

## style manager

# “OUR CHARACTER IS WHAT WE DO WHEN WE THINK NO ONE IS LOOKING”

—H. JACKSON BROWNE



**DEAR STYLE MANAGER:**

I'm thinking about growing some sort of facial hair. What's stylish?

From a fashion point of view, most styles of facial hair are out. If you insist upon cultivating facial hair, however, it's important you understand how it might be interpreted. There's a school of thought, for instance, that maintains a mustache advertises that you're gay. As for beards, trim and neat is the order of the day. This requires daily shaving and sculpting, but it can transform your facial features into a more chiselled look. However, the presence of a beard can send out another signal, that of a shy person wanting to hide behind something, which could work against you professionally. The stylish exception is the goatee, which can be quite alluring to the ladies while showing enough face to prove you approachable and

confident. As for sideburns, they're suitable only for young hipsters, and convey a certain kitsch-irony which may baffle office-place superiors.

**DEAR STYLE MANAGER:**

During the winter months I always arrive at business meetings looking dishevelled and flustered, lugging around a huge coat and boots. Any suggestions?

You can take a lesson from a dapper editor we know who refuses to take an overcoat or don boots if traveling by cab to a lunch or appointment in the winter. The walk from cab to front door may be uncomfortable, but he always looks sleek and composed.

On the other hand, Donna Chevrier, a Toronto-based image consultant, advises never to go without winter protection. "It gives an image of being careless, not attentive and not valuing your health," she says. Her solution is showing up early to compose yourself before being subject to introductions. "Arrive at least 10 minutes in advance of your meeting and don't be afraid to notify the receptionist that you do not wish to be announced until you have hung up your coat and used the restroom to freshen up." This will ensure an unfettered introduction as you won't be fidgeting with buttons and hangers while simultaneously

trying to shake hands. This is vitally important for a first impression. As Chevrier reminds us, "image transcends words."

**DEAR STYLE MANAGER:**

I was enjoying a drink at a local bar when I spotted a co-worker in a romantic clinch with my boss. The three of us locked stares, but nothing was said. I have good relations with all involved, including my boss's spouse. What should I do?

The saying "turning a blind eye" was invented for a reason; in a situation like this, your sole obligation is absolute silence. In any sense of the word, it's simply not your affair. If you choose to meddle, then it will be your reputation that will suffer right along with those of the other parties involved. Dorothea Johnson, director of The Protocol School of Washington, remarks that doing nothing at all is sometimes the only right thing to do, unless you wish to change your current profession to "off-site romance police."

And in the unlikely event that your colleague or boss offers you an explanation, it would be to your advantage to squelch said discussion immediately. Show your sophisticated side and respond, "It's none of my business, I do not wish to be involved." ●

**SEND QUESTIONS TO:**

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