

September 28: Clutter Free

Do you trip over boxes, toys, or piles of ‘stuff’ trying to walk through your home? Does it take a while to locate something you need for a project or everyday activity? Do family and friends think you are disorganized? Does the mail pile up or is it difficult to throw things away? Do you feel embarrassed or nervous if someone visits unexpectedly? If you answered yes to any of the above, it may be time to address your clutter. Clutter by definition is a disordered collection. A disordered collection that impedes movement and reduces effectiveness.

Clutter can be costly to your time, finances, safety, and mental/emotional health. It takes extra time to find things, longer to clean, and possibly even time to go to a store to replace an item you can no longer find. Paying for a duplicate item now affects your finances. Clutter can also be costly if it accumulates enough to need its own room in your house or off site storage unit. If your disorganization occurs with your mail or bills, you may be at risk of late fees, affecting your credit score, and your future borrowing ability. Physical and mental costs should also be addressed. Physically tripping and falling over clutter or using an inappropriate tool for a project because you can’t find the correct one can cause serious harm. Feelings of anxiousness, loss of control, and increased family conflict can also result from unnecessary clutter.

Create and action plan to declutter. Begin thinking about how you want a space to look. This could be in your home, office, or even an actual storage unit. Start with a small area first. If a large space needs the most attention, divide it into small chunks to tackle separately. Schedule a time to work in this space and write it down! If you block your schedule for two hours, set a timer for two hours, do your best to eliminate distractions and devote that time to cleaning up the space. You can use boxes or bags to separate items into keep, donate, recycle, or trash. You can even add a ‘decide later’ box but be careful not to begin saving all your clutter here. Lastly, don’t be afraid to make your own guidelines. Does this work properly? Did I miss it? Could I have found it if I needed it? When did I last use or wear this? Am I keeping this out of obligation?

Sometimes it’s easier for us to see someone else’s clutter before we recognize our own. Invite an outside family member or close friend to help you eliminate unnecessary items and make the decluttering process more fun!