

life etc.

9 PAGES OF
ADVICE AND
INSPIRATION
- all for you

Money, work, relationships, rights - and everything else that matters to you

7 things not to say this year

Sometimes they just pop out of our mouths, but these throwaway lines can be more damaging than we realise



Feature: Paul Tammy Photos: Getty Images

'OH, THIS OLD THING?'

'We tend to focus on our flaws, which makes accepting a compliment about our appearance difficult,' says personal stylist Gay Richardson (www.stylemeconfident.co.uk). 'Long explanations about how old/cheap/boring an outfit is downgrades the compliment. This makes the giver feel uncomfortable so less likely to compliment again. Instead, smile and say, "Thank you." It really is that easy!'

'NO, IT'S OKAY, I DON'T MIND'

(when you actually don't like it)
You may be trying to be nice, but it's not always happy for the other person. You're putting your own feelings on a coach's or friend's (or even your own) shoulders. It's not your job to make them feel better. It's their job to work on themselves. (www.allaboutyou.com)
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'SORRY' (when it's not your fault)

'Jumping in and apologising when you're not to blame can niggle at you for a long time afterwards, and lead to an out-of-proportion reaction from you next time,' says Jo. Give the other person time to think, react and say sorry.

'IT'S ONLY ME!'

'That little word "only" sends out a message that you're not important - when you are!' explains Jo. 'People with low self-esteem are more likely to use this phrase, but it's a vicious circle because saying it will make others doubt your worth.'

'DON'T WORRY, I CAN MANAGE'

(when you could use help)
It's not your job to make them feel better. It's their job to work on themselves. (www.allaboutyou.com)

Wedding-wear dilemma

Q Is it okay to wear black to a wedding? I can't really afford to buy a new outfit and I have a black dress I love.

A We all know it's a no-no for guests to wear white, but black is a grey area. 'In the past, black was thought too funeral and sombre, but times are changing,' says personal stylist Gay Richardson (www.stylemeconfident.co.uk). 'Kate Middleton made the shade more acceptable when she wore a black dress and black velvet frock coat to a friend's wedding a few months before her own. It's a good idea to follow the Duchess's lead and "deblack" your dress by adding a touch of colour with your accessories. She had a wine-coloured bag and matching shoes, but pink, red, blue and pastels work equally well. If in doubt, ask the bride in advance whether she's okay with your dress colour, giving her an alternative outfit choice just in case.'

'I HATE IT' (when you really hate it)

'If you really want to appear grateful, but there are ways of expressing your dislike tactfully. "How you react really depends on your relationship with the other person," says Jo. "In many cases it's best to say nothing, but if you're close enough, and you've been given a gift you detest for example, try saying, "It's lovely, it's just not my cup of tea. But it was so kind of you to think of me."'