

August 2009 Newsletter

Dear Friend,

Are you inundated with paper in your home or office? I am here to tell you that you aren't alone. There are very few clients with whom I work that don't have a *paper problem*. Why do we have so much of it? Why is it so hard to "control"?

Can we really become a paperless society? Oh...I think so...

Francesca

Paper, Paper, EVERYWHERE!

Paper - can't live with [too much] it and many can't live without it. Or so it seems. This so-called paperless society hasn't completely taken shape yet. I was thinking about why I come across so many people who have either deliberately kept paper or gotten so behind that the paper is just overcoming their desks at work and counter spaces at home.

I started to think about fear. Perhaps with the advent of so much technology and paperless systems, people are afraid. What if I need a hard copy? What if the computer fails? And a similar mentality follows them home with the added issue of not having enough time to deal with what comes into the house. Perhaps it feels safer save the paper for when you do have the time to sort, recycle and purge what you don't need or use.

The problem is, your good intentions to purge the paper covering your dining room table isn't enough. You have to do something about it or it will consume you, take over your home, and certainly not aid in your effectiveness at work. Paper isn't the evil, although we treat it like *it is* the problem. We *choose* whether we deal with it or not; we choose how we deal with it and when. **Dealing with it or not is the difference between being sane or chaotic, efficient or unproductive.**

Getting rid of unnecessary paper is one issue. The pure use of so much paper is another. We allow ourselves to use paper - for everything - and these days there is more paper than ever. From bank statements and insurance documents, medical records and warranties to memorabilia and articles. We allow paper to come into our homes without giving enough thought to its purpose or need. At work people get in the bad habit of printing up emails and other computer documents and then copying them. Not very "green" of us. There are many ways to be more efficient with paper and save the environment at the same time.

Don't think too much affects you? Picture your kitchen countertop or table. Do you see the top? How does it make you feel when you see it? Picture the desktop at your office. Are things in files and put away? **Is the area neat and ready for you to complete the next task efficiently?**

Remember, clutter, in any form, affects the way you feel in a space; it affects your productivity and mood at work (and home!). **It affects how you and your children treat your home and personal spaces.** With less paper, our world functions better as well. It is something we can control...and something of which we can live with a lot less.

HOW TO...Pare Down Paper!

1. **DEAL WITH IT.** When paper comes into your home, whether in the form of mail or your child's schoolwork, make time to sort through it. Decide what needs to be kept/dealt with. Recycle the rest.
2. **SCHEDULE IT...**time that is... to take care of mail. It sounds silly but scheduling time to go through your mail daily will make a huge difference in how your bills get paid (hopefully, on time!), and how the area in your home where the mail resides looks. I can almost guarantee that you will see how little time it takes to sort and give an action item for all of your mail when you deal with it daily.
3. **GO THROUGH THE GARAGE.** When you pick up your mail, don't go back into the house via the front door. Go through the garage. Have recycle bins for paper (even a shredder) by the door and sort your mail before you enter the house. Any unwanted magazines or mailings should never see your kitchen countertop.
4. **SYSTEMS.** Set up systems for incoming paper. Have a designated container for your children's paperwork, permission slips and/or homework. And have one for incoming paper that you need to act on. Keep your bills in a separate space from other "to do" paper items.
5. **TECHNOLOGY LENDS A HAND.** If you carry a blackberry or something like it, use it to keep notes for appointments and to do's instead of using paper. You can even set it up to remind you of your tasks.
6. **DON'T GO NUTS.** Too much paper clutter can drive you crazy! Carve out your time to sort through your "incoming" containers. It is suggested that paper upkeep takes anywhere from 1-4 hours EVERY week. That statement alone might be enough to make you go nuts but don't fret. Have the systems in place and ready for paper that comes in, and the task of clearing it out weekly won't be as daunting.
7. **SAVE A FEW TREES.** At work, don't print up emails and don't print up documents unless you need to. Instead, treat your email inbox like your incoming paper container. Sort (delete) what you don't need. File into designated email folders the emails you that you will need to refer; save emailed attachments in a file on your computer for future reference. And keep in your inbox only those emails that are urgent or require attention more immediately. And don't forget to back up your computer once a month - then you can "rest" more easily.
8. **DO YOUR PART.** Just being aware of how much paper you bring into your space is a start. Avoid the big, daunting piles of paper (everywhere) by making a concerted effort to control how you use paper and questioning why you are keeping it.

Quick Tip

If you have junk mail and too many catalogs and magazines that you don't read or never asked for, go to Tonic mailstopper (formerly greendimes.com)

<http://mailstopper.tonic.com>

For a small registration fee, this company will contact organizations on your behalf so you will stop receiving junk mail. And they'll plant trees to boot!

ARE YOU...



Tired, overwhelmed, frustrated? Company losing money?

Business owners who have space, systems and employees that aren't efficient - *and therefore aren't effective* - should get verri organized!

Call 978-337-3614, or go to verriorganized.com to set up an assessment.

ABOUT VERRI ORGANIZED?

Francesca Verri Gove is a professional organizer and coach and owner of *verri organized*. Having a knack for making order out of chaos, and a passion for creating workable systems to improve efficiency, Francesca sees a great need for her talent and services among mothers, businesses, home owners and children.

A former assistant dean for administration at a college outside of Boston, Francesca has spoken to mothers, college students and businesses on how to get and stay organized, and has coached professors, professionals, home owners and doctors on how to experience life in a lighter way by getting verri organized.

Francesca believes life should be "light", and in order to experience it in that way, we need to look at what we "have", assess our "systems", and believe in our own ability to become verri organized.

For more information about verri organized and the services it provides, please visit www.verriorganized.com, or call 978-337-3614.