

How to De-Clutter Your Life

- **Do it in small chunks.** Set aside just 15 minutes to declutter just one shelf, and when that shelf or that 15 minutes is up, celebrate your victory.
- Then tackle another shelf for 15 minutes the next day. Conquering an entire closet or room can be overwhelming, and you might put it off forever. If that's the case, just do it in baby steps.
- **Or set aside a couple hours to do it.** This may seem contradictory to the above tip ... and it is. It's simply a different strategy, and I say do whatever works for you. Sometimes, for me, it's good to set aside part of a morning, or an entire Saturday morning, to declutter a closet or room. I do it all at once, and when I'm done, it feels awesome.

- **Method.**
- Take everything out of a shelf or drawer at once. Whichever of the two above strategies you choose, you should focus on one drawer or shelf at a time, and empty it completely. Then clean that shelf or drawer.
- Then, take the pile and sort it (see next tip), and put back just what you want to keep. Then tackle the next shelf or drawer.
- Sort through your pile, one item at a time, and make quick decisions. Have a trash bag and a give-away box handy. When you pull everything out of a shelf or drawer, sort through the pile one at a time. Pick up an item, and make a decision: trash, give away, or keep. Don't put it back in the pile. Do this with the entire pile, and soon, you'll be done. If you keep sorting through the pile, and re-sorting, it'll take forever. Put back only what you want to keep, and arrange it nicely.

- **Motive**
- Let your motive be to help someone else. You may not need this item now and you may never need it again, but even if you did, if you aren't using it, someone else is being deprived of it. Give it away with a good heart.
- Be merciless. You may be a pack rat, but the truth is, you won't ever use most of the junk you've accumulated. If you haven't used it in the last year, get rid of it. It's as simple as that. If you've only used it once or twice in the last year, but know you won't use it in the next year, get rid of it. Toss it if it's unsalvageable, and give it away if someone else might be able to use it.

- **If you are on the fence** with a lot of things, create a "maybe" box. If you can't bear to toss something because you might need it later, put it in the box, then close the box, label it, and put it in storage (garage, attic, closet), out of sight. Most likely, you'll never open that box again. If that's the case, pull it out after six months or a year, and toss it or give it away.
- **Celebrate when you're done!** This is actually a general rule in life: always celebrate your accomplishments, no matter how small. Even if you just decluttered one drawer, that's great. Treat yourself to something delicious. Open that drawer (or closet, or whatever), and admire its simplicity. Breathe deeply and know that you have done a good thing. Bask in your peacefulness.