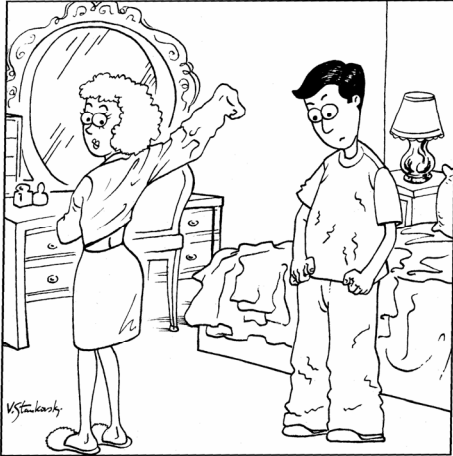


SO IT GOES

BY JASON LOVE



In secondary school I was named “best dressed” in drama class, which immediately concerned my father. Fortunately, the testosterone kicked in and by the sixth form my taste had so declined that “matching” merely meant that all my clothes were wrinkled.

For whatever reason—cultural, spiritual, X-chromosome deficiency—men are clumsy dressers. Most days it looks like we get dressed in the dark. While intoxicated.

When a woman stands in front of her wardrobe, she is planning, inventing, *dreaming*. When a man stands there, he is wondering what time the match starts. So we keep things simple—three or four outfits max. Compare to women, who may wear that many outfits *in the same day*.

The question is, Can men be taught to dress, or is it simply their nature to mismatch? We go *In Search of: Fashion and a Peril for Men*.

I flagged down a few fashionistas at the shopping centre, where the teens were so casual that you could see a good portion of their underwear. (Do they try on new clothes to make sure they *don't* fit?)

I grabbed 16-year-old Christian Wilson because he was the only one not talking on a mobile phone. Chris wore an upscale T-shirt with baggy jeans and a fresh pair of steps—shoes, people, *shoes*.

“It’s always a good idea,” said Chris, “to start with a cool haircut.”

This did not bode well for my balding peers.

Peter Henry, 41, had just bought a business suit at M&S. He was cruising the centre in a pair of Adidas trainers and bootcut jeans. None of his underwear showed.

I asked Peter to evaluate my own ensemble, which he did with the tough-love approach of Simon Cowell.

“I’d talk first about the colour of that jumper,” he said. “it’s just not masculine enough. And those shoes—you must really like them, judging by their age.”

Peter was right: I kept these shoes only because we had been through so much together. In fact, I’ve got shirts that won’t leave my wardrobe till the threads wear down to their original fibrous state and blow off my body in a strong wind.

Local Katie Feltes said that too much style is also a turn-off because then you run the risk of looking metrosexual (when a man sleeps with women but is, for all intents and purposes, gay).

Back in the Closet

When I returned home, I couldn’t look my clothing in the eye. The shirts seemed to slouch on their hangers, and my shoe rack smelled like the seventies. Sliding through the hodgepodge, I realised that my only hope was a wardrobe fire.

They say that fashion is common sense, but that begs a question: Who the heck are “they,” and why are they making our lives miserable? Is there a round table where They decide what is *in* like the Cool Committee from school?

I suspect that They have been in the business so long that they’re no longer qualified to judge. How else can you explain those faded-thigh jeans that make it look like you’ve been dragged behind a horse for several miles?

If you ask this frumpy dresser, fashion is whatever makes you feel more like you. As good as it feels to gussy up, I myself am tired of being profiled by the fashion police. If I followed their instructions, my wardrobe would finally dwindle down to one article of clothing—a straitjacket.

Remember, guys: Today’s fashion is tomorrow’s dirty laundry, and there’s nothing as stylish as owning what you’ve got. Just don’t outdress your girlfriend.