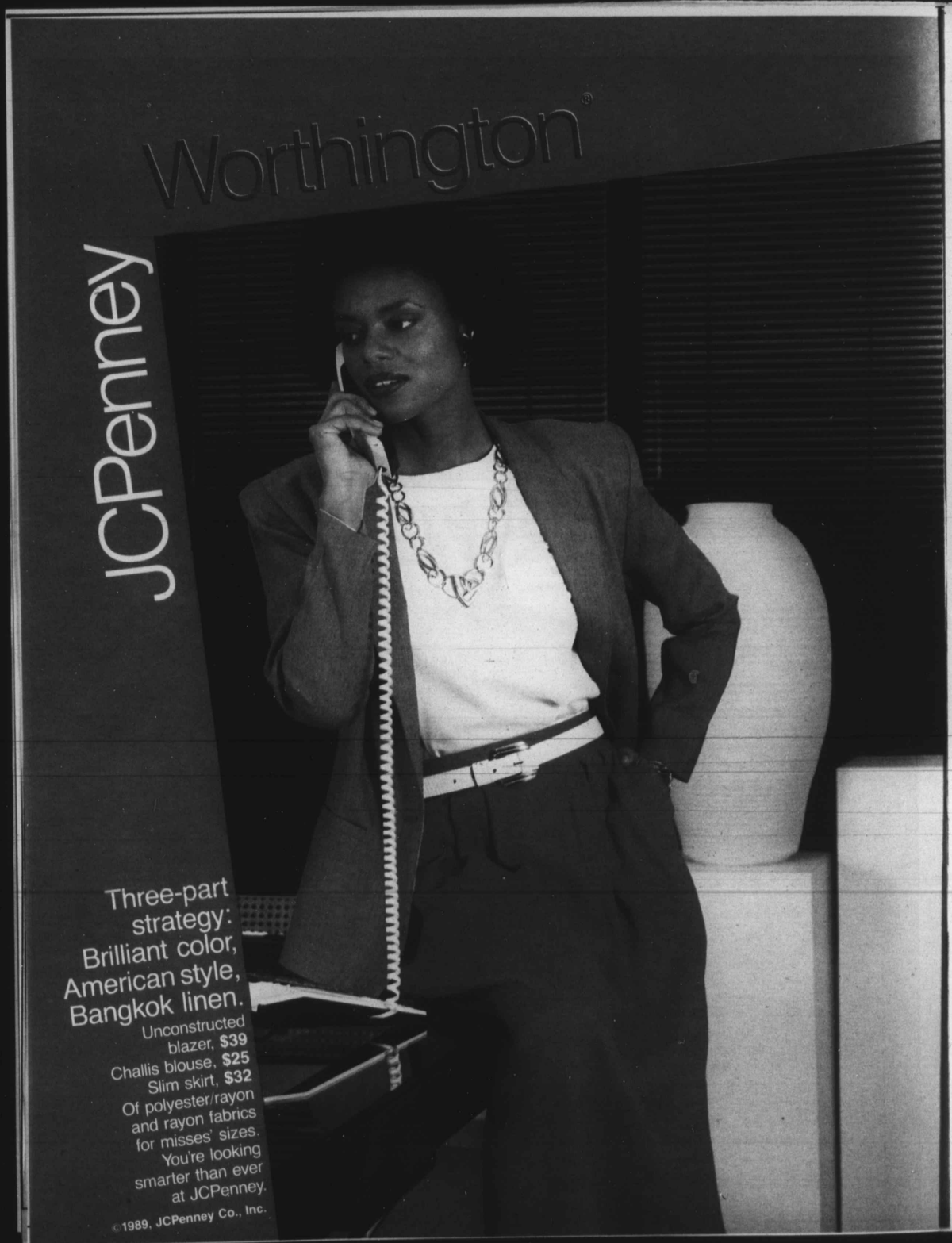





## *12 Easy Steps:*

# To A Closet Full of Clothes

**If you** are going bananas with a closet full of clothes and nothing to wear, then stop! Before spending one dime on the latest spring fashions, invest a little time in some pre-shopping preparation.

As the most savvy of shoppers will tell you, the best time to shop is after you have had an audit, a closet audit, that is. Yes, a closet audit: the process of examining every item in your wardrobe to determine what is "In" and what is "Out."

1. Remove all of your clothing from the closets and drawers and throw them onto the bed.
2. Separate each item into one of three groups:

A. That which you love to wear and feel great in;
B. That which you are not crazy about and may need to replace shortly; and
C. That which has no business in your closet in the first place.

3. Any item you have not worn in the past 12 months should automatically be given or thrown away. Keeping it around will only create the illusion of having more clothing than you actually do, and will cause you to feel guilty about purchasing new clothes. So, go ahead. Part with them. This goes for anything that no longer fits.
4. First try on those outfits you love and feel great in. Note what it is that makes these items special. Is it the color? Fabric? Style? Remember how you feel in these clothes, as this is the feeling you will want to duplicate when purchasing new additions to your wardrobe.
5. Try on those items you are simply lukewarm about. Ask yourself, what is it about each you would have to change in order to "love." Is it simply a matter of tailoring or does it lack the right accessory? If the problem is not that simple, then plan to replace this garment.
6. One by one, return each garment you have decided to keep to your closets and drawers. Try to keep as few items in your drawers as possible. "Out of sight, out of mind" goes for your wardrobe too.
7. Invest in wood, fabric-covered, or plastic hangers. Garments lose their shape on wire hangers.
8. When returning your clothes back to the closets, organize them either by color or by classification, (i.e., all blues, all reds, or by all pants, all skirts . . .). An organized closet is a sign of an organized shopper.
9. Based on the first eight steps you should be able to identify on what items your clothing dollars should be spent. Are you long on skirts but short on blouses? Is there a suit not getting enough mileage just because you do not have the right shoes? Do you have plenty of "work" clothes but none for "play?" Jot down those items you need to purchase in order to round out your wardrobe. This will become your shopping hit list and only now are you ready to tackle the stores.
10. Do not invest money in new outfits until you "complete" those outfits you already have. For a truly versatile wardrobe, it is suggested 2/3 of your budget be spent on accessories.
11. Shop with your hit list. Just as you would not go grocery shopping without a list, the same applies when purchasing clothes. Whenever you shop, try to wear or bring the item you are seeking to coordinate.
12. Remember, quality is better than quantity when it comes to clothing. Always buy the best you can afford. After all, you deserve it.

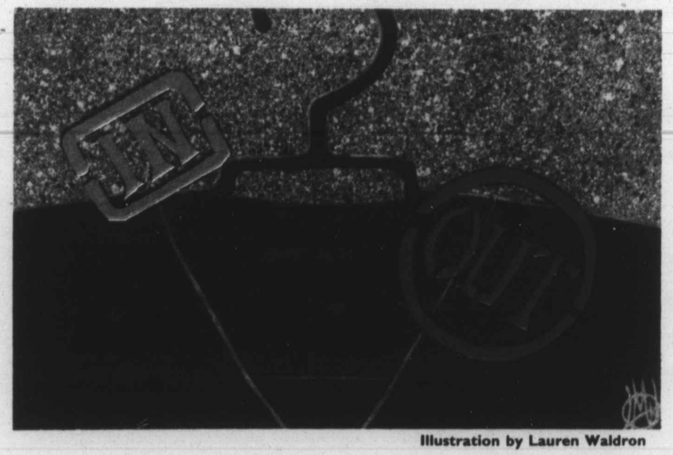



Illustration by Lauren Waldron

**Do a closet audit. Determine what is "In" and "Out" for your wardrobe.**

**Editor's note: The writer, Cynthia Franklin, is the owner of Finesse, a New York City-based image consulting and career counseling firm.**