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## Style editor's wardrobe gets new life

I was nervous about stylist and fashion reporter Ginger Murphy seeing my closet.

Three months ago, I became Fashion & Style editor and entered a world where reporters talked in terms of embellishments, boot cut and tszujing an outfit.

I was at [home](#) in the fashion world, I thought. I'd been dressing for the newspaper office for nearly four decades. I prefer separates to dresses. I haunt Ann Taylor, Ann Taylor Loft and Talbots for their bargains. I can't pass Brooks Brothers if it's having a sale on blouses. I like Chico's, [My Sister's Closet](#), Marshalls and T.J. Maxx for the kind of classic, tailored look I've cultivated over the years.

I'm vain enough and lucky enough to have a daughter-in-law who keeps me "fashion forward" with [gifts](#) like a pair of Coach leopard flats.

But in this new world of fashion

I realized my wardrobe could use some help. Murphy was coming to my home to help inject some new life, some different options into my wardrobe. She was going to tszuj me.

I looked at the blouses, skirts, sweaters and jackets crammed into the space and projected her critique: way too much black. Too many outdated pleated pants. What was I thinking with that brown floral flowing top I'd worn only once?

And shoes? Was I still wearing square toes? Chunky heels?

My wardrobe was tired. Things that seemed like a good idea when I'd bought them on clearance had hung in my closet for years. Others were my go-to outfits. They didn't need replacing as much as reviving. Rethinking.

I needed a new take on my clothes, and Murphy was ready to offer a fresh viewpoint and options. Now I wasn't so sure.

In three hours - two 90-minute sessions - she assessed my collection: I had some good pieces I clearly was underutilizing. Pants I thought needed shortening and therefore hadn't worn since buying them four years ago were indeed the perfect length.

Sweaters, pins, belts, a camel-hair suit and a lovely teal-blue cashmere cardigan I'd bought on sale two years ago and worn once because I couldn't ever figure out what to pair with it - all now had new partners. Murphy had given me options. Wonderful, stylish, up-to-date options, and I didn't spend any money - although Murphy did suggest a few things I need.

Here are four outfits I never would have thought of pulling together if it weren't for her fresh, talented eye.



## The Coat

When Murphy found the pair of Coach 4-inch-high cream- and espresso-colored pumps in my closet, I thought she would weep. They are the highest heels I own. I'd bought them three years ago to wear with a cream suit for a wedding. I haven't worn them since. But she was looking for something to add a little snap to a skirt-and-sweater outfit she'd pulled together in the same way a chef can take random ingredients from the pantry and create a feast. This particular ensemble began with a Dana Buchman suit my mother had given me that I never wore because the jacket didn't fit that well. Murphy loved the skirt's color, texture and straight lines. It fit and paired nicely with a cashmere short-sleeve sweater set I'd picked up at My Sister's Closet but that I only tended to wear

with a tweed skirt. It was one of several outfits Murphy created that I would never have thought to combine. She added a narrow brown suede belt, three gold chains and my grandmother's gold watch. Then she found the shoes. And while I was practicing walking up and down the hallway, I showed her the coat. It was my grandmother's spring coat, a lovely, loosely woven cotton coat with three-quarter sleeves that I had been unable to part with but had never worn. I pulled it from the closet, and we looked at each other. Perfect. It was perfect. The length, the fit, the color, the collar. Perfect. And so was my mother's clutch that I unearthed from a box of purses I love but rarely carry. I could have stopped my wardrobe redo with this outfit. But I'm so happy we didn't.