

Clutter, Clutter Everywhere

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THE JUNKIE “CONSIDERS” ORDER

CIRCLE YES OR NO

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Does it take you more than 10 minutes to unearth a particular letter, bill, report or other paper from your file (or piles of paper on your desk)? | Yes | No |
| 2. Do strangers say your house is “interesting”? | Yes | No |
| 3. Do you feel that your storage problems would be solved if you had more space? | Yes | No |
| 4. Within the last 2 months, have you forgotten any scheduled appointment, anniversary or specific date you wanted to acknowledge? | Yes | No |
| 5. Does your primary clothes closet contain only those items you regularly wear? | Yes | No |
| 6. Is your definition of “organized space” ...to fit as many objects as you can into a limited space? | Yes | No |
| 7. Do you still have your High School Student Activity card in your wallet? | Yes | No |
| 8. Can you identify all the items in your refrigerator and without opening or unwrapping them? | Yes | No |
| 9. Can you make a fairly complete list of your belongings? | Yes | No |
| 10. Do you know what you own? | Yes | No |
| 11. Are the kitchen items you use most often in the most convenient place? | Yes | No |
| 12. Does your pet have a pile of plates of his own? | Yes | No |
| 13. Do you still have the aftershave or perfume ³ you received as a Christmas gift last year? And the one before? And the one before that? | Yes | No |
| 14. And did any of you keep the wrapping paper and the ribbon? | Yes | No |
| 15. Do you set your handbag down to write out a check and passerby’s chuck trash into it? | Yes | No |
| 16. Do you want to establish some order, but everything is in such a mess That you don’t know where to start? | Yes | No |

Scoring: Give yourself 1 point for each “YES” answer.

9 – 11 points The end is near...therapy or a massive transplant might help. Start dejunking ruthlessly. You might survive your junk.

6 – 8 You’re on the brink like many of us...if you start to de-junk now, you can make it.

5 – 7 There is hope. When you come to terms with those few problem areas, order will survive clutter.

1 – 4 You truly have order in your home and are probably impossible to live with.

“REASONS” (Excuses) for Clutter

- I might need it someday.
- There’s an article I have to read in it.
- It’ll be worth money someday.
- It will come back in style if I wait long enough.
- It was a gift.
- I paid good money for it.
- As soon as I lose twenty pounds I’ll be able to wear it again.
- It’s still perfectly good/it’s never been used.
- It doesn’t belong to me.
- I inherited it.
- It just needs to be fixed and it will be good as new.
- They don’t make things like that anymore.
- I’m saving it for....
- It would cost a fortune to replace.
- It brings back memories.
- It might get me through hard times.

“What’s the worst that could happen if I get rid of it?”

Basic Techniques For de-Cluttering

- Overcome the obstacles.
- Divide and Conquer.
- Be “in the mood”.
- Give yourself some elbow room
- Work in stages. #1. the obvious #2. one of a kind swoop. #3. the hard or hidden.
- Switch de-cluttering project to keep momentum.
- Clean as you de-clutter.
- **Be wary of “ambushes” – friends, neighbors, spouses, details, fix-its, diversions – they’re de-cluttering traps!**

Junk Sorting Guidelines

Is it clutter or is it not? Is your dejunking fever being cooled down by cold feet? Are emotional ties and guilt diluting your ability to be ruthless and strong? If indecisiveness sets in, here are some guidelines that may help.

IT IS JUNK IF:

- It's broken or obsolete (and fixing it is unrealistic)
- You've outgrown it, physically or emotionally
- You've always hated it
- It's the wrong size, wrong color, or wrong style
- Using it is more bother than it's worth
- It wouldn't really affect you if you never saw it again
- It generates bad feelings
- You have to clean it, store it, and insure it (but you don't get much use or enjoyment out of it)
- It will shock, bore, or burden the coming generation

If you can check one or more of the above truthfully, then it's probably junk. Do yourself, your house, and posterity a favor – pitch it! It's robbing you of peace of mind and space.

IT'S NOT JUNK IF IT:

- Generates love and good feelings
- Helps you make a living
- Will do something you need done
- Has significant cash value
- Gives you more than it takes
- Will enrich or delight the coming generation

If you can check a few of the above comfortably, then it is probably not junk – enjoy it and feel good about its place in your life.

Don Aslett – Clutter's Last Stand

How to Get Rid of It

Simply dumping it is harsh and not always the only way or wise way – so says Gladys Allen, a well known de-junking engineer. Her approach is as follows:

Start with three large heavy-duty garbage bags and one box. Label them:

1. Junk
2. Charity
3. Sort
4. Emotional withdrawal (the box)

Dragging your bags and box behind you, systematically attack every room in the house. Assign every junk suspect-every piece of loose clutter, clothing, magazine, toy, shoe, stray animal, unidentified child, etc. – to one of the bags or the box.

1. **JUNK** - if it's broken, outdated, lost its mate, out of style, ugly, useless, dead or moldy, then it's junk. **DUMP IT.**
2. **CHARITY** - If it's still repairable or useful (to someone else), if it's the wrong color, wrong style, too little, too big for you, bores you, or is simply an excess, chuck it in the Charity bag. Let someone else worry about it for a change. **GIVE IT AWAY!**
3. **SORT** – I want it, but have no place to keep it. All your loose, misplaced and homeless stuff that is still useful and needed, but that you haven't figured out where it park, put in the Sort bag. Much of this is probably not located in convenient place to use. **KEEP AND SORT AGAIN IN A MONTH.**
4. **EMOTIONAL WITHDRAWAL** – inactive, unused, outdated sentimental stuff. **KEEP** (in junk limbo for six months) and then...**THROW IT AWAY!**

TIPS TO DE-CLUTTER AREAS IN YOUR HOME

GENERAL

1. Closet door alternative – drop shades. They vary in width, color, height price, and materials-rattan, plastic, fabric or woven wood, for example. They require no door-swing or projection space. The limited storage/stack space required is overhead.
2. Read labels and care directions before you buy. How much care will you have to invest in this item?
3. A plastic shoe rack works for drying and sorting wet mittens, hats and scarves.
4. A child's broom kept near the door is a quick way to whisk off snow, sand or dirt before it adds to your housework.
5. Put out ample, functional doormats.
6. Keep filters clean in furnaces and air conditioners.
7. Get rid of those items for which no one wants to be responsible. Perhaps they really are no needed.

KITCHEN:

8. For one-motion retrieval, stack like items 2 or 3 high at the most. That way you don't have to sort through the pile for the 1 item you want.
9. Stack extras behind or in less accessible spot. For example, if there are 4 of you at mealtime, stack plates, sauce dishes, or cups 4 high, the others go elsewhere.
10. Square containers are more efficient than round ones. Why not try transferring items in odd shaped storage bags into square or rectangular containers with lids.

11. Start any cooking project with a sinkful of warm sudsy water to rinse and re-use items as you go along. Avoids need for duplicates and the clutter of dirty dishes doesn't accumulate.
12. Try to store items for your mixing center between the sink area and cooking center. Time motion studies show the greatest number of trips occur between the stove and sink. The second highest number of trips is between the mixing center and the sink.
13. Envelopes of mixes are ready for easy access when standing upright in a rectangular divider or box.
14. A plastic dishpan saves trips when setting and clearing the table. A child can work from the dishpan to efficiently set the table.
15. Plastic dishpan, kitty litter pan or bread loaf pan hold pot lids, plastic lids or cleaning supplies. It can easily be pulled forward to see and retrieve the needed item with one motion.
16. Chest-type freezer storage is more organized when heavy open top cardboard boxes are used to group like items—all beef, ground meat, all pork, all cut corn, all bakery items, The boxes stack well and can be easily shifted to reach other items.
17. A large piece of nylon net gathers tissue pieces inside clothes dryer.
18. Nylon hose over washable, pretreated stuffed toys helps preserve toy.

TOYS

19. Large plastic pans or bins work well for grouped toys. Desired toy is easily seen and returned.
20. Jigsaw puzzle pieces are easier to number after the puzzle has been assembled. Turn it all over at once to number code backs. Pieces may then be stored in ziplock bags with small identifying picture attached. Large photo from obx is added to scrapbook catalog of other puzzle photos.
21. Backs of tray puzzle pieces and the trays can be number coded for sorting and storage. This sorting and matching numbers can be a game in itself. All of number 1 belong to the cow puzzle, all of number 2 are the ballerina puzzle.

BOARD GAMES

22. A cabinet of various sized drawers can hold game pieces. Put rules into catalog you make and label drawers to match catalog. Store game board next to cabinet.
23. Consider keeping all toys in one "neutral" room or basement. Throughout the day, toys children are finished with go into large wastebasket. At bedtime, basket is returned to toy area and toys are replaced.

Causes of Storage Problems

Choose the causes, which contribute to your storage problems.

Can you think of storage solutions?

- A. Plenty of storage but in the wrong place.
- B. Plenty of storage but items unorganized.
- C. Too much storage available, which doesn't force you to organize.
- D. Plenty of general storage but lacking in specific storage for individual items (trash container in the kitchen, ironing board in sewing room).
- E. No wall space on which to display items or against which to place furnishings.
- F. No large, out-of-the-way storage area such as basement, attic, or garage.
- G. Adequate storage, but size and shape of the storage area is awkward and inaccessible.
- H. Storage space too far away from place of use (easier not to put it away).

- I. Generally good storage except for one or two specific rooms.
 - J. Awkward sized items (brooms, mops, TV trays).
 - K. Crafts or hobbies take up too much space.
 - L. Things are out because they're between use (dirty clothes, dishes, projects being worked on).
 - M. Inability to organize things.
 - N. Purchasing too many useless items.
 - O. Frequent moves by family.
 - P. Other people.
 - Q. Moved to smaller place.
 - R. Other reason _____
-

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE TIPS

1. Where will it be stored?
2. Am I certain it'll be used?
3. Will it be time consuming to maintain?
4. Keep a running list of things you'd like someday – you'll see many lose their luster over time without purchasing or storing them.
5. Learn to say “No thanks” to friend's castoffs.
6. Keep a recycle box handy. Toss in anything needing repairs or reworking. Work through it and return items to useful purpose or pitch.

FEELINGS WHICH AFFECT STORAGE

Read through the following questions and be ready to discuss those, which you feel are effecting your storage situation. Why are these feelings important when considering storage?

1. What are your feelings about the amount of things you buy?
2. Do you feel compelled to buy things because others would expect you to have them?
3. Do you buy things to fit your own self-image?
4. Do you have to be the first to own things?
5. Do you take things people give you free?
6. How do you feel about the amount of things you have to do in your life?
7. Do you ever feel your possessions own you?
8. Does it seem like everything is always broken or gone when you want it?
9. How do you feel about your ability to find things when you want them?
10. Does it seem like you can never find the product you want in a store?
11. How do you feel about how your house is organized?
12. How do you feel about the decorations in your home?
13. Which rooms do you feel are the most disorganized?
14. How do you feel when you look in your closet or cabinets?
15. How do you feel about the order in your garage?
16. Do you feel better about one room than another?
17. How do you feel about miscellaneous or junk boxes?
18. Have you seen storage ideas, which you would feel good about using in your home?

TEN COMMANDMENTS ON CLUTTER

- i. Stop Procrastinating**
- ii. Quit Making Excuses**
- iii. Use it or Lose it**
- iv. Learn to let go**
- v. Be a Giver**
- vi. Set Limits**
- vii. Use the In & Out Inventory Rule**
- viii. Keep Everything in its Place**
- ix. Compromise**

Stephanie Culp, How to Conquer Clutter