



# PIECES OF MY PATH

## Of Women's Purses!

by Zoe Tummillo

**A**s a casual research project, it is fascinating... Everything from the mystery of any woman's personal criteria when searching for a new purse, to what qualifies for being kept in her purse, to the phenomenon of: don't touch my purse! It could fill a book!

Women's purses constitute very specialized real estate. They are on the absolutely hands off list; on the don't nag me about size and weight list; and are the place where there's a good chance she will find something she can't find.

We women are very serious about that accessory that hangs from our shoulder, dangles from our fingertips or, more recently, might be incorporated into a backpack.

It can take weeks to find the perfect replacement. I know three women at this very moment who have been

searching for weeks, and are currently still reciting the mantra: OMG! I have to find a new purse! ... as they try to find one that fills their requirements.

It is partly about style, yes, and partly one's definition of "organized." Some perceive organization as related solely to the total roominess a simple sack-like design promises. As far as I can tell, their preference is all about sheer volume available partnered with their own uncanny sense of touch. How else could they possibly locate anything -- reaching into the bulging abyss, fingers trolling?

Everything is simply stuffed through the top and compacted upon everything else. One woman I know even drops loose change and stuffs crumpled bills right on in -- yet never keeps anyone waiting while she dumpster-dives for phone, money, a needed receipt or a piece of gum! Somehow, she knows where everything is.

There is a wonderful category of savvy women

who have "handbags" that coordinate to certain outfits -- and that's their priority; more important than volume, capacity or compartments. They have a variety of chic names -- clutch, handbag, purse, bag, vanity, etc. Looking "pulled together" rules!

My personal requirements (I have been told) border on the obsessive-compulsive end of the spectrum. First of all, it has to be able to stand upright on its own -- not slump like a lumpy blob. And it has to have multiple zippered compartments with top access so I have a specific place for everything. Most of the time I have to concede a requirement or two, but then I improvise with inserts pirated from an older retiree.

A bit more than twenty years ago, I had a remarkable stroke of luck while searching for a purse replacement. I found the end-all be-all purse that needed no modification! Beautiful black leather, the exact variety and number of compartments, zippers,

two-way straps and flawless hardware! For the first (and probably last!) time in my life, and full of "longevity optimism," I bought four of the six available.

Over the years I became complacent. When one purse wore out, I simply reached in the closet for a new one. In recent weeks, I have had to acknowledge that my current wonderful purse is nearing transition. I reached onto the closet shelf and realized the one I am using is the last one! My first thought? I should have bought all six! My second? Where will I ever find the right thing?

Well, I am noticing what is available in the purses market, and they don't look anything like my organizable, tried and true favorite. I can't even imagine myself carrying one of those huge "sacks" that seem popular; or a backpack thingy; or, one of the skinny flat things that seem to only accommodate an iPhone, six or eight plastic cards and some greenbacks. I need my mini-filing cabinet! (I think I'm out

of the loop!) For instance, I'd never buy a purse on line -- I have to examine every inch and corner by hand! Yikes...

Women and our purses are an exclusive culture. We take the jibes and roll with the punches. Sooner or later someone will be needing a little something -- paper clip? magnifying glass? unopened fortune cookie? eye glasses screw driver? You can be sure that one of us will have it somewhere in the mysterious depths of one of our purses!

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