

Rescue Yourself From Clutter

One of the main reasons clients seek help organizing is feelings of overwhelm and exhaustion. They feel like they have lost control of their surroundings and there is no time or energy to get organized – even if they did know where to begin.

Instead of enjoying their possessions, instead of spending quality time with friends and family, they find themselves busy buying stuff, moving stuff, caring for stuff and trying to work around stuff. Stuff, Stuff, Stuff! Does this sound familiar?

Somehow the balance between the flow of stuff into the house and the flow of stuff out of the house can disappear over time. There can be far more stuff entering the house than leaving – and over time that Stuff accumulates. It can feel like STUFF controls us...

Getting organized takes time and energy. It can be so much easier if you know a few tricks and get the right kind of help. If you have some de-cluttering to do – or want more organization in your life, here are some suggestions:

- **Pay attention to the difference in how much stuff comes into the house and how much leaves.** Incoming stuff includes mail, deliveries, all shopping, gifts, etc. Outgoing includes recycling, garbage, donations, give-aways, etc. If it feels like you have too much stuff, can you find ways to decrease the incoming flow and increase the out-going? Your home will eventually fill up if you don't keep things flowing OUT!
- **Start organizing with a project that is small and central.** To feel successful and enjoy great results you want to ensure that you can finish the task you start and you want to be able to frequently see your results. In other words, if you have projects you could organize in various parts of the house, don't start in the far corner of the basement, start in the kitchen or bedroom – somewhere you spend the most time. Seeing your own great results is positive reinforcement and helps to get momentum going.
- **Be careful with those good intentions...** because distractions seem to frequently get in the way of organizing tasks. Until it is a habit, schedule organizing into your daytimer or calendar to help make it happen. Assume the task will take longer than you think. For example, if you think it will take 10 minutes to sort out that kitchen junk drawer – plan for 20. Schedule in time accordingly. If you finish early, you can relax and enjoy a treat, or perhaps think about taking on another task on your list....
- **Don't dwell on the organizing task itself.** To help yourself get started, focus on the end results and how you will feel when the job is done. Often the most

dreaded tasks are the ones that we appreciate completing the most! For example, instead of thinking about what a hassle it will be to clean out the laundry area, think about how much easier it will be the next time you do laundry, how nice it will be to not trip over dirty clothes on your way into the room and to find those dryer sheets without effort. Another benefit is you can take that job off your to-do list and feel the accomplishment instead of the burden. Doesn't it feel so much better to see and work in an organized space?

- **Recycling, giving away, and donating are three ways to relieve yourself** of stuff you no longer want or need. Let the stuff have a new life with someone else. It can make it easier to let go of things if you know that someone else will enjoy it.
- **Getting organized and staying organized require time**, but in different doses. Getting organized takes bigger chunks of time less often; staying organized takes moments of time on a regular basis. Once you have an area organized, be sure to take those moments to keep it in great shape....it will save you time, disappointment and frustration in the long run.

When I finish an organizing project with clients the most common comment is "I wish I had done this a long time ago". Wouldn't it be a treat for you to look around and see organization rather than reminders of things to do? And wouldn't it be a relief to enjoy your hobbies and recreational activities guilt free! Hopefully these ideas will help you get motivated and started on a project or two...

...Kelly Talbot uses her training as Professional Organizer, Lifestyle Coach, Counsellor, and Feng Shui Consultant to provide unique, individualized consultations and workshops on-site and online. Phone 780-882-7969 or email kelly@kellytalbot.com for more information.