

Coping with Clutter



Face the Mess: Confine, Control, Conquer

- Start to declutter at your home office desk, laundry room, or master bedroom. These areas bring immediate benefits as they are brought to greater order. Then tackle other trouble spots, usually the public before the private, the easier before difficult, personal before the familial.

Incoming clutter, rotating clutter, and outgoing clutter

- Incoming clutter is best managed when it finds an immediate "home". Set up landing places for your incoming mail, school papers, unpaid bills, and purchases.
- Rotating clutter is best handled by FINISHING. Finish the dishes. Finish, fold and put away the laundry. Finish and put away from projects when you come to a stopping point.
- Outgoing clutter is best handled frequently. Wastebaskets in every room collect outgoing trash. A regular collection to the exterior garbage keeps the home environment neat.

Encourage cooperation, make it convenient, be consistent with standards

- Everyone in the home should help clean up after themselves. Provide tools to make it convenient. Be sure neatness standards are understood and followed. A good example is the best start. Watching until you are obeyed is a good teaching tool. It is better to address clutter frequently versus letting things slide for a long period of time.

Who will put it away? Where will it be put away? When will it be put away?

- Individual accountability promotes group success. Make family members accountable for their own clutter. Make sure they know where each item's home is located. Set a timetable for cleaning up. "Bedrooms are to be neat before TV is watched tonight." "Dinner will be served to everyone who has put away their laundry." "Soccer equipment is to be placed in the garage before we get out the post-game snacks."

Important Family Records



Tools, Systems, and Routines

- Tools provide places to put paperwork right away, other places to keep it as you handle it, a third place to keep it forever. Systems are individualized methods which work for you to retrieve an item after you have filed it. Routines are habitual times for tackling paperwork to keep it organized, filed, and available for use again and again. "Where is my passport, anyway?"

The Family Information Binder

- Set up a secure but convenient place to keep paperwork that is frequently referred in your family's everyday life. Have dividers for each member of the family, both for work, school, and medical information (doctor's visits, prescriptions, immunizations, and childhood diseases). Use other dividers for information about the house, passwords, and the numbers in your life.

Family Identity Binder/CD/Thumb Drive

- Copies of vital documents such as birth certificates, social security numbers, drivers license, passports, temple recommends, marriage certificate, adoption papers, fingerprints, individual portraits, family pictures, phone/email/addresses of extended family, pink slips, insurance information, loan papers are all useful in case of an emergency. Prepare a secure place for copies of these vital documents. Other important documents can also find a safe home here. Put originals in a safe, fireproof location.

Personal Journals

- Set up a personal journal binders for each member of your family with dividers for each season of their lives. Add the tools need to make journaling, saving and sorting treasures convenient and easy and put these in the rear of the journals.

Photographs

- Gather tools, set up a system, and figure out a routine for conquering the photographs in your life. Label all photographs with names, places, and dates (whenever possible) to facilitate sorting, documenting, and preserving. Sort by individual, family, or timetable. Gather or purchase archival supplies for keeping the photographs safe and secure. Finish the project by consistent, repetitive focus for reasonable periods of time.

Maximizing Your Time Management Skills



From Activity to Accomplishment

- Most everything we do in life, we are likely to do again. Why not do prepare right the first time for repetition? Lessons, presentations, parties, and many other activities can be approached now for redos again and again.
- Setting up forms to recall all pertinent information when repeating activities, projects, and information gathering helps increase our efficiency and effectiveness.
- Preparing a formal place to collect and keep all pertinent data for the current focus will aid us to function superbly now and in repeating the project a second, third, and fourth time with success.

Permanent Lists

- Making up a permanent list when you prepare for a trip, calculate needs for a picnic, work on a presentation, or prepare for an important event facilitates competency.
- Most lists will be added to and improved upon with time, but with a master list at your disposal, most of the planning is already done.

Thinking in Bulk

- Many home management activities are repeated over and over. Why not think in bulk? Greeting cards can be purchased, prepared, and stored once a year. Gifts can be prepared, wrapped, and stored for easy retrieval when needed.

Standardizing Procedures

- Taking phone messages can be systemized with a form and teaching family members the proper procedures for successful taking of messages. Having a single location with a systemized form to keep complete contact information will bring long-term benefits. Having a master copy of all household and vehicle keys will save many a locksmith visit.

Organizing Closets and Cupboards



Set up a Plan

- Decide where to start organizing, how much to do in one session, and when you will return to this project. Setting up a such plan will make it easier to return with energy and focus.

Pull Everything Out and Begin Sorting

- Find a quiet time to begin organizing. Gather three containers (large garbage bags, heavy duty containers, cardboard boxes). Label the containers: GIVE AWAY, PUT AWAY, THROW AWAY. Decide which closet or cupboard will first receive your attention.

Make A Decision

- Pick up one item and ask several questions: "Should I keep this item, i.e. is it useful and needed? If so, does it belong in this place. If so, put it back. If it is useful and needed, but does not belong here, put it in the PUT AWAY container. If the item is useful and but not needed, put it in the GIVE AWAY container. If the item is not useful and not needed, put it in the THROW AWAY container." Pick up the second item....

Keep Enough for Your Needs, Give Away Your Abundance

- Sometimes you have more than you reasonably need of a single kind of item. Candles, decorations, clothing are often in this category. Usually, keeping a "representation" of the treasured items will do. Decide how much is enough and share the rest.

Organizing Cupboards and Closets to Make Sense

- Congregate like items with like items. Use containers to confine small items. Label containers for easy identification and future retrieval. Put items which are more frequently used nearer to the front and center. Put less used items up and away, down and in back.

Routinely Organize Cupboards and Closets

- Once your major cupboard and closet overhaul is done, set up a schedule to review each shelf and drawer on a routine basis. This will keep the clutter, confusion, and over abundance in your life reasonably in control. Teach other family members the proper place to return items.