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Whether it's an *age-old debate* (should you tip the salon owner?) or a newer *dilemma* (how do you tell a friend she's over-Botoxed?), follow these pro tips to get through *sticky situations* with aplomb >> by EMILY LISTFIELD

I / I'm embarrassed to tell my hairstylist that I can't afford to visit the salon every six weeks anymore. How can I ask for a cut that needs less maintenance without admitting why?

» **Your stylist has** heard the intimate details of your marriage, your divorce, your battles with your kids and your latest run-in with Ben & Jerry. (And if he hasn't heard it from you, trust us, he's heard it all from just about everyone else.) Granted, it can be easier to discuss your sex life than your cash flow problems, but for now, stow the shyness. "Honesty is the way to go here," says Ted Gibson, owner of an eponymous Manhattan salon. "Your stylist will understand and give you a cut that lasts longer so that you need to come in only four times a year. A rule of thumb: Shorter

hair needs attention more often; longer hair will retain its shape for several months." Also, in most places, bang trimming between cuts is complimentary, so be sure to ask.

2 / My masseuse started telling me how her boyfriend had broken up with her. I replied that I was very sorry but I would love to lie quietly and focus on the massage. She stopped talking but spent the rest of the hour sighing loudly. Should I have told her supervisor?

» **You did the right thing.** Just because your masseuse has a captive audience—you—doesn't mean you have to take it lying down. Silence is the industry standard, so you were totally within your rights, says Samantha Cooper, spa director of Canyon Ranch in Lenox, Massachusetts. She points out that you tried to make it clear that this was your time to decompress and you preferred to avoid conversation. If this happens again and the masseuse continues to talk, she suggests you be polite but direct. "You can say, 'You know, I would really appreciate *silence*.' That word indicates no talking, muttering or even sighing," she says. "If it

doesn't work, then yes, ask to speak to the manager—not afterward but right away. You should never feel obligated to continue a service if you're not enjoying it. Or, the next time you book, state clearly that you prefer quiet. The person at the desk will note that in the appointment calendar."

3 / My best friend and I made a pact to tell each other when it's time for a surgical tweak. For her that time has come. Shall I tell her—or keep my mouth shut?

» **Diplomacy is an absolute must** in this situation. And even if you think your skills are on the Hillary Clinton level, this approach should be attempted only if (a) you're sure your pal is not going through a rough patch that might make her feel particularly vulnerable, and (b) there are no hidden fault lines in your relationship that could lead to a misunderstanding. If you decide to bring up the topic, do so in the spirit of togetherness. "You might start with, 'Remember that pact we made? I'm looking in the mirror, and I'm not sure if it's time for me to do something. Do you feel the same? Maybe we

should go for a consult together,'" suggests celebrity dermatologist Fredric Brandt. Actually, going to a plastic surgeon in pairs is quite common—the grownup equivalent of group trips to the ladies' room. But if you both choose to "have a little work," go one at a time; that way you can take turns bringing each other ice packs.

4 /

Can you settle once and for all whether I should tip the owner of the hair salon if he or she does my hair?

» **"It's not necessary,"** says Gibson. "It is nice to tip at holiday time, though, to show that you appreciate the service you've gotten throughout the year." You needn't come up with a year's worth of tips rolled into one, but it's not the time to Scrooge out either. Gibson, ever the diplomat, says whatever you feel comfortable giving will be appreciated. But keep in mind that in tough times, salon owners make sure their employees are paid first, even if it means cutting back on their own salaries. (And giving some homemade cookies wouldn't hurt.)

5 / How much perfume is too much in yoga class? I go from the office and don't have time to shower first, but I don't want to offend anyone with my scent.

» **"When you get** to the studio, wash your hands as well as your wrists and neck," suggests Dana Slamp, an instructor at New York's Pure Yoga. "That will remove most traces of perfume." There are other benefits to a quick freshening up, she adds: "When you wash your hands before hitting the mat, you're washing off other people's energy. It signals you're done with work and ready to start your practice fresh." And if someone else's scent is getting to you in class? "Practice tolerance, realizing you could easily be the offender yourself. Don't say anything; that would put both of you in a negative space." (This, ladies, is why *she* is the yoga teacher.)

6 / My friend has become a Botox addict. Seriously, she looks as though she's been in a deep freeze. How can I stage an intervention?

» **Unlike other forms** of needle addiction, Botox is not life threatening, so ixnay on an intervention. As long as your friend is