

## HOLISTIC DISCUSSION – AUGUST 31, 2021

### Own Less and Live More when you Declutter - Part One

#### **When do you know that you need to declutter? View your home as if you were a first time visitor**

1. You have not used something for a year or more.
2. If it's ripped, broken, irreparable, or out of date.
3. You have so many things you can't find what you are looking for.
4. Nothing has a place - A place for everything and everything in its place.
5. When you look at your home and get depressed.
6. When you won't invite your friends and relatives to your home.

#### **The benefits of decluttering – Your possessions are holding you down**

1. Keep your relatives, friends and caretakers in mind – they may have to dispose of all your “stuff.”
2. You will have less stress with less to organize, take care of and clean,
3. You will have more time to follow your passions, and spend time with friends and relatives.
4. You will have more energy and clarity of mind.
5. You will have less debt, save money and time.
6. You will have space for new things you really need.
7. You will have Freedom!

#### **The first step in solving any problem is to recognize there is a problem,**

#### **Why are we holding on to so many things?**

1. Loss – things that evoke memories of the past and people who are no longer in our life.
2. Self-esteem – things that make us feel important or loved.
3. Collections that have gotten out of control.
4. Inertia – it's a lot of work to declutter.
5. Lack of help – a lot of decluttering is more than a one person job.

#### **Books – there are many; here are just a few – PICK ONE OR TWO (remember you are decluttering)**

1. Decluttering for Dummies by Jane Stoller
2. The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning: How to Free Yourself and Your Family from a Lifetime of Clutter by Margareta Magnusson
3. Declutter Your Mind: How to Stop Worrying, Relieve Anxiety, and Eliminate Negative Thinking by Barrie Davenport and S.J. Scott
4. Minimalist: The Ultimate Guide to Organizing your Home, Decluttering your Mind, and Creating a Joyful Life (Live more with Less) by Lilly Nolan.

## HOLISTIC DISCUSSION – September 7, 2021

### Own Less and Live More when you Declutter - Part Two

1. Identify why you have accumulated more than you need: For example, giving away things gives you a feeling of loss; you are a “shopaholic”; having many things raises your self-esteem; you have large collections or hobbies that involve a lot of pieces; you have items of sentimental value. This is the psychological aspect of decluttering which needs to be addressed or you will continue cluttering.
2. Analyze the space(s) in your home. Make a checklist of areas, zones, drawers, cabinets, etc. This will help you decide if your need to declutter is doable or overwhelming. If it feels as though it will be overwhelming, get help. Help may come from a friend, relative or professional organizer.
3. Divide the decluttering into various piles: Items to keep (and put away in an appropriate place), to recycle, items to keep that need mending/fixing, items to trash, donations to charity, and items to distribute to friends and relatives.
4. Gather supplies that you may need: folders, acid free containers for photos, trash bags, boxes, shredder, scissors, packing tape, scotch tape, labels, rubber bands, paper clips, binder clips, markers, and pens.
5. Take a before photo of the area(s) that you are decluttering.
6. Decide how much time you will spend decluttering. Remember you did not accumulate all these things overnight. It will take time. It is recommended that you spend between 10 and 30 minutes at a time, then take a break. How much time you need may depend on whether you have an imposed deadline (such as having to move) or a self-imposed deadline (so you don't procrastinate).
7. Prioritize. Decide what is most important to you. Do you want to tackle the worst first or the easiest first? This is a personal choice but most have found tackling the worst first yields the greatest satisfaction because then everything is downhill from there.
8. Write down your plan of attack in checklist form. As you finish an item, mark it off. This will give you a great sense of accomplishment. Take after photos (a picture is worth a thousand words). Do not hesitate to ask for help, sometimes two heads and two arms are better than one.

#### Suggestions and ideas from our senior planet group:

1. Photos: Sort them by categories; on the back, using an appropriate pen, write the name(s) and date or other identifying information; put them in an acid free container; offer them to friends and relatives; create a book or album; store them in the “cloud”; or store them on a flash drive.
2. Sensitive documents: shred at home; take them to a shredder company; scan and put on a flash drive; keep in a safety deposit box; cover information with special stamp or marker. You should determine what items need to be kept forever or a certain period of time. Each jurisdiction has its own laws so check before shredding.
3. Furniture: donate to thrift shop; sell online or at a garage sale; give to organizations such as Habitat for Humanity; check with friends and relatives who might want it; put it curbside and mark “free”; list it on Craigslist or similar website; put in an assignment store; be wary of junk haulers as they often charge exorbitant prices.
4. Books and magazines: donate to a library, nursing home, hospital, school, religious organization; reading club; jail or prison. If they are torn or moldy trash them.

5. Clothing: don't keep anything you haven't worn in a year; don't keep clothing that doesn't fit; if you buy something new, get rid of two; put in an assignment store; donate to an organization that utilizes the clothes for workers, homeless, etc.; give to friends or relatives;

6.. Miscellaneous: have a give-away party; ask gift giver if they want it back; re-gift; don't buy any new items unless absolutely necessary; immediately toss junk mail; have a specific place for everything; join a minimalist support group. There is no one right way to do this. Be realistic. Every journey starts with one step. A goal is a dream with a plan and a deadline.

## DECLUTTERING THE KITCHEN

**Why it is good to declutter:** studies have shown that living in a cluttered environment leads to more anxiety which leads to overeating, snacking more (eating 2x the calories) – the more you have, the more you stress. The kitchen is the most use room in the house. What do you use your kitchen for besides meal prep?

**Before you start:** Think about who you are and how you live. Do you live alone, with others? Do you entertain frequently? Do you cook a lot or buy prepared food? How much space do you have – in kitchen, other parts of your home, remote storage. Is your living situation likely to change? You may want to take a few days or weeks to observe your actual use of the kitchen. A rainy day is a good time to get started! Or start when an appointment gets canceled.

**Preparation:** Get your containers ready for items to keep, trash, recycle, donate, sell, gift, move to another area, store or repair.

### **What should I keep?**

1. Have I used this more than once this month (year for specialty items)? Use your judgment, be honest with yourself.
2. Store away holiday and special occasion items.
3. Do I have room for this? Large items cluttering up the counter?
4. Keep only essentials – one of each; enough for daily use plus a couple of spares for breakage. Lots of duplicates, get rid of them. Why do I think I need it?
5. Do I have a friend or relative from whom I can borrow a seldom used item? Is this something I could rent, if necessary? Or could I use recyclable disposables?
6. Would I buy this again? E.g. bread machine

### **Method: Set a timer for 30 minutes or whatever time works for you**

1. Gather cleaning supplies. While you are at it, downsize your cleaning supplies. Be

sure to put anything hazardous aside and take it to a collection site.

2. Clean one area at a time.
3. Make piles of like items.
4. Remove extras and things that don't belong there or things that are going to be moved to storage, sold, etc.
5. Clean the empty area.
6. Return the items you are keeping in an organized manner. Make sure you can see each item and that they are in the appropriate, useful area. E.g. pot holders near the stove or oven. Visualize your cooking and cleaning. Keep items that are multipurpose.
7. Think practical, not pretty. Put heavy items on a bottom shelf. Put rarely used items high up. Buy storage containers that stack or nest.

### **Areas to consider**

1. Countertops – keep these as clear as possible. Keep only frequently used items such as a coffee maker, toaster, salt, pepper and oil set. This goes back to before you start. Think of ways to get things off such as wall rack for knives, pot rack,
2. Spice rack or cabinet. Get rid of the spices you don't use or those that are really old. When buying spices go to a store where they sell them in bulk so you can get just a small amount or just the amount you need.
3. Pantry – look at each item. Is it way beyond the suggested date? Do you eat this kind of food anymore? Can you reorganize it so it is more user friendly? Keep an inventory of what you have so you don't buy something you already have.
4. Refrigerator – empty completely. Toss – you know what to toss! Consider a Lazy Susan for more space. Get the magnets and post- its off the door for a cleaner look.
5. Cooking and baking utensils - keep the ones you really use, not the ones you may use someday. E.g. angel food pan, 15 gallon pot.
6. Tableware and cutlery – see before you start. Do you really need plates and cutlery for dinner for 12, How many do you need on a daily basis?

7. Paper products – can you substitute cloth napkins? Wipes that you can use more than once?

**Now that you have decluttered**

Congratulations – decluttering a kitchen is a big, time-consuming job. But it doesn't have to be. Schedule a declutter of each area (or at least check to see if it needs it) as often as you feel is necessary but at least once a month. If you stay on top of it, it is a simple chore. We schedule so many things, why not this as well.

## Do one thing to prevent clutter.

To fulfill your duty to the Decluttering Cure challenge, just choose *one* thing from this list... and do it. Leave the note, call the customer service number. Then put your feet up and revel in your clutter-stopping superpowers.

1. **Cancel a magazine subscription.** That title you haven't read in a while? Just cancel it, or subscribe to their website instead. Or just buy the one issue you always look forward to on the newsstand.
2. **Stop the influx of catalogs.** There's usually a 1-800 number on the back of every catalog; call and request they take you off the list.
3. **Get your address off physical junk mail lists.** There are services that will help you: Check out How to Eliminate Junk Mail (& Email) Once and For All.
4. **Sign up for online statements** from your banks, utility providers, and credit card companies.
5. **Set a recurring weekly reminder to digitize any papers you're keeping "just in case."**
6. **Put a trash can or paper shredder by the door where mail comes in.**
7. **Think twice before you print something out from your computer.** Could you store this digitally instead? Tape a reminder to your computer, or remove the paper from your printer tray to give you a reason to pause.
8. **Set up a permanent donation basket** near the front door and commit to making weekly or monthly trips to empty it.
9. **Implement a one-in, one-out rule for clothes or books or toys.**
10. **Talk your friends or family into a "no gift" pact for the holidays this year.** Or for next year's round of birthdays.
11. **Tattoo "Say no to free stuff" on the palm of your hand.** (Or leave yourself a reminder like that that's a little less permanent — like a phone background.)
12. **Block the word "sale" or "deal" on social media.** If you can't resist a deal, you can at least make them harder to find.
13. **Watch an episode (or several) of "Tidying Up with Marie Kondo".** You *will* be inspired to stop messes before they start.

## The Rules:

1. **Have I used this item in the past year?** This one's easy. Try to remember a time when you used the thing you're weighing on. If it hasn't been worn, used, or appreciated since last fall, let it go.
2. **Will I use it in the year ahead?** Try to resist any thoughts about how you "might" use it, and find something more concrete: *Will* you use it? If you don't have a real need or plan to do something with it, the answer is "no."
3. **Would I buy this again today?** Does it work? Does it fit? Do you have another thing that does the same job? Do you even *like it* anymore? Try to be present and mindful about your current tastes, habits, and priorities.
4. **Is it worth fixing, if it's broken?** Consider whether you would use the broken item if it were in good shape (see question number 3 above). And weigh the cost of fixing the thing against the cost of replacing it. And will you actually get it done? *Soon?*
5. **Would I keep this if I moved?** Would it be worth packing up, moving, and unpacking in a new space? We tend to be a little more ruthless and honest with ourselves about what stays and what goes when we're moving from one home to another.

# Decluttering Resources

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Cut and Paste:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/20/well/mind/how-to-declutter.html?smid=em-share>

<https://www.thesimplicityhabit.com/decluttering-and-self-care-the-benefits-of-letting-go/>

<https://www.becomingminimalist.com>

<https://www.realsimple.com>

[www.thesimplicityhabit.com](http://www.thesimplicityhabit.com)

<https://www.marthastewart.com>

<https://jamienovak.com>

<https://www.storagevault.com/best-declutter-book/>

[www.apartmenttherapy.com](http://www.apartmenttherapy.com)

[www.community.seniorplanet.org](http://www.community.seniorplanet.org)

Organizing from the Inside Out by Julie Morgenstern