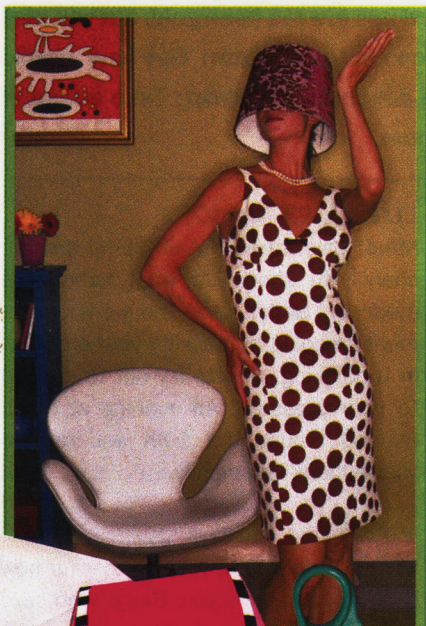


THE LIST

7 Things You Should Never Regret



1. DEVOURING DESSERT. Rather than obsess over a few (hundred) empty calories—and possibly throw in the diet towel for the day—focus on the positive. Indulging in sweets when the urge hits can short-circuit a binge later, says Lisa Dorfman, R.D., a Miami-based nutritionist. “Plus, it’s mentally soothing to treat yourself,” she says, explaining that carbohydrates produce serotonin, a relaxation-inducing hormone. Sure, scarfing a pint of ice cream may be overkill, but having just a scoop or two? That’s just good (and cheap!) therapy.

2. CUTTING SOMEONE LOOSE. Breaking up with commitment-phobic boyfriends, narcissistic pals or got-their-degree-by-mail shrinks is about self-protection, not selfishness. “Acknowledging that you deserve better opens your mind to new experiences and opportunities,” says Helene Brenner, Ph.D., author of *I Know I’m in There Somewhere* (Gotham, 2003). Worried you’ll hurt your hair-stylist’s feelings? Simply recall that mullet she gave you last spring...

3. REGIFTING. Rule #1 when giving away the ceramic figurine Grandma made for your last birthday: Don’t get caught! Your no-remorse rationale? You have the perfect gift for someone who loves tchotchkes, and Grandma’s loving efforts won’t go to waste.

4. GOING OUT ON AN EMOTIONAL LIMB. “Nine times out of 10, people don’t regret what they’ve done, they regret what they didn’t do,” says Brenner. Breaking out of your comfort zone—asking out the cute guy in sculpting class or saying the “L” word first—can pave the way for more meaningful relationships. Plus, vulnerability is sexy. Think Kristin Davis’s character in *Sex and the City*.

5. USING THE “GOOD CHINA.” Yeah, it makes cleanup more of a hassle, but this ritual can enhance your outlook and your life, says Susyn Reeve, author of *Choose Peace & Happiness* (Red Wheel/Weiser, 2003). “Using your best dinnerware lets you celebrate the simple joy of being alive.” Pizza night? Light some candles, turn on the soft jazz, and spring the Lenox from the sideboard.

6. EMBARRASSING YOURSELF. If you’ve ever dreamed of belting out “Borderline” at a karaoke bar, don’t let the fear of looking foolish deter you. “Not only do people feel closer to you when you let your hair down,” says Brenner, “but giving yourself permission to be silly will keep you feeling young.”

7. BLOWING OFF A BASH. It’s Friday night and you’re home with your cat and a crossword puzzle. So what? Embracing your homebody habit—say, your preference for tea over martinis or Bach over Tupac—is a recipe for self-acceptance, says Brenner. Besides, who’s going to look (and feel) more rested come Saturday morning—you or those party animals?

—Stacy Baker