

**GURU  
GUIDE**  
with  
Vidusha and Anton

in conversation with  
**Alison Weihe**

**17**

**DRESS WELL  
FOR SUCCESS**



# A QUICK INTRODUCTION TO THE GURU GUIDE

The 'Guru Guide' is an attempt to refine decades of hard-earned expertise into succinct, simple and practical advice.

It is NOT meant to be an exhaustive exploration of a topic: rather, pointed areas of focus which can only be discerned by a practitioner. It is not meant to be a generic set of advice: it is advice from battle-hardened professionals who have had a lifetime of experience and proven track records.

## The Guru Guide has a pre determined format:

- ✓ It aims to understand a topic/ area of focus
- ✓ It aims to give tools to help you navigate the area
- ✓ It also gives contexts and examples: so that you can customize it to suit YOU

Exploratory, intimate and insightful, the Guru Guide aims to bring to you a wealth of expertise which can only be possible through veterans whose varied and in-depth experiences offer unparalleled insights.

The brevity and simplicity is by choice, and design. Focused on Executives and Managers who want to get quick tips and techniques, who are eager to improve their craft

and trade : the Guru Guide aims to offer 'little nuggets' of advice and importantly, simple tools, which will enable practitioners to up their game and benefit from expertise which may be hard to find in a hurry.

## INTRODUCING



**VIDUSHA  
NATHAVITHARANA**

Vidusha is currently the Destiny Architect at High5 Consultancy and Luminary Learning and the organization's founder. His areas of expertise are with strategy facilitation, HR strategy development and Leadership Training. He has conducted assignments in 15 countries regionally and consulted for the World Bank, the UN as well as some of the top corporates in Sri Lanka and the Region. He is also a member of the board of directors for Chrysalis, a social enterprise working to empower women and youth by fostering inclusive growth in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.



**ANTON  
THAYALAN**

Anton is a multi-faceted professional who has had over two decades of hands-on experience in process improvement, change management and strategic management, and currently works as the Chief Evangelist of Luminary Learning and the Transformation Therapist of High5 Consultancy. As the former AVP at HSBC DPL Anton won accolades for his superlative work there: and won the prestigious HSBC Group Service – Global Talent Management Member two years in a row. Anton currently works as a consultant focusing on efficiency and productivity improvement and process optimization for local and regional clients.



## INTRODUCING ALISON WEIHE

We met Alison on one of our webinars ; and her level of energy certainly is contagious. She is a speaker, a truth-teller, a story-teller.

Her talks embody global experiences and learnings, weaving in her extensive understanding of neuroscience and what drives us. She shares her journey on stage and in her writing, to inspire you to step into the light of who you are truly meant to be.

Alison has been a Sociologist (and still is at heart), Political Activist, Journalist, Media Designer, Change Management Consultant and an entrepreneur for 22 years. She is what Seth Godin calls a "Bootstrapper Entrepreneur", building up a company from

a field in Amalgam, Johannesburg, to an award-winning company featured in Entrepreneurial magazines and on Radio and Television.

Alison is a Curious Explorer of "Conscious Entrepreneurship" and what she calls "Identity Intelligence". She is known as "The Re-invention Revolutionary". But to us, she is simply Alison...someone who can untether your untapped potential and help you unleash your magnificence into the magic of your re-invented world. As a qualified Leadership Coach, Image Consultant /Personal Branding Specialist, and Mindset Speaker, Alison is passionate about how "Soul Branding" influences performance.

## **BUT ISN'T DRESS CODE A MATTER OF PERSONAL CHOICE ?**

Well of course ! The way you dress is very much a personal choice, and also, a statement of your individuality. No one is disputing this.

However, you would neither go to a funeral in a colourful sari nor to a wedding at a five star hotel in a pair of Bermuda shorts and T-shirt claiming it to be your personal preference, would you ?

So, in order to be effective in managing your brand, you need to be conscious of where you are, the role you're playing, and also, social norms, when you dress, especially in work settings. Most people assume that dressing for success is being 'conservative' and 'boring'; it doesn't need to be that at all. However, do understand that there needs to be a proper appreciation of your organisations' dress code and an understanding of the absolute 'no nos' so that you do not 'get into trouble' over something as basic as your dress code.

Apart from that, how you dress is, indeed, your choice...



## WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T HAVE 'THAT' KIND OF FASHION SENSE ?



Many misunderstand 'dressing well' as being 'fashionable' – they are two completely different aspects. You can be very, very smartly and appropriately dressed without ever having any sense of 'fashion.'

Being fashionable is good, but that's a whole different topic of conversation. Unlike being fashionable, being 'well dressed' means that you are able to understand the basics, make sense of them and stick to them. Being fashionable requires you to 'keep up' with the shifting tastes and 'in' things, whereas being well dressed is about sticking to fundamentals that are absolutely straightforward.

So, don't ever think that you need to have a sense of 'fashion' to dress well...

**DRESS FOR THE  
JOB YOU WANT,**

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**NOT THE  
JOB YOU HAVE**

## **IF I AM GOOD AT MY WORK, DOES THE WAY I DRESS MATTER AT ALL ?**



What's wrong with being well dressed anyway? Why do you have to look at it as an either or choice? Why can't you perform superlatively and dress well too? Is it honestly THAT difficult to put some effort into being well groomed and well presented?

Many people are either too 'lazy' to put in that effort or they do not realise it's importance. It is perfectly fine not to follow the latest fashion trends, but being dressed slovenly or being too lethargic to tuck your shirt in properly, for example, isn't career-enhancing. It just shows a blatant disregard for yourself and the organisation you work with.

So, dress well: it shows a level of professionalism that organisations will appreciate. It also makes you feel good about yourself and perform better.

Regardless of the dress code. not being well-groomed and neat is inexcusable. It will alter others' perception of you and will limit your career potential. By contrast, dressing well sets you apart as a leader regardless of your position.



## PRINCIPLE 1 : SENSIBILITY

The absolute, most basic principle in dressing 'right' is about being 'sensible'.

**A**

Before anything else, read your company's dress code policy.

**B**

Then, talk to HR about what is or is not acceptable if there are aspects the policy has not covered or you have doubts.

**C**

Take a look at how others dress to work and take stock.

Sensible isn't it ? – Rather than making assumptions, turning up at office and ending up feeling like a fish out of water ?



## TOOL 1 : HOW TO ASSESS WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE AS DRESS CODE WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

The way you dress needs to be appropriate and acceptable within the organisational confines unless of course it is YOUR company. EVEN if it is your company, remember THAT how you dress will matter AND ALSO set a precedent. So, look around you and understand the formal policy frameworks as well as norms before you embark on deciding on your dress code.

### IN THE POLICY



## PRINCIPLE 2 : INDIVIDUALITY



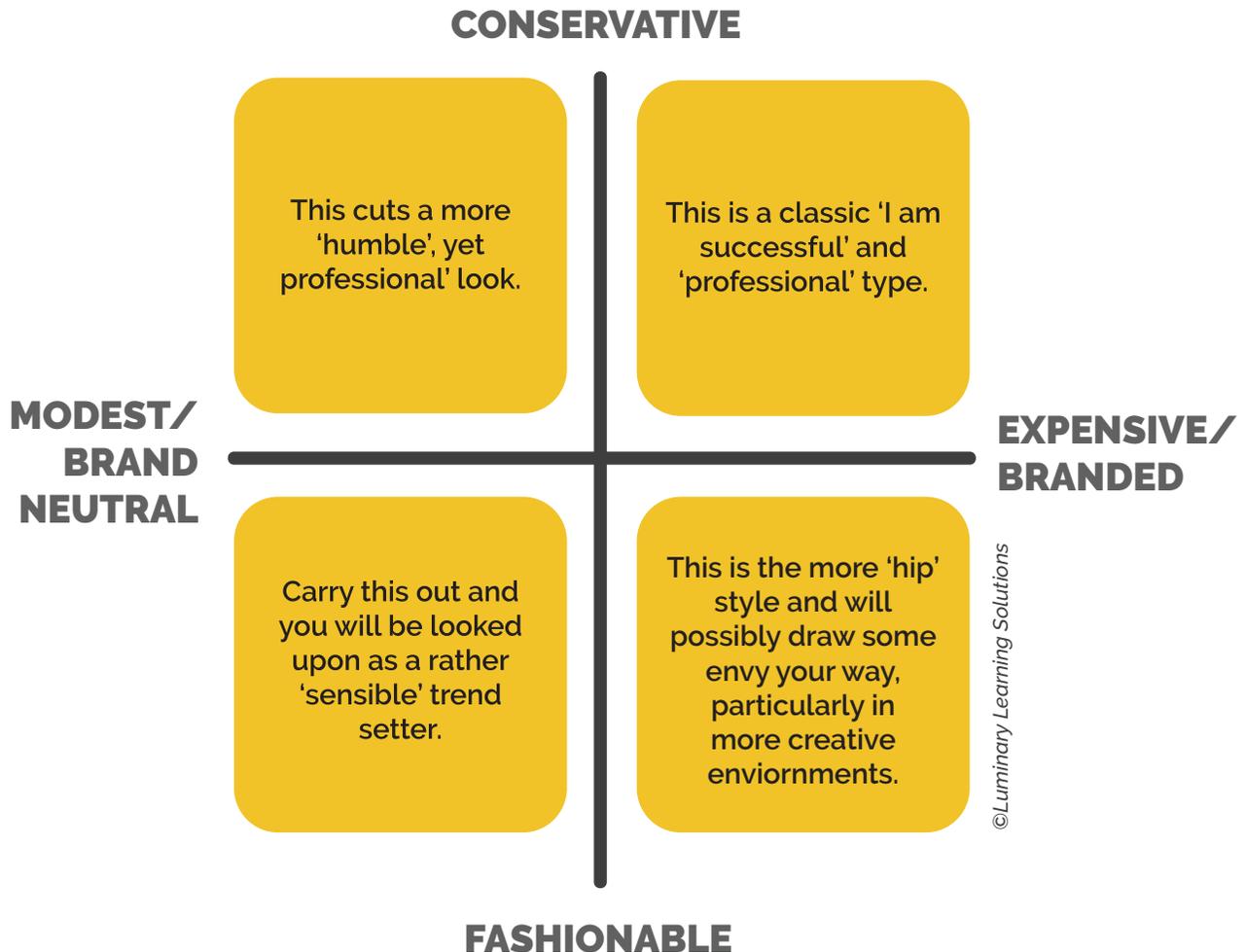
As long as you understand the policy frameworks and norms you can assert your individuality. In certain circumstances, dressing slightly differently, or slightly 'better' or even slightly 'flamboyantly' could help set you apart - and highlight you within the organisation.

When asserting your individuality, please remember to always be respectful of others and of the organisation. Please don't push the agenda of 'individuality' at the cost of others and their sense of sensibility and acceptance. Establish credibility, trust and confidence first; and as with all things, once this is established, you will find that the way you dress will possibly be of least concern to others. However, establish that trust and confidence **FIRST** before putting 'individuality' first...

## TOOL 2 : WAYS TO DIFFERENTIATE YOURSELF THROUGH YOUR DRESS CODE

Whether you are conservative or fashionable, whether you wear branded everything or branded nothing, you CAN have a certain sense of individuality in the way you dress.

The KEY is this: be able to 'carry it off'. You need to be able to match what you wear with your personality – your attitude, confidence and 'swagger' – otherwise, you will start looking completely out of place in your own clothing.



## TOOL 3 : 3 SIMPLE 'HACKS' TO ENSURE YOU ARE ALWAYS WELL GROOMED



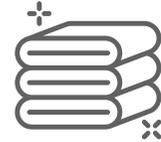
Always carry a vanity case

Irrespective of your gender, carry a small vanity case with you with some toothpaste, gum, a deodorant, perfume and some shoe polish. This way, you can always run to the toilet and 'groom' yourself if ever you have to 'present yourself' at short notice.



Keep one day each month/week for 'maintenance work'

Your hair cut, your manicure and pedicure, your little grooming rituals; it is easy to forget them when work gets in the way. So, diarize them and make a ritual out of them. Don't forget to ensure your bag is cleaned and tidied up and don't forget your wallet !



Make sure your clothes are readied each week

Don't wait until the morning of each day to iron your clothes. Take one day and make sure all your clothes for the week are washed and ironed and neatly kept in your cupboard. If you are laundering them, keep a day for it. This way, even if you have a power cut on the day, you will always be well dressed !

## SOME FINAL TIPS

- » Dress for Success - Step into who you are becoming and facilitate becoming the person you were destined to be.
- » Create a unique signature look that is appropriate for your body shape, your environment and your career. Get assistance from a stylist in refining your "look". It will be an investment you will never regret.
- » Stand tall and carry your clothes with confidence and poise. Your outer appearance is a reflection of your inner world. Watch Amy Cuddy's videos on "How Body Language May Shape Who You Are". That is why your signature look has to be balanced with being comfortable and being "impressively professional."
- » Be willing to stand out. Always err on up-dressing rather than down-dressing in a professional environment. You set the tone of who you are and what you project.
- » Notice how differently people respond to you when you dress well. If you look like you care about your appearance, you automatically project that you care about your work, your deadlines and the company that you represent. But above all, it is your perception of yourself that underpins performance. When you dress well, you say "take me seriously," I am committed, disciplined and dedicated. That is not being self-absorbed. It is a reflection of your own self-worth. Because self-worth is the cornerstone of courage, of creativity and performance. Neuroscience teaches us that. When your inner spirit and your outer appearance align, you create brain congruence between your conscious, your subconscious and your unconscious.; and in that alignment, the magic of manifestation is unlocked. Dress well, feel good and you will perform well.

**You are worth it!**

# ALISON WEIHE



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In Conversation with  
Luminary - MBAs and DBAs :  
Requirement or Adornment?

# High<sup>5</sup>

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