

The joy of a uniform

Banish the daily existential crisis of choosing what to wear by finding the benefits of a capsule uniform, says Emma Freud



Emma Freud has found the perks of sticking to one outfit every day

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I have experienced zero joy in my clothes cupboard recently. When I open it I'm thrown into crisis. It's not that I hate my clothes, it's that I feel that I'm being asked yet again to decide who I actually am. Should I wear the clothes of "mother", "producer", "student", "broadcaster" or any of the other random parts I play. Any selection makes me feel slightly different — although to anyone else, I probably just look a bit like me.

Consequently, my day starts with a small existential crisis — every single morning. That's because, apparently, making choices is becoming more of a problem as our options keep increasing. Dr Lisa MacLean, an American psychiatrist and the chief wellness officer of the Henry Ford Wellness System, says that the average 21st-century person makes more than 35,000 decisions a day, which depletes us and creates decision fatigue. Which is why I should probably decide who I am and stick to that clothes line. The problem is I'm 62 and I am still not sure.

This month, I tried to find some joy by opting for a uniform: by choosing one outfit, purchasing multiples and sticking to it. Making my mornings mellow by making my clothes monotonous. (FYI: my partner knows none of this agony. He has always worn only black trousers, blue shirts and navy jerseys. He somehow decided his uniform before he even decided his personality, and stuck to it. Meh. Men.)

Uniform chosen, four weeks ago I culled my cupboard of anything that didn't fit my chosen look. I have stopped glaring at the [high-waisted jeans](#) wondering whether I'm that person or if I might become her by mid-afternoon. I've given up looking at my three blazers, which I haven't worn in 20 years but still consider every day, thinking, "[Am I a blazer person after all?](#)" (I'm not.) Post-cull, I have three pairs of black trousers, five crisp white shirts, four black vests of slightly differing smartness, and four jackets that are basically the same but weather specific.

This route may sound like the antithesis of joy, but actually it makes me happy every morning. One fewer choice to make, no empirical confidence failure, and a monochrome smartish, maleish, casualish look that is so uneventful that it neither shouts about itself nor hides at the back of the room.

The real bonus is that while I'm someone who still doesn't know who she is, you certainly aren't going to know that from my clothes choice. #joyful