

March Newsletter

Dear Friend,

Spring is about to be sprung! With spring comes a plethora of projects to do in and outside of the home. Before you start, make sure you tackle the most important tenet of organization; start implementing it now and feel the difference.

Home Sweet Home

Have you ever lost your keys? How about an important report your boss needs on her desk yesterday? How do you feel? Are you frustrated, annoyed? You are definitely stressed. And that stress affects your everyday life; it affects you mentally and it affects how you interact with people with whom you come in contact. The question is can it be avoided? The answer is, of course!

When I talk to people, I always stress the most important tenet of organization – everything must have a home. Without a home, it is homeless, and can get lost, or forgotten.

There are a few simple lessons to learn around this tenet. It is important for everyone in your family to learn them as well. Growing up, you might have heard your parents say, “put things back where they belong”. I heard it all the time and I thank my parents for drilling that into my head. Everything should have a designated space. When things have a home, the area feels better – lighter – and you feel better, too! So lesson 1 is simple: if you use it, put it back where it belongs. If you don’t know where that home should be, take the time to figure out where something is best housed. If you have young children, create that “home” for them and teach them the lesson of putting things back where they belong. It will stick with them.

Lesson 2 relates to this: Don’t let things pile up; address incoming things right away. The more you put things down instead of putting them in their home, the more things pile up, the more annoyed, frustrated and overwhelmed you will be in organizing it in the future. By not returning one particular item to its home, you create a trend. Before you know it, your kitchen table or counter top is filled with homeless items. All this causes – you guessed it – more stress and frustration.

The same goes for files and paper in your office. Piles might appear to be neat, which some mistake for being organized. Truth is, when you need to find that one piece of paper with your clients information on it, you have to flip through the entire “neat” pile on your desk, leaving it not-so-neat, and you, once again, stressed and frustrated. File things away when you are done using them. Don’t get in the habit of piling things up. Not only will you waste time trying to find those items in the future, your space will be in disarray and this will affect how you do your work. When paper comes in that you don’t need, throw it away immediately. If you do need it, or know you will need to refer to it in the future, don’t put it down. Put it in a home – a filing cabinet, a bulletin board, your bill paying system, etc.

Put the time in right away to put things in a home; this will reduce any chance for clutter to build up. When you don’t find a home for things, the area can quickly become chaotic. Clutter causes chaos and once again, causes you to be frustrated, late, overwhelmed. Sometimes, you don’t even know why. Now you do. You need to have a home for things and I suggest those things should also have a purpose. Just as you shouldn’t file a piece of paper you know you don’t need or won’t use, you should make sure the things in your home have worth for you. Keep in your space only what informs that space positively, that you use, that you like, that fits you. Everything else can be given to a different home, like good will or the Salvation Army. Donate or sell things that you don’t need or use.

Create a home for everything in your home; teach those around you about those homes. Be strict with yourself about putting things in their place to avoid clutter build up and future frustration. You will be able to find what you need when you need it and that will make all the difference.

How To... Purge

Purging and clearing clutter in any area of your life can be daunting. If you stick to the most important tenet, that everything must have a home, you will justify what to keep differently. Not only do you need to find a home for everything you choose to keep, you need to be sure these things will inform the space and you positively. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. When was the last time I wore/used this item? If it has been a long time or you don't remember the last time, it is time to part with it.
2. Does it fit? If you were to take everything out of your closet and try them on, everything should fit. Things that don't are not informing your space positively. If you are in between sizes, only keep what fits. When you lose weight, I guarantee you'll want to reward yourself by going shopping.
3. Do you like it? If you don't like it, chances are good you aren't going to use it. Instead of storing things you will never use, free up that valuable space for things you like, use and need.
4. If you don't like, use, or need something, ask yourself if there is someone else who could benefit from this. There are always charitable places who will take items that are in good condition and give them to people who need them, will use them and like them!

Quick Tip

Keep your bills separate from all other mail and to-do paperwork (i.e., invitations, directions to an event, etc). I suggest you put them in a desktop sorter so you can put all bills due on the 1st of the month in one slot and bills due on the 15th of the month in another slot. Keep your bills in the same place where you pay your bills. If you haven't designated that spot, your first step is to create that home.