



Space and Time, L.L.C.®

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### ***An Important Part of the Process***

Helping people find ways to be better organized is my profession and something that I am passionate about. I have been writing articles for this publication for a year and the purpose of my articles has been to inspire and motivate people to improve their lives by getting organized. Most people would like to be organized and many have discovered that by taking a more assertive approach to becoming better organized, they are glad that they did. However, there are those among us that find organizing a source of aggravation instead of a positive experience. The scenario repeats itself often, "I clear away clutter, straighten up the house and it always seems to come back". People fail to realize that once organized, it doesn't magically stay organized. You have to have methods to routinely maintain an organized space in order for it to stay that way. This seems to be the last 20% of the process that is neglected most of the time and it causes a lot of frustration. Organizing is a lot like your car because you have to maintain it to keep it running smoothly.

Getting organized is not a trait that you are born with, but a skill that can be learned. The behavior patterns that cause the clutter need to be altered in order for the process to be a success. When you are getting rid of the clutter, you have to determine how it got there in the first place and address the underlying issues. Adopting practices that will enable you and your household to keep everything in its proper place is a fundamental element in organizing. When you decide to organize your home, your office or your life, knowing that you will be maintaining what you have accomplished is critical in avoiding the trap of having it all fall right back to where you started. There are two basic, simple principles that need to be adopted; make sure that everything has a designated place and put it away on a continual basis. This will help you stay organized and will reduce the amount of time that is spent on house work, looking for things, and it will reduce your stress level too!

For me to say that you should make sure everything has a designated place can seem a bit oversimplified, but this basic principle applies to every aspect of our lives and it works. This can be applied to paper, laundry, toys, equipment, the kitchen, the bathroom, or your office. Clearing away the piles is one step, deciding where it all belongs is more important. Once you have purged through a large pile of paper and you have decided what you will retain, the most important part of organizing is deciding how those papers will be filed so that you can retrieve them. Creating a designated place where all of the paper that enters your home will be kept (what is usually called an

information center) enables you and your family to keep control over the piles of paper and flow of information. Clearing away the clutter in the garage is the first step, but finding a designated spot for the equipment, tools, and toys is more important in order to keep the space cleared. Usually kids struggle with picking up their rooms because they don't know where anything goes. A child can clear away the piles on the floor only if they have a place to put them.

Let's face it, most of us hate "picking up". We didn't like to do it as kids and we are less fond of it as adults with too many demands for our time. Starting the process by finding a designated time that will be spent putting things away helps to create a routine for maintaining an organized space. Every household and office is different and what works for one person may not work for another, so you have to decide what method will work for you. A quick pick up every morning may be great for one person and an hour session, once a week may be sufficient for another. Sometimes just spending ten minutes every day sorting the paper that comes in the door can make a major impact on the size of your paper piles. Once a method has been established, people can gradually make a dent in the piles that have been gathering over an extended period of time.

I firmly believe that organizing is a continual process and anyone can do it! Professional organizer Barbara Hemphill states that one of the things that distresses her the most is how unwilling people are to ask for help. They are embarrassed and the only thing that makes them take the plunge and call is the devastating effect their disorganization is having. I encourage you to not wait until it is unbearable! Use some time this summer and get started to improve your life by getting organized. Just think, clutter is responsible for forty percent of your upkeep and housework. Wouldn't you love to have more free time to spend with your kids or to do fun summer stuff? So, my words of advice or tip for this month is to make organizing a process and not a temporary fix by designating a place for everything and making sure you adopt a routine or method to keep it that way.

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About the author:

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