

# One-to-one with Balsam Al Khalil

**You are a woman in a man's world, a banker, an entrepreneur and above all, a specialist in etiquette and protocol. Tell us more about the various faces of Balsam Al Khalil and how you manage to balance them?**

Although I've been in the corporate world for almost half of my life with Finance & law as a base, I've remained as Balsam the sensitive woman, the one with an eye for detail & an itching urge to make "things" & "people" look & feel better. Being in law never stopped me from pursuing my passion & continuing education in a completely different field; the fields of etiquette and fashion & styling.

I wasn't nicknamed the "Busy Bee" for nothing, I guess I carry and manage different hats at the same time. The truth is I sleep for a few hours (maximum of 4) and therefore I work until the afternoon, socialize, and teach or conduct seminars in the evening. I write at night and mostly at midnight. Week-ends are my only "switch off" days and leisure time.

**Of all the above mentioned activities and tasks, which one appeals to you the most?**

Believe it or not, writing has become so dear to my heart to the point where I can't ever stop myself from it and therefore I surround myself with as many mini notebooks as you imagine.

**What do fashion and luxury mean to you?**

I definitely appreciate luxury and am privileged that I can afford it. Of course I follow fashion trends but I apply to myself



what suits my personal taste, style & definitely state of mind.

**Do you follow trends or do you go with what suits you?**

Trends are there to be checked and to be taken into consideration but if we left every woman to follow them blindly we will surely have many fashion disasters and the list of the "worst dressed" will be endless! I choose

what suits my "petite" frame, the clothes that make me feel happy, confident classy & definitely glamorous.

**Do you consider yourself to be bold with your fashion choices or you prefer to be classic?**

I like to be classic and elegant but that doesn't stop me from making some "unexpected" fashion statements from time to time.

**You've just launched your first illustrated travel etiquette guidebook, I personally loved it and found it very handy, can you tell us how you came around to publish it?**

It all started as a fun idea but when I saw what my talented advertising agent delivered, I was over the moon and decided to share it with the world and introduce the cute Miss B character to the public. The idea behind the book is to bring educate the public on travelling and help avoid making common travel mistakes.

**Tell us about what the reader can find in this book?**

They can find very helpful tips to guide them through; from the moment they pick the destination to the moment they return from it.

**The book had 2 launches, one at Sauce Dubai and one in Lebanon. Tell us more about the launches?**

"Sauce" in Dubai was all about fun, happy experience & joyful atmosphere with lots of friends joining in on the achievement. In Beirut it took place at "Librairie Antoine" at Beirut Souks and it was a nostalgic experience supported by my wonderful friends.

**You are a very discreet and low profile person, however we came to know that you donated all the proceeds of the book sales in Lebanon to charity, tell us more about this decision.**

Oh dear, I arrived in Beirut the second day after the book launch in Dubai to hear about the sad & terrible conditions the Syrian refugees are going through in the camps due to the declining temperatures & storm then. In fact 9 kids were reported dead that particular morning.

I decided to buy children's clothes with the proceeds, and thanks to my friends and family members, I was able to send them to the camps at Bekaa Valley.



**Charity is a very wide angle we would love to talk about in our future issues, but can you share a major pillar that everyone must have in mind when thinking of donating to charity?**

Donate from your heart; while you're busy choosing a new outfit for a new occasion, think of the people who have no clothes to keep them warm! One's trash is another person's treasure. Make sure to donate clothes for the relevant same season in other words, don't donate summer clothes during winter and vice versa. Donate in an honourable way by keeping things tidy and wrapped in a proper way.

**We are privileged to have you contributing to our magazine through the dedicated section "Etiquette" in the coming issues, can we give our readers an idea on what articles they will be expecting soon?**

I'm privileged to write for a very high standard magazine and to cooperate with a very professional person like you dear Lara. Readers can expect reading about modern etiquette related to Facebook use, wedding planning & definitely my favourite topic, travel! ❤️

# Social media etiquette

## The correct usage of “Facebook”

In the world of cyber connection, it is rare to find an individual without a Facebook account. Facebook which was initially created to connect people wherever they may be, has taken the modern world by storm and although the privacy settings are meant to protect the users, sometimes they have done just the opposite. In many instances, many of us have unintentionally found ourselves in a compromising situation where our integrity and dignity were on the line.

What most people don't recognize about Facebook, is the personal set of rules each individual should make sure to set for themselves and follow through. Just like fashion, there are Dos & Don'ts we must strive to comply to, in order to avoid any mishaps and misconceptions that can sabotage one's social image. Briefed below are the pointers I would suggest to be useful in ensuring an efficient experience with social media:



1. Do use the “spell check” facility before you press the “send” button and in case you discover any mistakes after posting, use the “edit” option to rectify them.

2. Do transfer your personal matters/ messages through the inbox rather than posting them on the “wall” as we should always remember that we have many acquaintances or colleagues who need not be exposed to such private information.

3. Do keep the way you express yourself modest and refrain from behaving or expressing your ideas in an overly emotional manner so as not to offend anyone.

4. Do comment on your friends' posts from time to time or just press the “like” button if you wish them to continue to comment on yours.



5. Do reply back on a comment or a post by your friends or at least press the “like” button until you have the time to comment back, especially in the cases of a question or enquiry.

6. Do keep the posting of photos of a single event to a minimum and choose the best photos amongst them.

7. Don't over share yourself on Facebook by reporting every single thing you do unless you are a celebrity or have attended a special occasion such as international fashion shows, weddings or important conferences and exhibitions.

8. Don't send new “add” requests to friends you have just met without sending them a note through the inbox indicating that

you were happy to meet them at whatever occasion it was as people tend to forget names and it is better to give them a heads up. At this point, it is up to them to accept or decline the request.

9. Don't tag photos or tag members with the “check in” at a certain place which is mostly restaurants or leisure facilities without obtaining their prior permission in case it causes them an inconvenience.

10. Don't post photos of yourself or your friends then tag them before checking whether everybody in the photo looks proper according to their standards.

11. Don't get involved in spreading chain messages specially the ones which state that

if you don't spread them something wrong will take place as they do not have any added value.

12. Don't take on an aggressive tone while expressing your political or religious opinions as you must always remember that you have facebook members from all sorts of backgrounds.

13. Don't use the “poke” option which could be understood as childish, or could even be taken as a form of harassment. Do send a message instead expressing what you have in mind.

Happy posting & connecting to all! ♥

Text by Balsam Al Khalil