

February 2010

Dear Friend,

Happy February to you! The New Year is under way. Let's assure each day of this new year is starts off in the most organized way!

Best,
Francesca

Starting the Year Off Right - One Day At A Time

Last month I talked about setting goals and the importance of it for organizing your life. Having life balance is equally, if not more, important to being organized as having physical, organized space in your home. This year, I want to share with you my thoughts on how best to achieve life balance so that your everyday chores and tasks can go off without a hitch and you are left every day feeling fulfilled and happy.

Have you set your goals yet – on paper? What often stops us from writing down what we want is us! It is hard to write down what you want, to dream in that way, when you are not quite sure how to get it. Trust me on this. Knowing *what* you want to accomplish is all that you need; the *how* will come in time if you focus on the what. Make what you want to achieve a top priority in your life; express it to people and you'll be surprised at what comes flowing in. Before you know it, you'll be going towards what you want and won't have to question how you got there.

As is often the case when I organize a client, people want to object or make excuses when it comes to focusing on their goals. I understand how a disorganized space can make you *feel* like you have no time and no space. The reality is that you have to make the time to sort out things, get rid of what doesn't inform you or your space positively, and you will create the space for better organization. And so it is with your goals. Make the time to delve into your heart and find out what you want. Change your practices if need be, question yourself about what you can do differently to achieve those wants, and you will create the life you desire.

There is plenty of time to "do" more, be more. You can't control time; you get the same amount as everyone else! You *can* control what you do with it. You have the ability to set into motion better systems and procedures so you can utilize that precious commodity to its fullest. Below are a few things you can do every day to use your time wisely so you can stay focused on your goals and actually "do" what you "say" so you can "be" who you truly "are".

Today is a new day and every day is today.

HOW TO... Start every day organized!

1. If you have a family, organize each evening what you need for the next morning. You should lay out clothing for your children (or better yet, get them in the routine of doing this), pack backpacks with homework and snacks, and set the table for breakfast.
 2. Chances are good you need to get dressed each morning! Assess the night before what the weather will be like the following day and prepare what you are going to wear. If your mornings are fast-paced and require you to do for others, this tip is important. The mental time you save in the morning by laying out your clothes the night before is invaluable.
 3. Look at your calendar each evening for the next day. Plan out what you need to do the next day. If you keep a to-do list (I hope you do!), you should pluck from it any tasks you need to get done, or can get accomplished the following day and write them in your datebook or planner.
 4. Have one designated space for all keys, purses, cell phones. You'll never again have to say "I can't find my keys" or have to be flustered or angry because you can't put your fingers on them. As well, designate one place for children's coats and backpacks. You will save time every day by setting this system in place.
 5. Take inventory each evening of the things your children need for the next day. Have a checklist ready and go through their needs, including signing any permission slips, homework, and making lunch. Leave their belongings – backpacks, lunch boxes, coats – in their designated spot each evening.
 6. Establish a routine and stick to it. Routine means you have a system in place for accomplishing efficiently, the same tasks every day. Much of what you and your family need to do each morning is repetitive. Develop a routine around these things and they will become second-nature and operate like clockwork. You will likely gain more time the more efficiently your routine runs. At the least, you won't be wasting it.
 7. Give you children tasks to do and get them on a routine. Have them make their beds each morning and pick up laundry. Give them age-appropriate tasks; this will help you with housework and build a sense of responsibility in them. Make a list of all chores and check off or star the ones they complete. This will give them a sense of accomplishment and motivate them to continue with it.
 8. Get enough sleep. Your mind should rest much easier now that you have built good evening habits and a nice morning routine. You don't have to worry or think about getting dressed; getting the kids dressed, preparing breakfast, finding your keys or making sure the dog didn't eat the homework.
- Mornings don't have to be hectic. They usually are because we don't utilize our time well. Try the tips above and then you will see that what you envision each day isn't craziness and chaos. You'll start your day off in a calm way – and you'll see that the rest of the day will follow suit.

QUICK TIP

We all love our sleep. I truly believe we get a better night sleep when we take off of our mind that which stands to challenge us or take too much time the next day. Now that you have routines set in place and to-do's taken care of, you will sleep better. Set your alarm 15 minutes early and allow yourself a leisurely entry into a new day. At the least it is built-in time for any snags that come up in your routine. If all runs smoothly, you just bought yourself some extra time for you.