

Organization 101

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Chapter 1 - Why Get Organized?

If you are like most people today, you feel that you have too little time and too much to do. As a result, you often end up not getting the things done that are needed to be done. And even little things grow into a mountain of work that you feel you can never climb.

I used to be very unorganized. On all of my report cards that I received as a kid, the teacher always made that cute little comment “needs to get organized.” I had a desk that was a mess at school and a room that was a mess at home. One day, the teacher dumped out everything in my desk on the floor in front of the class and told me to pick it up. I can still feel the sting of that humiliation.

My mother was not as cruel. She would clean my room so that the Board of Health didn't come in and condemn our house. Both of these people tried to help me get organized, but neither one of them really helped me at all. My teacher used drastic and humiliating tactics that didn't work but just made me upset, and my mother did the work for me instead of making me do it myself. It wasn't until I was an adult that I realized how to get organized, why it was so important and how to teach my own children how they could stay organized as well.

The purpose of this book is not just to tell you how to clean your home or

desk so that everything is where you can find it, but also how to organize your life so that it is easy to manage and you do not feel overwhelmed. Although I eventually realized that it was much easier to have my important papers at a place that I could find them and the value of having a home that didn't look like a pigsty, my mind was unorganized throughout much of my life. My kids were forever joining activities and I was forever driving them around to different events after school while trying to maintain a job as well as my home. I often felt like a hamster on a wheel. It wasn't until much later when I learned not only how to organize my home and work place, but also my mind. This book will teach you how to organize every aspect of your life - from your home, your work and even your life. It will also teach you some valuable tips and teaching secrets that you can pass on to your children so that they can learn the value of organization as well. You will learn valuable lessons on organization that you can use to keep your life in order and avoid feeling overwhelmed all of the time as well as read some anecdotes that perhaps you can relate to.

It will also teach you how you can stay organized even when things occur that throw you off your routine. We are not robots, we're humans. And as everyone knows, we have things that come up that are unpredictable that can throw us off our kilter. You want to be organized, but you do not want to be so rigid in that you cannot handle a break in the routine without, as the kids nowadays say "tweaking out."

Organization is essential for you to live a healthier life in both mind and body. When you feel as though you are well organized, you also feel as though you have more control in your every day life. It makes those around you more comfortable and also lends to harmony in the family. Why get a little organization in your life? The answer is simple - to retain your sanity, make you more efficient and to also give some sort of structure to your life and those around you.

No matter how unorganized you are, you can become the epitome of organization by taking the tips from this book. The first step is to realize that you did not get overwhelmed at once, it took months, years or even a lifetime for you to get to the state you are in now. However, even if your house is a total wreck, your kids are sapping all of your energy, your dog is constantly having accidents in the house and your work life is a mess because you keep skipping from one project to another, you can get it all back on track. It is important to know the first step in the process is to take it one small step at a time.

Trying to get organized can be daunting if you look at the entire picture. Therefore, you have to remember the old adage that my father always uses when it comes to getting organized: “How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.”

So sit back and enjoy reading this book. Remember that you have to take your

organization skills “one bite at a time” and start with small goals that will eventually lead up to the big goal, which is having organization in your life, work and home. Trust me, if I can do this, so can you.

Chapter 2 - How To Get Rid Of Clutter

There are good ways to get rid of clutter and bad ways. The bad way is the route you usually take when you get disgusted with the fact that you have too many things all over the place and decide to get rid of everything. I know this because during a time when I was in the mindset to get rid of all the “clutter” part of it turned out to be my high school yearbook and my mother’s wedding dress that I was holding. Things that cannot be replaced and are gone forever. But such was my zeal to get rid of clutter that I discarded these items without realizing what I was doing. Like everything else, clutter has to be evaluated before you get rid of it. And you should also make sure to bear in mind things that other people can use, even if you no longer want them.

Another example of how I got rid of clutter was when I moved from my home to a smaller apartment and had a ton of kids toys that my kids no longer used. I ended up with a heap of toys in my driveway ready for the garbage truck. These could have been donated to a number of different charities, but I was so overwhelmed that I just wanted them gone. The good news about this is that my neighbours had a field day picking through the garbage and getting themselves some free goods. It was particularly gratifying to see those who did not want to attend my estate sale in that upscale neighbourhood because they did not want to be seen buying used goods actually climbing the trash heap to get what I now considered to be trash. But that is not the point - the

point is that the toys should have been donated and could have been had I been a bit more organized when getting rid of clutter.

The good way to get rid of clutter is the way that I now use. I go through my home periodically and get rid of clutter in the places that is most likely collects like the closets. Those coats and other garments that I have not worn for the past year get tossed into a bag for the many organizations that come around to take these items for charitable causes.

Some things, however, are not meant for charity as they are too worn , stained or have something broken, like a zipper. What I do when I want to get rid of clutter is to have two bags, one for items that are to be donated and the other for items that belong in the garbage.

Clutter can consist of many different things in your home that you have no use for and you have been accumulating for long time. I used to deal in collectibles and went to many homes where clutter was amok. I've seen people who have had basements filled with old magazines and newspapers. Homes where you had to walk a narrow path to get through the house in order to get from one room to the next. This is the result of clutter piling up to the point where it got overwhelming for the person.

There are two reasons why people tend to collect a lot of clutter. One reason is that they feel that they have something of value and continue to hang onto

items that, in reality, usually have very little or no value. These types of people are those who are afraid to throw anything out less they find that they need it later. Many people have a compulsive disorder to keep everything that they receive, including junk mail, newspapers and other items that people normally throw out, just in case they may want to look at them anyway. Some people just like to hold onto junk. I have a neighbour who is like this and who routinely takes anything out of the trash that I put in. Needless to say, his house is a maze of clutter. And to make matters worse, it is a maze of much of my old clutter.

The other reason people keep clutter is because they are too overwhelmed to know where to begin when it comes to getting rid of the clutter. Cleaning out an overstuffed closet seems to be a monumental task that they cannot bear to undertake. So the clutter builds and builds. Until they get to the point where they decide to chuck it all and end up getting rid of their yearbook and mother's wedding dress. Most people fall into the latter category.

The easiest way to get rid of clutter in your home is to decide what you want to keep and why. Obviously, things that have sentimental value or those that are collectible are kept. Clothes that you wear are kept. Other things, however, such as the kids toys that they no longer play with because they're now teenagers, clothes that you haven't worn in years and cannot wear even if you wanted to as well as knick knacks, old videos, music and books can be given

to many different charities.

Electronic equipment also falls into this category. Do you really need that analog TV sitting on the floor of your bedroom when you just bought yourself a flat screen? Many charities will not take electronics, so it is best to advertise them for free on a site like Craig's List or just to give them to a neighbour or friend who can use it. I give all of my old electronic equipment to my neighbour and save him the trouble of having to go to the trash to get it. I have cut out the middleman with the trash when it comes to this person and now just bring it right to the source. If you know someone who collects all types of junk, you can make their day by giving them stuff you no longer want and save yourself the trouble of having to advertise to get rid of it.

Take your time when you are getting rid of clutter. If it seems daunting, give yourself an hour to work on the project and then stop until the next day. Even if you spend a half an hour a day working on what to keep and what to give away or toss, you will start making headway. You do not have to feel as though you need to get rid of clutter all in one day.

In our house, books and magazines comprise a great deal of clutter. Once every month, therefore, I go through the books that are keepers and those that I will never read again and send them to the Goodwill,. We have four subscriptions to magazines that no one ever seems to read that I bring to the doctor's office after removing the address and name label. Newspapers get

bundled up and recycled.

Once a year I go through movies and music that we have hanging about and also donate these items to charity. We are a family that reads quite a bit, listens to music and also accumulates many movies over the course of a year. While some of these items we keep for future use, others are given to charity.

People with little children have to be especially vigilant when it comes to toys, stuffed animals and clothes as children outgrow these quickly. Instead of letting all of these items pile up and clutter up closets and playrooms, it is much better to give those that are in good shape to organizations that can sell them for a low price to people who will be grateful to have them. This is a good way for you to teach your children a little bit about compassion and how to not want to hoard everything that they receive. Of course, there are some things that are sentimental to your children that they will not want to get rid of and those should be kept. For example, my daughter, who is now nineteen, still has the Barney doll that she had when she was a year old. Sure, it's tucked into the corner of her closet in a box so none of her friends can see it, but it's there and she's not parting with it. It holds sentimental value.

To put it simple, clutter is stuff that makes your house look like a mess and consists of items that you do not need and may have accumulated over the years. When you are ready to let go, make sure that you give them to someone

who may be able to use them. The items that you keep should be stored in a place where they are unobtrusive and do not make the house look cluttered. You can look for traditional storage for these items or get creative. My home is tiny now, but I still have retained all of the things that I feel I cannot part with. I purchased cheap display cases for my doll collection. I cleared a shelf on the top of one of my closets for books as I do not have the room for bookshelves. I use a cedar chest that doubles as a coffee table to store our photographs. If you walked into my home, you would not see clutter, even if you opened the closets.

Once you get rid of the clutter and have, as they used to say “a place for everything and everything in its place,” you will not only find it easier to clean your home, but you will feel more organized. You will know where to find things when you need them and not have to worry about inadvertently throwing something out by mistake, like your high school yearbook. (...)

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