

You Can't Put Everything Everywhere

By now you've probably read at least seven articles about Spring Cleaning and how removing clutter can really pay off in terms of feeling organized and saving time when looking for things. If you are a parent this organizing means creating a sense of order to lead your family along the path to school, activities and beyond, as well as for you personally. Parents also serve as examples of how to manage our busy lives.

Regardless of whether you are organizing for yourself or on behalf of others, it can be a challenge if we do not feel we are naturally, internally organized. But that's ok! In fact, the most mind wandering, disorganized of us can establish a few easy habits to cope with the demands of being organized and, as one who is firmly in this category, believe me, it pays off.

Write It

You are going to eliminate your clutter and organize the remainder one area at a time. Make a quick list of your work or staging areas such as the laundry room, mud room and kitchen, home office, library, any where clutter accumulates.

Reduce

One area at a time, take everything out of that space and create four piles – don't buy containers yet, because you don't know how many you will need. Use only boxes, bags, whatever you have on hand that will serve.

- 1) throw away or better yet, recycle if possible;
- 2) give away to charities, freecycle.org or craigslist.org;
- 3) pass to another member of the house for handling if appropriate;

4) send similar things off together into appropriate places, such as all medicines into the bathroom, coupons in a kitchen drawer, your calendar or correspondence into your home office or work area, etc. and this will leave you with a pile of things intended only for the space you are currently decluttering – all of which will require you to now ...

Buy Storage

Now you can arrange to purchase shelves or containers. Only buy enough for one decluttering area at a time. This way, you will learn as you go what you'll need going forward and it will keep the project from being overwhelming. If you are overwhelmed, you won't do anything. Try going to the thrift store to find storage items – you don't need to spend a lot of money. You do need to have a place to put things away easily. If you buy containers, try to keep to one color or match them. This will give a uniform organized appearance to your storage.

Put It Away

If possible, take away enough of what was stored so you don't need to remove one thing to get to something else. Put seasonal or infrequently-used items up high or move them somewhere else. Consider when you will next need them - can you give any of it away? Have a place to put things back in the same place every time.

This will become a habit shortly and is something you and others will not need to really think about after a while. If you keep it simple, it will be easier to explain to others and to maintain going forward. Just keep thinking about how you will be able to find things easily and see how beautiful your home really is!