



Space and Time, L.L.C.®

Betsy Peterson, Professional Organizer

207-7295, beterson@space-and-time.com

PO Box 4325, Oak Ridge, TN 37831

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Space for Me

Recently, I reclaimed a space in my home. For as long as my kids can remember, the hutch in the kitchen was the "craft domain". What began as a place to keep school supplies, paper and pencils, colored paper, scissors and tape, evolved over the years into a place where the kids and friends could go for just about anything that they would need for a school project or hobby. The cabinet housed all of the "neat stuff" for various art projects and hobbies over the course of about fifteen years, so emptying out this now defunct treasure trove of stuff was like a trip down memory lane. The school/craft supply cabinet was a really great concept and it worked wonders when I had kids, but they have moved on and I no longer need this cabinet of supplies for kid projects. I do not regret committing this space to raising kids, but now it could be mine!

It took an afternoon to go through the boxes, containers and drawers and sort it all out. I kept a small pile of markers and pens and pitched the ones that were dried up or scented. I decided to keep a small container in the drawer for the scissors, tape and a few pencils, simply because old habits are hard to break and I still do go to that drawer for tape. The items I would no longer use I divided into several boxes and donated them to the Girl Scouts, Girls Club, YWCA, etc. By the time I was done sorting, the "keep" pile was very small and fit into a small storage box. I found a space for it on a shelf in my office (once my daughter's bedroom).

The fun part was I had an empty hutch ready for what ever I wanted to use it for. The hard part was deciding what I would like to put into this space. I had a lot of ideas but in the end, I decided to take a practical approach. The hutch is in the main part of the kitchen, so I was delighted to now have a space for the kitchen items that have been on a top shelf, in the back of a drawer, or in the closet of another room. Yes, I reclaimed my space. I have "adult" things in a space that was committed to the kids for years.

I shared this scenario with you to demonstrate that in a short period of time, and in a small space, you can make a significant impact. Instead of keeping the hutch as a designated space for kids that are no longer here, I changed it to best suit my present need. Just because a space has been used for a particular activity or used to store certain items for a long time, doesn't mean that it needs to stay that way or that it is in fact the best use of that space. I suggest periodically doing a little space evaluation, reassessment, and a reclaiming. It works wonders! As adults, we seem to be resistant to change, either because it is too much trouble or the thought may not occur to us that it could or should

be changed. So start with a very small space, a drawer or a cabinet. Instead of wishful thinking (“I wish I had a space to put my ...”), take action and pull the items out. Are they in the best place or would it be better to have them somewhere else? What would you actually prefer to have this space used for? If you need a place to keep something, where would you like it to be? I really like having my serving dishes close to the kitchen table and not in the hallway closet. How efficient! As Bruce Barton put it, “Sometimes when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things... I am tempted to think there are no little things.”

About the author

Betsy Peterson is a local professional organizer and owner of Space and Time, LLC. She is a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) and offers organizing services for the home and office, specializing in; senior move management, staging your home for sale, and student organizing. She can be reached for questions at 207-7295 or by e-mail at bpeterson@space-and-time.com.