



Tuesday June 12, 2007

Whether you call it “junk”, “stuff”, “what-nots” or “family treasures,” clutter is a problem for many of us. Moving aging parents from the homes they’ve shared for 55 years or selling your own home to downsize to a nifty, but small condo are obvious de-clutter moments. But many of us want to simplify and de-clutter for a better quality of life now – even if we are not moving.

Some clutter can be thrown away or given to a friend (“One man’s trash is another’s treasure”). Some can be donated to charitable organizations for use or sale, and some needs to be returned to the rightful owner or forwarded to the children who have asked you to keep it for them.

You can read books on de-cluttering (yes, I have several of them cluttering my bookshelves!) or articles (check out www.aarpmagazine.org/lifestyle/conquer_clutter.html for “Conquering Clutter” by David Dudley) but I suggest you just get started – with a method that will give you immediate results and a feeling of success.

Here’s a plan for you to try; I call it the 10-10-10-10 Plan. Commit to spending 10 minutes a day for 10 days to de-clutter 10 spots in your home of 10 items per location. The 10 minutes and 10 days should be clear. The 10 spots should be easy to find; make them specific and small enough to actually be de-cluttered in 10 minutes. You can make your own list, but here is an example of mine:

- Kitchen catch-all drawer
- Medicine cabinet
- Jewelry box
- Sock drawer
- Tool box
- Bedside book shelf
- Second shelf in linen closet
- Spice cabinet
- Magazine basket
- Shoe shelf

The 10 items are pretty easy to find too: the one sock that has lost its mate, the book you’ve started four times but can’t get beyond chapter one, the shoes that used to fit, the prescription bottle dated 2000, the next door neighbor’s pipe wrench, the padlock without a key, the frayed towel.

Here’s the hard part: discard it, give it away, tuck it into a bag to mail to the rightful owner or walk next door to your neighbor’s house **right now**. Don’t allow yourself to make another pile to deal with later.

What techniques have you found useful to help you de-clutter? Are there any resources that you would like to share with other Paths participants? Would you like to hear more about de-cluttering? Please respond to this e-mail and let us know your thoughts. We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.
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