DE-CLUTTER YOUR HOME

"When your environment is pleasant, you're more likely to be" --Emilie Tolley

1. GET RID OF IT!
   -Ask yourself if it is really worth my time and the space it is taking up in my home. "Have nothing in your house you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful" --Henry David Thoreau

   HOW:
   - Attack one closet a day
   - Set the timer for 15 minutes and work until it goes off
   - Set up 3 large bags- garbage, D.I., and storage - get rid of bags quickly before family members start going through them or you change your mind.

2. EVERYTHING NEEDS A SPACE
   -A place for everything and everything in its place helps cleaning up become a simple task. (Easy enough for children or husbands!)

   HOW:
   - Plastic bins and inexpensive banker's boxes are beautiful things. Assign one category of toy, game, (those flimsy cardboard boxes are worthless) food item, craft item, etc. to each box. I use these in my toy closet, pantry, linen closet,
     I even use inexpensive disposable Tupperware containers to organize bobby pins, elastics, and hair bows in the bathroom; batteries, screwdrivers and nails in the miscellaneous drawer. They come in any size and you can get them to fit snug in your drawers.
   - Label each box. The labeler is my favorite toy, but of course a marker works just as well.
   - After throwing away all those unnecessary items in step 1, there should be plenty of room in your closets and cupboards. If you are still cramped on space, use creative solutions like under-bed boxes, space bags, or handy closet organizers.

3. START AT GROUND ZERO EACH MORNING
   -Don't get depressed and overwhelmed first thing in the morning by waking to a messy home.

   HOW:
   - Enlist help from your family and spend 15 minutes getting everything back in its place.

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- Do not deep clean each night - save that for once a week. Concentrate on each member of the family putting his or her stuff away.
- Assign each member of the family a "zone" (a room or area of the home). Each night remind about checking to make sure their zone is clean before bed until this becomes a habit like brushing teeth and saying prayers. We like to choose new zones each week at family night to mix things up. If zones are not done each night, the full allowance is not paid.

4. MAKE HOUSE CLEANING AS EASY AS POSSIBLE

-"Is there Life after Housework?" --Don Aslett

HOW:

- Put a wastebasket in each room including bedrooms.
- Have window cleaner and disinfecting wipes in each bathroom for quick clean-ups. Teach boys to use the disinfecting wipes if they miss.
- I like to have a vacuum on each floor of the home. If you have to go all the way to the basement to retrieve the vacuum, you are less likely to clean up little messes before they get big.
- Restrict deep cleaning to once a week. Knowing that I don't have to scrub the toilet each day gives me freedom to play and do the things I want instead of feeling guilty for not cleaning. That does not mean you have to live in a mess. Use your wipes and spend 30 seconds cleaning down the counter and then be off.
- Have set jobs for each member of the family. Small children are great with little jobs. Give your four year old the responsibility for using the rechargeable hand vacuum under the table after dinner. Give kids a sock and let them put it on their hand and dust in small areas that you can't reach. Husbands and teenagers can empty the trash or do dishes. The key is to make it clear what you expect from them. Example: let your teenager know they are in charge of the trash. It has to be emptied on Wed. and Sat. and taken to the road on Thurs. Turn the responsibility over to them and let them suffer the consequences.

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DE-CLUTTER YOUR FAMILY

-"The great gift of family life is to be intimately acquainted with people you might never even introduced yourself to, had life not done it for you" --Kendall Hailey

1. EVERYONE NEEDS A PLACE

-Let each member of the family have a designated spot for their belongings.

HOW:

- Keep a separate container for school or paper work. Go through it once a week
  and keep only the best of the best. Put these items in their designated file or scan into the computer. Scanning is a great alternative to saving every scrap of paper or report card. If it is in your computer it is probably a lot safer than in a box hidden in the attic.
- Let family members keep an under-bed box with anything they want. They get to keep what they want - you get a tidy home.
- Lockers or designated hooks for coats, back packs and shoes. Give them the responsibility of keeping their locker/hooks in order.
- Over-the-door shoe holders work great for small items. Put these organizers on the inside of coat closet for mittens, earmuffs, sunglasses and keys, or on the inside of bedroom door for markers, crayons, card games and other small treasures.

2. FAMILY CALENDARS

- Help each member of the family be aware of activities or major assignments.

HOW:

- Spend time once a month at Family Home Evening writing down all of the upcoming
  events.
- Discuss ways to help each family member accomplish what he or she needs to do that month. (Baby sit for mom while she goes to a meeting, rearrange carpool to get son to baseball on time, etc.)
- Each week during family night go over the calendar to solidify plans.

3. SCHEDULE EVERYTHING

-Everyone is happier if they know what to expect.

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HOW:

- Schedule homework. Having a set time each day can discourage arguments and missed assignments.
- Schedule play. This is important for all ages!
- Schedule vacation time. Everyone needs something to look forward to and work towards.
- Schedule family get-togethers or reunions. Celebrate all extended family birthdays once a month. Rotate host home and responsibilities. Schedule parties in advance to avoid the last minute stress.
- Set new deadlines for projects. Give yourself some wiggle room by changing the deadline to a few days before the actual deadline. If you have to give a lesson on Sunday, set the deadline to Thursday to avoid problems. If your daughter's book report is Jan. 31, set the deadline to Jan. 28.
- Make sure to schedule time for each other. Date night, daddy daughter time and just playing catch in the yard makes life worthwhile.

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DE-CLUTTER YOUR MIND

"But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right…" D&C 9:8

1. DON'T BE AFRAID OF SILENCE

-There is so much outside stimuli in our world that we forget to enjoy the silence.

HOW:

- Turn off the TV or radio during certain parts of the day. Sometimes we just have the TV or radio on while we are working as background noise. If we turn them off, we have a chance to think about things that need contemplation. I doubt the spirit can speak to our hearts if the TV is always blaring in the background.
- Make sure your children get some "stimulation free" time as well. Use it to talk and decide about important issues or values.

2. MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

- With so many outside influences pulling at us this may seem impossible, but a few minutes here and there can make all the difference in our emotional well-being.

HOW:

- Find a way to get some physical exercise in during the day. Late at night or early mornings might be your only option. You will find yourself renewed and with a higher self-esteem if you can find a few minutes for physical activity.
- After cleaning a closet for 15 minutes, give yourself a reward. 15 minutes of free time without any guilt, a nice walk, or a few minutes with your favorite book.

3. CROSS IT OFF

-Don't worry about things you can't control or have already given your best effort.

HOW:

- If you made a mistake and regret it, chalk it up to experience and move on. If you have truly learned your lesson, you can put it in the past and quit feeling guilty about it. Maybe the lesson you taught in Relief Society

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wasn’t as good as it should have been. Make a commitment to prepare earlier next time and move on.

- Try not to tackle too many things at once. Focus on one task or problem until you accomplish it and then cross it off and move on to the next thing. When we have five different problems running through our mind it is hard to accomplish anything.

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ENJOY THE PEACE

"…A true Mormon home is one in which if Christ should chance to enter, he would be pleased to linger and to rest." David O. McKay

1. ENJOY YOUR FAMILY
   -After all the work of getting your home in order, don't forget the most important part - to enjoy it.

HOW:

- Set aside time to be with your family. Treat it like you would any other appointment. Don't miss out on these precious times.
- Again, turn off the stimuli and enjoy each other's company.
- Prioritize your life to make room for family meals and family home evening. It may take some creativity, but it will be worth it.

2. ENJOY THE SPIRIT
   - The spirit cannot dwell in a chaotic and tense environment. Now that your home and life are organized, invite and recognize the spirit in your home.

HOW:

- Have family scripture study, family prayer, and family home evening.
- Listen to the promptings of the spirit in regards to your family.
- Help children recognize the spirit that abides in your home.
- Bear your testimony to your family to help them strengthen or build their own testimony.

"Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God." *Doctrine and Covenants 88:119*

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