

Learning to De-clutter

WHAT I KNOW FOR SURE IS
THAT WHEN YOU DECLUTTER —
WHETHER IT'S ON YOUR HOME,
YOUR HEAD, OR YOUR HEART —
IT IS ASTOUNDING WHAT WILL FLOW
INTO THAT SPACE THAT WILL ENRICH
YOU, YOUR LIFE, AND YOUR FAMILY.

— PETER WALSH



Everyone has stuff lying around their home that they don't need, but can't find it in them to throw away. Over the years we tend to collect mounds of objects that may have made us happy in the moment, but no longer have use for. Look around your home and ask yourself the following questions;

1. Have I used this in the last year?
2. If I were shopping right now, would I buy it?
3. Is the only thing that's keeping me from throwing this away, that I don't want to waste money?
4. Am I holding onto this for sentimental value?
5. Do I have a similar item that serves the same purpose?
6. Do I have a specific plan to use this?
7. Does it fit me or my living space?
8. Am I holding on to a broken item to fix in the future?

Go through your home and make a list of items that may fit under any of these categories. It's also helpful to sort these items into categories of give to a friend, donate, garbage. If you no longer use it but it still has the potential to fill someone else's needs, donating it is a great way to still feel good about parting with your possessions.

Some rules you should follow while de-cluttering include:

- Get rid of duplicates
- Get rid of things you haven't used within the last year. Let someone else enjoy it

- Digitize nostalgic items
- Do not keep items out of guilt
- Don't keep items you wouldn't buy now

Freeing up your space will offer you a lot more positives than if you keep all those things you no longer have use for. Not only will it free up space in your home, it'll help making cleaning that much easier. The less items lying around to collect dust, the better.

Things you should de-clutter right now;

- Excess coffee mugs
- Extra plastic containers
- Paper receipts
- Old editions of magazines/newspapers
- Junk mail
- Seldom used beauty products
- Worn out shoes
- Your old toothbrush
- Cookbooks you don't use
- Old medication

You'd be amazed how much space is freed up when you toss just these few things.

Here are a few proven benefits of finally getting rid of all that junk.

1. You'll Suddenly Be Able To Concentrate For Days

As Mikael Cho notes on Lifehacker.com, "Whether it be your closet or office desk, excess things in your surroundings can have a negative impact on your ability to focus and process information. That's exactly what neuroscientists at Princeton University found when they looked at people's task performance in an organized versus disorganized environment. The results of the study showed that physical clutter in your surroundings competes for your attention, resulting in decreased performance and increased stress." Clutter essentially makes your brain multitask, so getting rid of it will turn you into a concentrating machine.

2. You'll Probably Sleep A Whole Lot Better

Do you ever lie in bed and stare, with utmost stress, at your messy closet? Or the piles of laundry on the floor? It's amazing any of us get any rest ever, because there does seem to be a connection between messy rooms and a lack of sleep.

As Julie Pennell notes on Today.com, "A new sleep study has found that people who doze in cluttered rooms and are at high risk for developing hoarding disorder are more likely to have sleeping problems. This includes having trouble falling asleep at night and experiencing rest disturbances." Not to say everyone with a messy bedroom is going to be a hoarder, but it's an interesting connection.

3. You'll Boost Your Mood

Clutter can make you feel cranky not only because it's like visual noise, but it also sends a signal that you don't have your life together. And that can be kind of a bummer. This connection was shown by researchers at UCLA's Center on Everyday Lives and Families (CELf), who studied the relationship between 32 California families and the thousands of objects in their homes. According to an article on the topic by Lisa Kaplan Gordon on HouseLogic.com, "It turns out that clutter has a profound effect on our mood and self-esteem. CELf's anthropologists, social scientists, and archaeologists found ... a link between high cortisol (stress hormone) levels in female home owners and a high density of household objects. The more stuff, the more stress women feel."

De-Cluttering Quiz

1. True or False- A new sleep study has found that people who doze in cluttered rooms and are at high risk to have sleeping problems.
2. True or False- Excess things in your surroundings can have a positive impact on your ability to focus and process information.
3. True or False- It turns out that clutter has a profound effect on our mood and self-esteem.

4. Fill in the blanks

Over the years we tend to collect mounds of _____ that may have made us happy in the moment, but no longer have use for.

5. Fill in the blanks

Clutter can make you feel cranky not only because it's like _____, but it also sends a signal that you don't have your life together.

6. Which **WAS NOT** listed above?

Things you should de-clutter right now:

- a) Leftover food
- b) Excess coffee mugs
- c) Extra plastic containers
- d) Paper receipts

Quiz Answers

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. Over the years we tend to collect mounds of **objects** that may have made us happy in the moment, but no longer have use for.
5. Clutter can make you feel cranky not only because it's like **visual noise**, but it also sends a signal that you don't have your life together.
6. A

Sources:

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