



Suzanne Newman

Deerfield

Age: 49

For \$75 an hour, Suzanne Newman will become your best girlfriend and gently makeover your closet, your looks and possibly even your life. She'll sit on your bed and share stories in her sweet, slightly Southern accent, and her presence will be so warm and comforting, you'd never guess what she's been through.

Then again, she's so good at makeovers because she's had to revamp her own life several times.

Newman's parents divorced when she was 4, and she grew up with an abusive mother ("It was so toxic, I can't even talk about it," she says), moving constantly and attending a different school each year of her life. Thanks to a teacher's intervention, Newman earned early admission to college, starting after 10th grade, and graduated from the University of Georgia.

"People who come from backgrounds like mine either end up being like what they grew up with, or they do the opposite. My life has been doing the opposite—being as good of a mother and person as I could be," she says.

Newman had been married for almost 20 years when her marriage ended in divorce. Having stayed home to raise her daughter, she needed to get back into the working world. She took a Myers-Briggs personality test and attended a divorce workshop and a life-planning class at the Women's Exchange in Winnetka. It was through this group that she was encouraged to start a business. Her first client was from the class.

Since creating Find Fashion Happiness, she's worked with people who have been through some intense transitions similar to her own. She helps stay-at-home moms who are re-entering the work world move from sweats to suits; she boosts cancer patients' spirits by showing them how to look good despite the side effects of their treatments; she advises divorcees on how to dress for dating; and she shows some women "how to stop looking like a mom and start looking like a woman." She recently became the personal shopper for Westfield Old Orchard Shopping Center.

What keeps her going? Her daughter, Gabriella, and a wonderful group of friends, who are like family. And her clients: She's awed by how many "amazing, strong women" have helped her along the way. "I haven't worked with anyone who hasn't been a pleasure," she says.

-NK & LL