve ignored peace. We’re always on the go, grabbing instant take out, instant gratifying ourselves, squeezing in appointments, buying a bigger better house etc. We have unknowingly stressed ourselves out.

De-clutter.

Be organized.

Ensure you sleep well.

Say no.

Go slow.

Do one thing at a time.

Cut down on activity.

Don’t overspend or overstretch your budget.

Don’t be overly thrifty until you are miserable.

I can continue a long list of ‘don’ts’, which may just cause us both to stress out!

### Don't Lose Your Peace

What I'm saying is that get rid of things, activities, decisions that cause you to lose your peace.

If you don't love it, don't buy it! If it causes you to feel guilty, throw it out. Don't take a job because of money, you'll be miserable. Do things that make you happy. If you can't afford this house or car, get a smaller one. Your peace in your heart is more valuable than stressing out.

Remember, it is not about what you have, where you live or what you wear that makes you elegant; even though there is some value in that, it is only secondary, you will have all of that later.

Why is this peace so important?

The peace is important because it adds to your countenance.

### A Beautiful and Elegant Countenance

"Countenance" is defined as "a person's face or facial expression".

I've always admired how an elegant person looks. Not by her dress, but how her face looks. There is always a sort of pleasantness. An elegant person almost always looks kind.

Not everyone is born with great looks, but everyone can control their 'countenance' more than they realize. They can make their countenance pleasant and gracious.

### Do You Have A Pleasant Countenance?

Study other people's facial expressions, especially the ones they wear when they are out and about, not communicating with anyone in particular. For instance, when you walk down the street, you people watch. You'll observe all the people passing by, walking, and heading to their destination. What do they look like? Do they look sour? Happy? Pensive? Sad? Glum? Look further and you might identify a little skip in their step or a slight dragging of their feet.

If you chance upon an elegant person, you might notice a face that looks optimistic, warm-hearted, joyful and moving unhurriedly but with a sense of purpose and pride.



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### What Do You Wear On Your Face?

How about studying the expressions your friends wear in a social situation?

Perhaps by doing so, you'll have some insight of your own.

When you go to a party, or sit down at the dinner table with friends and strangers, you easily read everyone's expression after you say hello.

Pay attention to how you feel, how you 'judge' a person to whether he is friendly or nice. Do you want to make more effort to get to know him? Would you make the effort to walk over? Would you even attempt at a joke?

Have you noticed sometimes you feel very warm and welcomed? You might even pay a little compliment? Other times, you'd feel a little uncomfortable because you have been greeted with icy stares and tight smiles?

How we respond to those people is partly by the kind of expressions these people wear on their faces. Likewise, how people respond to you depends on what you wear on your face.

If you have a tight smile, reserved or cold face, you look unapproachable and there is no way for anyone to know whether you have a heart of gold. An elegant countenance makes you approachable, kind and friendly. It adds to your elegant self-confidence when people greet you with warm smiles.

### **Elegant Countenance Triumphs Over Pretty Faces**

While we cannot control other people's countenance, we can influence our countenance and ourselves. Personally, I want my presence to fill the room or my company with joy, warmth and friendliness. I want to feel comfortable around people and them to feel comfortable around me.

An elegant countenance is not the same as having a pretty face.

While a pretty face draws a certain interest and attention, it is not necessarily an elegant face. A pretty face can look spoilt, sour, snobbish or arrogant. Even if someone has a pretty face, she may not necessarily have a pleasant countenance. It's a vibe that you get, you almost can't explain. You just don't wish to talk to her.

On the other hand, someone who is relatively plain looking has an interesting face, with smart eyes, an intelligent look, and calm. Sometimes her eyes are warm and friendly. Other times, she is generous with her smiles.

She draws you to her. You want to know what makes her tick. You want to hear her story.

## Baby Steps 4: Guard Your Heart

### Whatever is in Your Heart Eventually Turns Up On Your Face

Someone told me before that whatever's in your heart turns up on your face. Apart from our regular beauty treatments, care and attention to our skin/face, we also have to look after our heart. The first step to elegance is to have an elegant heart. If you are feeling sour or bitter often, eventually you will have a sour countenance.

If you are feeling beaten down, you will look like someone who has not won in a while.

### Guard Your Heart

Guard your heart from all this negativity. Value and protect your peace, your sanity. Get rid of stress. We have read enough studies and reports to know that only just a little stress is good for us. We should not wear stress like a proud badge in our ambition and career.

That also means to *refrain from complaining*. Try to see the good in everyone, positive in every situation, try to like at least something about everything.

This is why some pretty faces look elegant and some don't. More than often, rather plain faces look smarter, classier, more elegant and wealthier. You are left to wonder 'Is it the language that they speak?', 'the make up?', or clothes? Perhaps it is their education?

Surely all of them play a part, but now you know what actually transforms and refines the elegant look.

Hence, my favourite elegant quote of all time and my email signature reads, "*A truly elegant taste is generally accompanied with excellency of heart.*"

If you want an elegant & classy countenance, refrain from complaining and guard your heart for excellence.

## PART 2 - Working On the “Outsides”

### Focusing the “Outsides” To Be Elegant

Congratulations, you’ve mastered part one of elegance – the insides. Now we’ll move on to the *outside*.

It probably involves tweaking what you already know.

For instance,

- Taking pride in your appearance
- Having manners
- Learning some basic etiquette
- Learning about culture
- Being aware of people skills, society
- Having a reverence of beauty

“I don't understand how a woman can leave the house without fixing herself up a little - if only out of politeness. And then, you never know, maybe that's the day she has a date with destiny. And it's best to be as pretty as possible for destiny.” – Coco Chanel

## Baby Steps 5: Taking Pride = Loving Yourself

Taking pride in your appearance **means loving yourself**.

When I first heard this, I found this to be true in my life and others around me. It was one of those EUREKA moments.

Every time a dear friend loses hope or feels unloved, her appearance is the first place she neglects. It is not vanity! Though I know many of us have grown up and listened to that untruth.

When you love and value something, say, a pedigree champion breed horse, would you feed it bad stuff, or neglect its grooming? No! In fact, you'll take care of it the best you can and show it off!

### Taking Pride In Your Appearance: An Elegant Look

The basic principles of achieving a beautiful, elegant look that is timeless are quite simple.

There is of course, a more sophisticated sort of elegance, which you will eventually acquire, but for now, we will stick to simple clean lines, focus on quality and build up on it.

*Note: You needn't go out and spend a tonne of money. An elegant woman is more materially restrained than we realize.*

Someone once asked Christian Dior, a very talented fashion designer and still one of the major fashion houses today,

“What is the key to good dressing?”

He replies, “Key to good dressing? There is no key!” Wow. He continues,

“If there were it would be too easy, rich women could buy the key and all their fashion worries would be over! But simplicity, grooming and good taste - the three fundamentals of fashion - cannot be bought. But they can be learnt, by rich and poor alike.” – Christian Dior

Good dressing is like elegance. It can't be bought, but rich and poor alike can learn them!

There is always something very cohesive, rounded, soft, subtle, and ethereal about the look of a woman who is elegant.

On top of that, it appears effortless and perfectly gentle.

### Basic Principles of An Elegant Look

No doubt the make of an elegant woman is timeless dressing. What makes someone look elegant?

A timeless, elegant woman is always

1. Clean
2. Neat
3. Graceful in appearance (*when you first notice her, before the dress, no matter how pretty.*)
4. Wearing quality clothes
5. Dressed appropriately, according to occasion

There is nothing unpleasant about her. (*Nothing in her appearance whatsoever to frown about.*)

### Your First Steps To A Timeless, Elegant Look

If you've hardly felt elegant before, these are baby steps you can make, *realizing that they are nothing but subtle changes.*

Let's humbly go back to the basics. You may use the helpful check list later on. Print it out and stick it in the hallway mirror before you go out!

### Skin Care, Make up And Hair

The very least, have a clean face, hands and nails. Smell fresh from having showered and not reeking of perfume or deodorant.

Develop your own customized **skin care** and hair care. Avoid being that fickle woman who tries every brand of skin care, hair care and cosmetics when she goes to the store. Then clutters up her bathroom and beauty drawer.

Pay attention to what works for you. Never take your looks for granted.

When you find out what works for you, stick to it! Get married to it, swear by it!

As for **make up**, not every brand is good for everything. You might want to do your research by analyzing what type of skin you have, read beauty forums or get recommendations from professional make up artists. It is good to get opinions from friends but realize that you probably won't have the same type of skin with your friend.

**Hair** should always be neat, in place and in classic styles. Most *Pedigree* women have their hair either straight or slightly wavy, around shoulder length. It is not messy with too many layers, as high fashion likes to do these days but with a straight blunt cut from across the shoulders.

Hair should always look combed, in place, shiny and neat. There should be no evidence of dandruff and be nice smelling all the time.

Ponytails are worn on the low side, rather than the high side.

Roots are always taken care of, if you colour your hair frequently.

Hair accessories are always kept simple, in one colour, often in cream, black, chocolate brown or navy.

### The Way Of Elegance In Make Up

In the **day**, your make up should look light and natural. Notice I used the word, *should*. How much make up to wear depends on how much you need.

It could depend on how much you have to conceal or how pale you are. You want to aim for a fresh, natural look so you won't get comments like, "You look tired," or "are you working too hard?" (Which are one of the meanest things you can say to anyone!)

Hopefully, because of your good grooming, you will have problem free, clear skin, and will not need to layer it thick with make up.

Some etiquette schools lay the rules down to never wearing eyeliner and eye shadow together in the day, or at all. I feel that it depends on your eye. The general rule of thumb would to just go as natural as possible.

That means your make up should highlight your features. Just like your outfit, you want to go as light as possible, so you can appear 'breezy'. This breezy look is a mark of refined women, who seem very causally elegant (on a non professional work day, if they work corporately at all). This casual elegant look, which I will expand on later, is complete with clothes and hair. It is kept simple, light and chic.

In the **evening**, you can afford to go darker with your eyes, cheek or lips, but never more than two of the features at once. In order words, you can be more dramatic with your application and colours.

The way to apply make up elegantly is to stick to the classic looks, never going overboard yet never looking like it's not enough.

Everything that you need to conceal is concealed properly because a spot in your face is distracting and you don't want to be self-conscious because of it.

Instead of bring a cosmetic case to touch up every few hours, I'd suggest that you find long lasting make up, if you are going to be out for the entire day.

Rather than clutter up your purse with all sorts of bits of make up, simply carry a tinted lip balm or lipstick, and maybe some compact powder if you really have to.

### Colours of Elegant Make Up

In my observations, elegant women still seldom wear gloss or glitter in their make up. If it is glossy, it is very subtle, where you might mistake her lipstick to have simply more moisturizer in it. The colours of her eye shadows are never out-of-this-world colours, but are usually earthy tones. Her lipsticks are various shades of red.

### Should You Wear Make Up?

It is absurd that some girls I meet are actually proud that they can't be bothered with make up. They either do not wear any, or don't know how to wear make up. They don't even have a body care routine.

Unless you are extremely naturally gorgeous without make up, I suggest that it's best to humble yourself to learn a thing or two and wear some, like the rest of us.

I've met some highly intelligent women who are simply too proud to do so. They view such activities, such as wearing make up, getting into a proper beauty routine, as demeaning to women, and are for 'bimbos' only.

Then they wonder why men are not so attracted to them. Instead they look around their shoulder and men are attracted to those they've looked down on.

Some women actually think it is attractive to be the opposite of what women naturally are – opposite of those who exhibit their girlish traits by being excited about make up and other 'girly things'.

They almost act like tomboys, proclaiming they hate flowers, have the same boring hair all the time, and never bother to wear contact lenses.

Perhaps it's a combination of wrong beliefs that they are unique and attractive by being so. They have a self-righteous attitude that people should appreciate their inner beauty and good heart. Sometimes it simply boils down to laziness.

In the Bible in 1 Samuel 16:7 “...Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” , illustrating that we are all humans, and we are affected by what we see!

No matter how lovely you are, the way you are dressed is a way of communication. Not the only way, but an important way. First impressions last.

You communicate how you want to be seen to the world, to someone new, or your boss. But not making an effort to dress, you may come across as a lazy person, a person with no sense of creativity, an uninteresting, boring person. You might even attract the wrong crowd! If you are less than appealing visually, no one will get the chance to find out whether you have a heart of gold or not.

With the exception of women who are blessed with excellent skin and tamed hair, I suggest all women should wear the very least bit of make up, unless you are eighteen and under.

## **Baby Steps 6: Impeccable Grooming**

“–verb (used with object) to tend carefully as to person and dress; make neat or tidy.” - the dictionary

Personal grooming is not vanity.

If you think about it, good grooming takes the ‘spotlight’ away from you. You will not cause someone to think in her head, “Gosh, she looks so pale.” Or “She

looks like she needs a good night's sleep." Or worse still, "Her shoes need a wash."

Personal grooming is about presenting yourself in the best possible way. It communicates your character to the world. It is 'taking pride in your appearance' but it is much more than that.

I read once, "The cornerstone of elegance must be represented by a bar of soap." Obviously from her time, it only consisted of a bar of soap.

Today we have help from many places; friends, beauty counters, websites and magazines. It is simply impossible to not know at least a little about grooming. In other words, there is no excuse!

Everyone can spot bad personal grooming instantly. Red splotches on face, wrinkled clothes, dirty fingernails, chipped nail polish, a run in the stockings, a dirty scuffed shoe, untidy make up, a weak shirt collar, very obvious knockoffs of designer goods (not part of grooming but part of elegance!) or very faded and worn clothes that should be thrown a decade ago.

### **So where do we start?**

Do a mirror self-examination test. That simply means, take a good long look at yourself in the mirror.

I've personally gone as far as to put a mirror on my desk where I work, so it is convenient to do a little self-check every now and then.

Sometimes, we get lost in the sea of messages when it comes to good personal grooming. So before you go out and buy a whole lot of products, let's break down what you need. The goal here is to keep it simple. If you have found that you need to spend a bit on grooming, simply think of it as part of the expenses to buy soap to wash ourselves and detergent for washing of it of your clothes.

### **Personal Grooming for Face**

A person with good personal grooming seems to always have clear skin. There are no spots to distract others with. Better to work on having good skin than to piling on the make up.

Thus, a good skincare regime is a must. If you don't really have one, start by identifying your type of skin. Perhaps, visit a Dermatologist or stop by beauty counters. Read up on reputable websites online. Try to get beauty product samples and recommendations from friends. Because we are all different, we have to make some effort to find products that best suit us.

The skincare basics are to wash your face when you wake and before you sleep, moisturize and wear sunscreen. Remember to remove make up properly! Throw away your make up when it has past its lifespan.

Get some exercise, sufficient sleep and drink lots of water to get the best glowing skin.

### **Use Make up For A Fresh Healthy Appearance**

Aim for a fresh, healthy appearance. A well-groomed lady has a face free of smudges and blemishes (or at least well-concealed), wearing appropriately the kind of make up according to time of day, occasion and place.

Depending on your age, and skin, there should be at least a tinted lip balm after the age of eighteen. It is advisable to wear make up to add a little colour on your cheeks, lips and to brighten your eyes. Go for a natural look in the day and darker, more dramatic look in the evening.

Learn to apply your make up well, evenly, correctly, without smudges.

Discover the most suitable and long lasting for you. Avoid clumpy mascara, smudges, uneven foundation, or cakey foundation. Do not bother buy cheap eye shadow because it does not last.

Watch or read make up tutorials, get recommendations from friends, study magazines and beauty forums. No one is the same, so this is time to explore what you like and eventually you'll create your own style. This is a journey all women at some point have to take on their own!

**Tip:** My favourite elegant make up tutorials:

<http://www.elegantwoman.org/beauty-make-up-tips.html>

### **Clean, Neat Hair**

Hair should be washed every other day or at least three times a week.

Scratching your head or tying your hair in public is a no go. In fact, refrain from touching your hair when outside. So, make an effort to make it perfect before you step out the door.

Study the shape of your face before to find a few hairstyles that suit you. If you get bored with your hair easily, try alternating between a few styles for your face shape.

You should also choose a hairstyle that suits your lifestyle. If you are a busy mother, choose low maintenance hairstyle. If you have to attend many social events, leave your hair fairly long to able to wear it in many ways.

An excellent grooming principle is to keep your hair away from your face as much as possible. Hairstyles that are elegant are ones that allow your eyes to sparkle and everyone to have a clear view of your face.

### **If you highlight or dye your hair...**

Get your roots done every three to six weeks depending on how fast your hair grows out. Be more religious about this if the contrast of your natural hair colour and dye colour is large. If you find it difficult or expensive to keep going to the salon, do not dye your hair or stick to colours that blend well with your natural colour. Or you might try highlights and lowlights instead.

Visit the salon every three to four months to upkeep your look.

### **Body Maintenance**

A woman's body subject to good grooming is evident when one cares about it.

Eat well, sleep well, and get plenty of exercise.

People who exercise regularly have stronger stomach muscles and have better posture. It is difficult to maintain good posture with weak stomach muscles. Eating and sleeping well enables you to be bright and fresh.

Try to be at optimum health, aim for good pressure and cholesterol levels, as well as low body fat. Health is the real wealth. We want to be active and well to be there for our family, to go through life and create many wonderful memories.

There is no such thing as over weight folks that cannot be elegant, but it is more challenging to be graceful, have good posture, and move around in general. It is harder to find clothes that can fit and try to maintain composure when a bit of extra activity than normal causes you to break out and sweat panting.

### Facial Hair

It must be removed.

If you are mono-browed, which means your eyebrows connect to each other, head to a beauty salon and get them separated immediately.

The rest of us should get our eyebrows shaped once a month or maintained by ourselves every other week. Maintenance requires you to get a pair of tweezers and to get rid stray hairs that grow during the week.

Hair around the face should also be waxed or tweezed off. For instance, most of us have hair growing on the upper lip.

### Hair Removal

Grooming also means to remove unwanted and unsightly hair.

Hair from the upper lip hair, underarms, and lower legs must be removed at all times no matter what season or time of the year it is. Bikini line and everywhere else generally depends on the type of clothes you wear and activity in like say, the summer months. Never buy into the "all natural" look!

Whether to remove hair on your arms and upper thighs depends on how much hair you have, how thick it is, and its colour. If it is less than obvious, it may be perfectly acceptable.

There are many ways to remove hair. Visit your local beautician or check out beauty forums.

### Grooming for Nails

Nails should always be clean and shaped. If you do not know how to shape your nails, or simply do not have the time to, keep them short.

Ideally, nails should be polished or buffed, or coated with a clear protective coat. If you have an active life and you use your hands often, simply keep them short and clean. That is the minimum that you can sport.

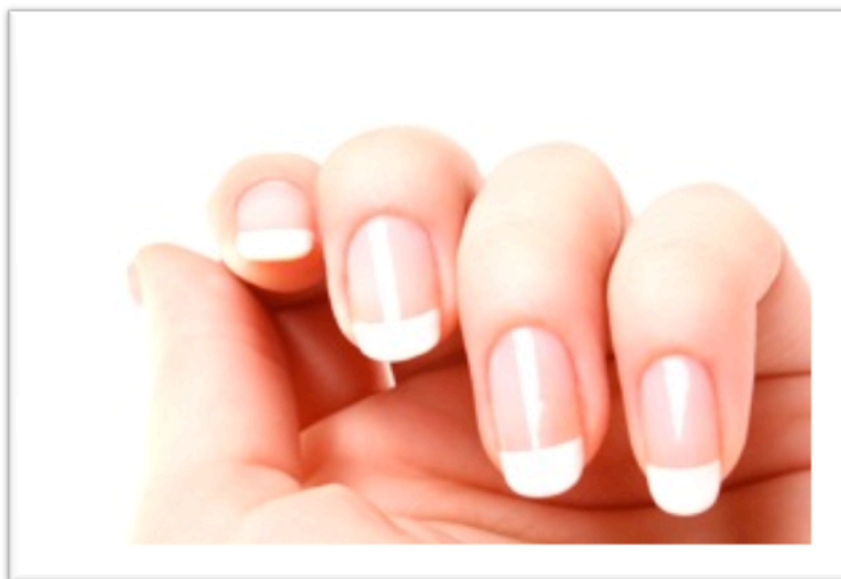
Long nails that are not groomed are just as unsightly as dirty fingernails. It shows neglect. Not to mention the health dangers that comes along with it.

#### **How should you wear your nails?**

Unless you feel that your hands are perfectly lovely, it is better to give an illusion of longer nails by letting your nails grow a little longer and wearing a light pink or colourless nail polish.

Manicures are easy to get at nail and beauty salons, at a very affordable price.

Try to get your nails done at least once in two weeks.



If you do not have the time, learn to do your own basic manicure. Opt for natural colours rather than darker colours. They will last longer.

The same goes for pedicures except that you'll probably get one every three to four weeks instead of every other week.

The height of good personal grooming and maybe perhaps luxury is to get your nails done every week! Make a date with your sister, best friend, and mother, and get your nails done together. It will be less of a chore.

“Chronic and habitual bad grooming in a woman, to the extent of "letting herself go" is either a matter of character or of physical or moral fatigue.” -adapted from “Guide to Elegance”

“While a clean, neat and tidy person may not translate to an elegant person, nevertheless,

one cannot imagine any one to be elegant unless she is perfectly groomed.” -adapted from “Guide to Elegance”

### How to Ensure Your Clothes Are Groomed

Clothes should always be clean, smell good, ideally freshly laundered and ironed.

Repair all defects. Stains, tears, missing buttons, and zips. If you can't repair them anymore, discard them. Discard those faded and weak clothes that do not have a smart appearance anymore.

**Pay attention to the tell tale signs** that will discredit your efforts to be groomed: weak collars, little balls of fabric from too much wear and tear, bits of thread that hang out from the sewing, a torn hem, or anything that is fraying.

Shoes should be clean and polished (if it is the type that can be polished).

If they are scuffed, try to reduce their scuffed appearance. Do not tolerate too much scuffing at the heel. They should also be discarded.

You can make your shoes last longer if you regularly re-sole or get the heels repaired.

### Smells

You should neither be smelt a metre away whether good or bad. Use a light scent for the day and a heavier scent for the evening.

If you are going out for a full day or from day to evening, bring a little small pouch of cosmetics or products to help freshen up!

### Your Elegant Woman Grooming Checklist

Run through this checklist before you go out. Print it out, stick it at your bathroom or door until you've established new grooming habits.

### **1. Hands**

- a. Are they clean?
- b. Are your nails cleaned?
- c. Are your nails groomed?
- d. Do they have chipped nail polish

### **2. Hair**

- a. Neat?
- b. Appropriate to the occasion?
- c. Ensure it is nice smelling or has no smell at all
- d. Does not colour your eyes?
- e. No roots showing?
- f. Does it look better in a ponytail or chignon?
- g. If you let down your hair, it is best if it is of a shoulder length.
- h. Frames your face?

### **3. Make up**

- a. If day time, ensure that is natural looking?
- b. If night time, make sure you highlight only one feature, eyes/lips/cheeks
- c. Is not clumpy or uneven?
- d. Do you have at least a lipstick or compact in your purse for touch ups later?
- e. Is not smudged?

### **4. Shoes**

- a. Are your toes showing?
- b. If yes, are they pedicured?
- c. Or short and clean?
- d. Any chipped nail polish?
- e. If you the growth of your nails against your nail polish can be seen, remove nail polish immediately. Or quickly polish with a colourless one.
- f. Shoes are clean?
- g. Your heels are not chapped?

- h. Appropriate to occasion? (e.g. do not wear heels to go to the beach).

### 5. Clothes

- a. Are they matching and appropriate?
- b. Ironed?
- c. No stains?
- d. Strong collar (if you have any)
- e. No holes, fraying threads
- f. Not faded?
- g. Lingerie not showing?
- h. No VPL? (Visible panty lines)
- i. Accessories – are they too much? Sometimes less is more.
- j. Bag/purse – are they proportionate to your body?
- k. Bag/purse – are they too full? Are they bursting with stuff?

### 6. Smells

- a. Have you used deodorant?
- b. Ensure that your perfume is not too much?
- c. Do you breath mints or two? (If you are going to be eating heavy smelling foods such as garlic or coffee)
- d. Brush & floss if it is convenient.

## Baby Steps 7: Valuing Quality

### Valuing Quality over Quantity and Price.

Quality is essential to elegance.

There are certain traits associated with elegance. Simplicity, thoughtfulness, and a reverence for the best quality are essence of a truly elegant person.

Maybe it is easier to illustrate by asking questions:

- i. Can you imagine an elegant person eating unwholesome, microwave dinners in large quantities?
- ii. How about an elegant person wearing a cheap promotional T-shirt that was a freebie when she bought a coffee machine?
- iii. Or have you seen an elegant person use much plastic cups in her home?

Well, not many.

Sadly and maybe unfortunately, high prices are associated with elegance. While all of us wish we all had more to invest in our “elegant look”, I hope to help everyone realize that we do not need to change our financial situation (i.e. spend more money than we usually do) to become ‘elegant’.

While it is true that if you have more to spare, you can buy more quality things, which contributes to the elegance of your home. But I’ve also met many wealthy folks who have simply no taste! They may have the means to buy many elegant things, but many times they simply buy *expensive* things, not elegant things. So the most important and fundamental skill you can acquire with very little money is “an elegant taste”.

Please see <http://www.elegantwoman.org/elegant-decorating.html> on tips for an elegant home.

So from our imaginative reflections, we all agree that a penchant for quality is part of being elegant.

So how do we incorporate more quality in our lives?

- i. Buy the best that you can afford (not the best that is out there.)
- ii. Buy fewer items
- iii. Simplify your life. Try to go without or make do. (Do we really need 20 varieties of tea? Or cleaning agents?)
- iv. Try to only have one of everything.

v. Get rid of clutter (so you'll really know what you need, and can find what you need instead of going out to buy it)

Aim for quality over quantity. Good quality is not an extravagance.

Buying quality items make more economic sense because they last longer, and you'll get more uses out of each item.

It eliminates waste and clutter. When you are very satisfied with one good quality item, it won't get you the urge to get another. You'll be pleased with it and use it to the end.

It pays to have the very best that you afford.

## **Baby Steps 8: Building A Quality Wardrobe**

That usually means we compromise of having "quantity" of clothes.

We wonder what it is like to have a really big closet. We fantasize of being like celebrities who are never seen in the same outfit twice.

Although having too many clothes may have the opposite effect. You lose the appreciation of each item and do not use it to its maximum potential. I find this 'effect' very accurate especially when I travel for months at a time and can only take a very limited amount of clothes, shoes, bags and accessories. If you ever have been in the same situation before, you will find yourself picking out the most classic items such as a basic pair of black pumps, a beige clutch, a white jacket, jeans, pearls and several black and white blouses.

Now THESE are ones that you should invest in quality.

### **Build Quality Into Your Wardrobe**

If you do not have a quality wardrobe i.e. your things never last more than three 'wears', these are the first things that you should build into your wardrobe. Or you do not find yourself using the same items for over three years, could probably mean that you do not have a quality wardrobe. (That does not mean that your things aren't of quality or expensive, it simply means that it is not 'quality' as a whole – it's physical quality and whether it is innate to your style.)

Have you ever saw something in a magazine or boutique window and loved it so much that you went and got it even though you couldn't afford it? Have you tried to 'sleep on it', and your desire for that coat or bag or pair of shoes or dress still never died but had gotten stronger? Have you ever had something that even after 10 years of careful, precious use, you still have it, love it and use it regularly?

Those are the things you want to have in your wardrobe. Few but quality, much loved items. If you actually sat down and calculated how much it costs to have that wardrobe, you might be surprised. Fewer more expensive, quality things go along way not just for your pocket, but for your style and confidence!

I know when I spend on something I really love, something that lasts, something that goes with almost everything, something that suits my lifestyle and every day wardrobe, something that people STILL give compliments... it boosts my confidence and it becomes a signature item.

"Oh this is so Eunice..." , "Or when I see that tanned shoe, I think of Lily."

And because you thought so much about it, you probably have worked out one hundred different ways to wear an item.

Those are money well spent. Invest some time, energy and research into building your wardrobe, piece by piece and certainly NOT ALL AT ONCE!

"Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy, but not expressed in fancy; rich but not gaudy, for the apparel oft proclaims the man." - Shakespeare

"Clothing identifies who you are in your world. If you met someone who was dressed and groomed in such a manner that you could not relate to them, you would never know if the person had a heart of gold or not." - Ginie Sayles

### **Building A Wardrobe That Works**

Planning is essential to an elegant woman's wardrobe. An edit should also be done every three months.

The best-dressed women are those who devote the most thought on their clothes. This does not mean they devote the most time on dressing up or money on their clothes.

Whenever there is a change in your lifestyle and day-to-day activities, it is a good idea to do an inventory of your wardrobe to accommodate the change. This could mean a change in, for instance, a new job, baby, a new city or country etc.

### **First, Acquire Your Basics**

First acquire your basics. But what are basics?

I like to think of "the basics" as the everyday clothes that can be worn like a uniform and throughout the seasons

Remember, our “basic” clothes differ from woman to woman. It depends on lifestyle.

For some women, their basics are a pair of skinny jeans and light cotton shirts. For, others they are mid length skirts that go with a variety of blouses. Little sleeveless cotton dresses are good choices too.

If you are unsure how to do that, first make a list of your daily activities.

*For instance:*

- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Running errands (remember to describe what type of errands, where, and think about the amount of movement your body so that you can pick clothes to accommodate that.)
- School
- Work
- Meeting friends for coffee
- Walking etc etc

### **Next, Analyze Your Wardrobe**

Assuming you have taken a mental inventory of your wardrobe, the next thing to do is realize which items you have too many of for, e.g. stilettos when you only wear them once a week for cocktails, and items where you have too little of.

(Usually that shows a lot about our priorities! But that is another book altogether).

You may analyze further by categorizing your clothes the best you can. Though some clothes are multi-purpose and can cross over into many categories, the purpose of this exercise **is to know what you have**.

Loosely separate your clothes into these categories

E.g.

- Career
- Daytime clothes
- Evening Wear, [Elegant Gowns](#)
- Sportswear
- Housedress
- [Negligees](#)

Separate your clothes, shoes, bags and accessories (as much as you can) into categories. Those that you cannot seem to categorize (maybe because they can be used for almost everything), set a category for them under "*Uniform - everyday stuff*" or a category "*Special Use*".

For example, I don't own any business suits because I don't work in a corporation (category = Career/Work) and neither do I own any leather business cases. I usually work from home or in cafes, or when I drop by my shop, so my Clothes Category, 'Housedress or Day time Clothes' should be more populated.

Also, try to think ahead also of any special trips coming up as well as special events such as [weddings](#) or [balls](#) that may be on your social calendar.

### **Paying Attention to Details**

As they say, "God is in all the details." I like to say that if you look at the details, you'll marvel at the little signatures God leaves. You can sense His presence."

Build a Wardrobe you truly own and love.

### How To Build A Quality Wardrobe

1. Pretend you are going away for a month. Pack all that you need into one suitcase (or maximum two – especially for all those winter clothes and boots).
2. Do not allow yourself to wear anything that is not in the suitcase. Do that for literally a month.
3. After one month, you may have realized you have packed the wrong things, so you may do a swop.
4. Live out of your suitcase for another month.
5. Doing so helps you realize what you need and what you don't need. It also helps you get creative with what you have in your suitcase.
6. Living out of your suitcases for a few months will force you to really think about what you buy and wear, as well as giving you an idea of the kind of quality your clothes have (from the frequent use.)
7. It will help you to shop better, and teach you how to distinguish items you can wear all the time, the quality of your clothes, how to identify quality.
8. It helps you realize what kind of clothes, shoes, and bags go with 'almost everything'.
9. From now on, you'll know what you really need, how to shop, how to prioritize quality over quantity and how to get creative and live on those very few items (like a French girl.)
10. Next, you move on to your clutter, and you must ruthlessly discard all out-of-date items, items that aren't loved anymore, clothes that you'll never wear, clothes that are too skinny or fat, clothes that are hard to match (you don't have time, unless you are working in fashion), unflattering clothes, clothes that do not scream "woman".
11. Do not have too many of the same items. If you have three or four similar black pumps, keep and wear the best one – give away the rest (or just keep one more spare one).
12. From now on, with a smaller wardrobe, it is easier to remember what you have in your closet and hence avoiding buying similar items or things that do not go well with the rest of your wardrobe.

13. Wardrobe maintenance: The golden rule from now on is when something new comes in, something else must go out: thrown, given away or donated.
14. Have fun with your wardrobe! When you use a pair of shoes to death, rejoice when you throw it away because now you have legitimate excuse to go shopping!
15. You'll enjoy shopping more and treasure it because it is a reward. It will be fulfilling. No more aimless wandering around the mall and no more temptations to mindless sales.
16. Make your wardrobe pretty. Mimic the cleanliness and neatness of stores. Your clothes should be hung not too closely to each other. If they are, you have too many clothes! Go back to step 1.
17. All your friends will be dying to shop your wardrobe! You'll only have the best pieces for you. You'll love and appreciate all your things. It will be your dream wardrobe. It is a wardrobe that works!
18. A good tip to keep in mind: Someone who is very fashionable is never really elegant. Do not look like models on the runway!

We all know of someone who owns a very beautiful thing, for instance, a red coat. When she wears the red coat again, you'll feel like complimenting her.

"Oh, I'm so glad you decided to wear it again. I love it!"

We all (well, hopefully), have a certain item that constantly gets compliments! We love it and enjoy wearing it again and again.

I wanted to put this out to all those who have a phobia of being seen in the same dress/coat/pair of shoes twice.

- 1) People don't care if you wear it twice. As long as you are clean and smell nice.
- 2) People who notice probably because they liked it the first time you wore it and forgot to compliment you on it.

When you have a favourite dress, there is no reason why you should not wear it often! My ideal wardrobe is to have ten really good pieces that I can wear over and over, mix and match, dress it up or down. It is natural to think that we have never enough, and we need more of this or that, but once you have built yourself a wardrobe that works. You'll find yourself shopping less at the malls, buying things that you are only half satisfied with.

That is the key to great shopping!

Quality and a good study on what clothes you need for your lifestyle is what you need to build a wardrobe that works.

Actually, I very much enjoy the simplicity of only having a few pieces, you get dressed much quicker and you find yourself more creative when you work with what you have!

It is much better to have a few clothes but good ones.

## Baby Steps 9: Matchmaking, a Principle of Elegant Dressing

Now we have established how important quality is, we will be moving on to a very important principle of Elegant Dressing, "matchmaking".

### Matchmaking Your Clothes

Because **coordination is essential to elegance**, celebrity fashion stylists like Rachel Zoe have emerged and made quite a living simply by facilitating this.

They provide their clients with various sets of matching accessories and even complete coordinated wardrobes.

As Madame Genevieve Antoine Dariaux observes, "Their efforts are certainly praiseworthy and have contributed a great deal to improving the aspect of our city street scene. But as in every other phases of elegance, moderation is always the best policy."

### **Practice restraint**

Even if you have a few favourite designers or brands, remember that everything should be in moderation. I'm not advocating that brands or designers help you look more elegant. In fact, it's the contrary. The more subtle your brand or designer logo, the more elegant – provided it is of good quality.

The reason why some elegant folks buy some high end, high fashion designers is because of quality. Not all though, so it is best to rely on your personalized, acquired taste of elegance than on designers.

The general rule of thumb of wearing designers is

Practice restraint. Do not buy too many things at once (lest you confused yourself further), do not wear too many things at once, and do not wear too many things with a designer logos emblazed on everything.

Sometimes, because you love it so much, it is easy to get carried away by a single brand. If you never had to feel restrained before, and are fairly wealthy, you might get used to wearing clothes cluttered with expensive looking logos and designer's name. Such is not elegant.

It is more elegant to do more with less. For instance, when you remove all the "visual clutter", simple silver earrings or a pearl bracelet can do so much more for you. Statement jewelry, such as a long turquoise beaded necklace will not be as much as a statement if not worn alone.

Your discipline and restraint will help you grow in elegance.

### Pick solid colours

If you only could have five new pieces of clothing for the whole year, pick clothes of solid colours.

Why?

You can wear clothes of solid colours over and over, more than clothes with patterns.

You can accessorize better.

You can get creative and “do different looks” much more than if you had five flowery dresses. You can ‘dress it up’ or ‘dress it down’, and find many different ways to wear them.

Also, again, if you could only have five pieces in your entire wardrobe, I suggest you pick basic or earthy colours such as black, white, ivory, beige, champagne, and navy. They are the most versatile. And you can inject your personality by your accessories, be it splashes of colour of simple pearls or diamonds.

### After You’ve Acquired Your Basic Clothes In Solid Colours

Next up in building your elegant wardrobe is to invest into a **few pastel-coloured pieces**, which will add a fresh casual elegance to daytime wear.

It’s time to get creative here with your **accessories** and **how you wear these basic clothes differently**. If you don’t feel creative, surf the internet or pictures on [elegantwoman.org](http://elegantwoman.org) for “elegant looks” that you like and mimic it. Sometimes all you need is to stand in front of a mirror and do a trial-an-error.

Once you have acquired that skill, you may even ‘re-use’ that outfit in the day. Don’t we all have those long days where we don’t have time to go back home to change? I don’t like big purses (small ones are more elegant anyway), so I usually remember to take a lipstick and maybe a compact, some sparkly earrings and maybe a bracelet.

**Useful Tip:** Of course, by now I have learnt to use certain brands of make up that stays on my face all day, so I minimize the purse bulge.

For example, a daytime outfit can transform to eveningwear by simply replacing a scarf with a long strand of pearls.

Avoid being too "matchy, matchy".

That means wearing everything in yellow. Or having a baby blue bag with baby blue shoes and a baby blue coat. That is old-fashioned and may look 'costume-like'. You don't want to look like you are stuck in the past. And people might not take you seriously. As much as I adore Audrey Hepburn and her clothes, and surely many things she wore are still classics, there are some things that should remain in the past.

Gone are the days where the shoes were made of the same fabric as the bag, though if you can find those sets, go for it! Everything in moderation is the key.

Now you don't want to look like a fashion victim either, so just mix it up a bit with classic with a modern edge to it.

Although restraint should always be employed in match-making, that does not mean ALL sorts of 'matching' shouldn't be done.

For example, it can be very elegant to match your

**Travel suitcases to your outfit.**

- Matching luggage
- Matching your purse to your luggage
- Matching your outfit to your purse to your luggage
- For, example, a white linen shirt and capris with chocolate brown bags and a beige shoulder tote
- Red luggage, a fitted black top and jeans and a white purse

- Black luggage, pointy black shoes, grey pant suit and a white scarf and a black bag (with large dark sunglasses)

### **Your Lingerie**

There is something very disciplined and admirable of having matching sets of good lingerie, and wearing them!

Sure, you can have the types that make you feel sexy. But I'm also referring to the ones that you feel comfortable in BUT DOES NOT make you feel embarrassed. Having an elegant lingerie drawer is like having inner self confidence. You don't have to show it, it shows from within. It is your elegant little secret.

To enable an easier time with matching lingerie, stick to nudes, white and black. That way you can buy pieces – tops and bottoms – from every place and still match them. That, I mean, white with white, black with black etc. If you should prioritize, get more nude-colour underwear. It makes perfect sense, you can wear it under black or white clothes. This was a secret told to me by a professional model, who travels a lot and where what she wears is her livelihood.

### **Your Umbrella to Your Outfit**

I know this is going a bit over the top, but it wasn't like this in the 'elegant times' a few years ago. I recently read a survey by Glamour.com, that people used to spend 10% of their income on clothes every month in the 1970s, and in the 1950s, people spent perhaps 35% on clothes. Now they spend about 5%. We now have so much choice and we didn't have to think as hard about a purchase the way people used to do. And because of that, we buy things on impulse.

So I'm here to encourage you (and me) to restrain yourself on buying everything that is 'cute' in the shops, but to whether it made sense with your existing wardrobe. Remember, an elegant wardrobe is not built overnight. Well

it may, if you have a professional stylist shopping for you and loads of extra cash, but you still won't acquire an exquisite elegant taste by impulse shopping.

An exquisite taste and elegant differentiating eye is a skill once acquired is transferrable to all other aspects of your life: food, music, wine, art, home decoration, friends, people etc.

So back to the Umbrella item, a red and pink flowery umbrella only goes with your outfit if it is all in one colour. How many times we have seen people wearing track shoes, blue jeans, a purple backpack, a green tee-shirt, and carrying a "Free gift" umbrella with marketing logos screaming loudly from its cap.

There's nothing wrong with that. Everything in there is functional. However this book is about being elegant.

Should we go the extra mile to get a little more elegance in our lives (such as matching our umbrella to our outfits?)

Well for some it's personal gratification. It's a manner of personal pride. For others, it is the impression they want to make. Impressions are a means of communication. And birds of a Feather do flock together, even subconsciously, they draw visual cues and naturally make up their minds on whether they want to get to know you better.

So maybe you're not in your favourite situation right now, but going that extra mile, taking that extra step must boost your self confidence, exercise that law of attraction and bring the changes you want into your life.

### **General Matching**

Other good matching ideas are perhaps your wallet, diary and purse, the type of bag to the type of dress. Matching the shoes to occasion i.e. never wear kitten heels on a hike (which I saw on a hike on Diamond Head hill in Hawaii).

Your own good taste is probably the best judge.

## Baby Steps 10: A Commitment To On-Going Education

Now that you have come this far, congratulations! The first basic nine steps give you a foundation to build your sophisticated elegance, that is, if you wish.

Elegance comes in many forms. You have casual elegance, traditional elegance, modern elegance, sophisticated elegance, a relaxed elegance. Many people think that elegance is all the same, and if you are elegant, you are all the same (and boring). When you begin to look deeper into the subject, you'll realize that the principles of elegance are similar but you make it your own. In other words, you personalize it.

I could never be Audrey Hepburn even if I wanted to. And I don't want to. I love some of her attributes and so I study them and make them my own. I have my own personality breathed into my own form of elegance. As long as I am kind and considerate, I can be a little cheeky, mischievous or I can be very open and honest and EVEN give encouragement/advice (!) – though the traditionally elegant always seem a little distant and non-personal.

The tenth step is to commit to yourself that you will continually study 'your own brand' of elegance. Say for instance, you love coffee. How about going a step further, by taking a course in coffee making? Or perhaps, make a trip to visit coffee plantations? As you gain knowledge in your chosen areas of study, you become sophisticated.

Now, don't pick the one that you THINK will make you look sophisticated. That spells a phony desire. Pick ones that you have genuine interest in, and pick good wholesome hobbies and subjects, if you know what I mean. There is something very elegant about a woman with high morals and integrity.

Now, the point of this whole tenth baby step is ALSO that you continue to make baby steps. You are committed to improve yourself; you are committed for the “better”. Now you have just started your process of your personal refinement. Friends and family will see the change, more so if they haven’t seen you in a few years. You’ll have a refined glamour attached to you! Most people can’t put a finger to it, but I’ll say it is the result of the continual education and pursuit of all 10 Baby steps!

Though I prioritize manners over etiquette, and I cannot, for the life of me, sit down and read one etiquette book in one sitting... I’d still encourage you to have an etiquette book handy, or check on my website [elegantwoman.org](http://elegantwoman.org) Simple things of Etiquette like learning how to make introductions or the proper way to host a party is useful. The know-how gives you confidence.

I’d recommend you refer to it only when you need it, so it helps you remember better.

Continue to study elegant hairstyles and posture, the art of conversation. Trust your instinct on what to learn next. It will guide you. Do not, I repeat, try to do all at once. You’ll end up frustrated and discouraged. If you make a mistake, just brush it aside like nothing and carry on. Don’t keep score and replay it over and over again in your head. If you want to replay something, replay a good memory of how an elegant lady walks and talks etc.

Why rely on instinct on “what to study or pursue next?” in your on-going education?

It is because you are hungry for change, hungry to be an elegant person. Your desire to become the woman you want to be will drive you. So if anything, feed that desire. Get rid of anything not elegant; make your home as elegant as you possibly can. Attempt to throw an elegant party or wedding. Discard all reading materials or books or posters that do not fit that elegant image.

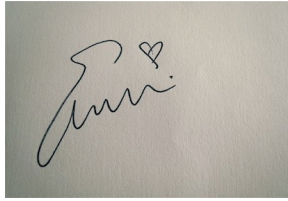
None of us can truly say they’ve got all ten baby steps nailed down, but the difference in our progress is whether we continue to make improvements in

each way, one step at a time. Remember SLOWLY but SURELY, we take decisive steps in the right direction.

I'll like to wish you the very best in your journey to elegance, and I pray that you will become the woman you want to be.

Stay in touch!

Love,



<http://elegantwoman.org>

**\*Eunice's Personal Inventory List**

**My interests:**

1. Reading
2. Writing
3. Traveling
4. Photography
5. Painting
6. Being creative
7. Improving myself
8. Beauty & Fashion
9. Passive Income
10. Studying elegance, society
11. God, Jesus, Family

**If I could spend all day doing just a few things, they would be:**

1. Reading and going to the library or borders
2. Surfing websites & most probably amazon.com
3. Spending time at home reading, studying, working later meeting my friends.
4. Improving my cooking, French, planning a party etc.

**If time and money was no object, this is what I will do all day:**

1. Read & Research areas of interest
2. Write, Study, Teach, get creative and grow something, a website, a business etc
3. Spend many glorious hours in the comfort of my home doing whatever, and go out if I have to.

**I like**

1. Reading, writing, being creative
2. Developing, growing something, a personal goal, dream, project etc
3. Being in control of my time

**I dislike**

1. Checking, Double-checking, Counting

2. Being in traffic

3. Keeping track of accounting, taxes, business management etc like employee pay slips

**My dream job would be:** to be able to create, develop my passion for helping women, grow a series of learning technologies made readily accessible to every woman.

**It would consist of:** Developing, books, videos, websites, audio projects, design little things and tools, source for my favourite things and make it available. (oh my gosh, it sounds so fun, I feel like jumping now).

**What do I think about all day?**

1. How to turn my passion into living. Then to work is to play.
2. How can I become better, grow, become the person I want to be.
3. Books to read, buy. Habits I need to develop, Skills I want to learn, such as cooking, a new language, get better at English, my posture, decorating skills etc.

**Single out one that you think about the most! It is your passion.**

**Could the thing you single out be your passion?**

**Let's get creative here and see if you can expand your passion.**

**Name four ways which you can develop your passion.**

1. Start a website or blog documenting my journey
2. Read more books, sign up for courses on womanly arts
3. Live and practice what I have learnt
4. Find friends who have similar interests

**Name three ways you can turn your passion into how you make your living.**

1. Start a series of websites
2. Get a role model; constantly get in touch with people who inspire me
3. Start teaching, developing my own brand of my interests