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Consignment Shopping Pays Off

By Rachel Paxton

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by: **Rachel Paxton**

Is your closet full of clothes you never wear? You can bet there are a lot of people who have a closet or dressers full of clothes they never wear. I did too, until I started consignment shopping. A clothing consignment store sells your clothes for you and gives you 30 to 50 percent of the selling price. Pretty good deal, when no one is wearing the clothes that are just collecting dust in your closet.

The first thing I did was go through my closet and dressers and took out all of the clothes I never wore. (This was a hard thing to do considering I had no money and was terrified of not having any clothes to wear.) I took a couple of grocery bags full of clothes to a local consignment store and within a month or two had at least \$50 in my hands. I couldn't believe it! Now that I actually had the money in my hands, I didn't feel as badly about giving up my clothes. I spent some of the money on new clothes at the consignment store (for about 1/3 or less of regular retail prices), and went home to find out if I really had gone through all my clothes. As the seasons changed and I brought out other clothes that were stored away, I found other clothes I had I wouldn't ever wear. I still had some clothes I had worn in high school!

I always sold my daughter's outgrown clothes. The money I received for her clothes I usually spent on new (consigned) clothes for her. I also took in her outgrown toys and baby accessories. Some of the money I received I spent on her, and I spent a little on clothes for myself (my wardrobe was starting to fill up with clothes I actually wear!), and the rest was just extra cash! What a deal! None of my hard-earned money (I was a single mother at the time) was going for new clothes anymore! My daughter and I had all the clothes we needed and I had extra cash besides! Of course I had other problems to deal with in my life, but trying to find the money for clothes suddenly dropped off the list! I have found that many people won't ever bother with consigning clothes. Either they aren't willing to part with their clothes for any number of reasons, or they just don't want to take the time to take them to the consignment store. Many people will give their clothes away to other people or Goodwill before they will make the effort required to resell them. I have personally never understood that way of thinking, but you can benefit from those people.

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When friends and family saw that I was "trading" in used clothes for new clothes, they started giving me clothes to take in! A few, like my mother, started to take her own clothes in, but I found for the most part people would rather give their clothes to me, even when they didn't have extra money to buy new clothes. So I started taking in other people's clothes and profiting from their decisions to clean out their closets. Then I started shopping at garage sales. Many people practically give unwanted clothes away. You can find very good deals at garage sales, especially if you go right before they close up for the day. You can buy clothes there, either for yourself or your children, or you can buy them solely for the purpose of re-selling them. I only recommend doing this, however, after you have been taking your own clothes in for awhile and find out what types of clothes the consignment store will accept. The consignment store reserves the right to not accept clothing that do not meet their standards. The store I shop at will donate unwanted clothes to charity for you, if you wish, if they will not accept any of your clothing. You also have the option to take the unwanted clothing back. It has been my experience that they will take most clothes that are freshly washed, folded or hung neatly.

They will not accept clothing with unraveling seams or holes. They also will not accept any clothes with any obvious stains. Occasionally they will not accept outdated clothing. But in the 10 years that I have been shopping at consignment stores, the only items they didn't accept were a coat that was at least 20 years old and the color wasn't in style, and clothes that were out of season (you can't sell a winter jacket during the summer). Usually most of the clothes you take in will sell easily, depending on the size and location of the store. Most stores keep clothes on the rack for 3 months. If the clothes haven't sold in that length of time you can either take them back or they will donate them to charity.

Even though I'm married now, we still have a tight budget and can't afford to spend much on clothes. Even if I had the money I still don't think I would spend a lot of money on new clothes, after everything I have learned. It's just not worth it. You can do this just for the money, some people I know never buy at consignment stores, but they do sell things there occasionally, you can do it just for the clothes, which I did for a long time just out of sheer necessity and it didn't occur to me to try to make a profit, or you can enjoy the benefits of buying low-priced quality clothing and also make a small profit besides! Whatever you choose to do, the experience is well worth the effort. In these times of recycling and trying to conserve the Earth's resources, it only makes sense to "trade" clothing with other people instead of buying new clothing. Almost everyone has clothes they don't wear, for whatever reason, that other people would be thrilled to wear.

Rachel Paxton is a freelance writer and mom who publishes the Creative Homemaking Recipe of the Week Club, a weekly newsletter that contains quick, easy dinner ideas and money-saving household hints. To subscribe send a blank e-mail message to

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CASH IN YOUR CLOSET. How To Turn The Mistakes In Your Closet Into Money In Your Pocket

By Monica Ricci

CASH IN YOUR CLOSET

How To Turn The Mistakes In Your Closet Into Money In Your Pocket

Do you have hundreds of unclaimed dollars just hanging around in your closets taking up space? Last summer's polka-dot dress and that wool blazer you outgrew. The slacks you bought because they were on sale and the suit that never fit right to begin with.

Sound familiar? We all make shopping mistakes, but why live with them the rest of your life? How can you turn past year's bargains into cold hard cash right now? Consignment!

Consignment stores are popping up everywhere because people know that they can find great bargains on quality used clothing for themselves and their families. The flip side of buying consignment is selling on consignment, which is a great way to clear your closet clutter and make some money in the process.

How you can turn some of your shopping mistakes or clothes you no longer love into money? Follow these simple steps.

Pull each item from your closet one at a time, and separate into one of four piles:

Pile 1: You love it and wear it faithfully, and you like how it looks on you.

Pile 2: You hate it and never wear it, in fact you wonder what you were thinking when you bought it, it doesn't fit, or you bought it because it was "a bargain".

Pile 3: You like it and you wear it fairly often, OR it's a key player in a few outfits.

Pile 4: You just can't decide which pile it goes into.

Here are five easy steps to complete the job:

Step One: Once the closet is empty, put everything in the Love It pile back into the closet.

Step Two: Put everything in the Fairly Often pile back into the closet. You should be left with two piles of clothing — the Hate It pile and the Undecided pile.)This is where it gets fun!)

Step Three: Fold everything in the Hate It pile neatly and wish it well, for it will be going on a journey.

Step Four: Go through the Undecided pile piece by piece, and ask yourself truly what value each piece CURRENTLY gives you.

Warning: Do not get sucked in by the clothing trying to convince you of its value, and reminding you how good you used to look wearing it. Clothing is sly and it will say anything to get you to keep it

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around. It will remind you of how expensive it was, or that it was a gift from your mother-in-law, but do not fall for these sneaky tricks! You must be strong and objective.

Clothes that aren't serving you need to be culled to make room for those pieces that are valuable. The fact that you are undecided on this pile indicates that you don't love it, which means you should be able to get rid of more than half of it if you're ruthless in the decision-making process. Once you've culled the pile, you should have a whole bunch of clothes that didn't make the cut back into the closet. This is where your secret cash stash is hiding.

Step Five: Call a local consignment store and ask what their guidelines are for consigning clothing. Find out if you must make an appointment to consign or if you can just drop by at your convenience. Ask how the proceeds are split between you (the consignor) and the store, and don't take less than 50%. Ask what happens to your clothes if they don't sell, and do not do business with a store that gives you clothing back if it doesn't sell. Most consignment stores will donate anything that doesn't sell within a certain period of time to a shelter or another non-profit organization.

Step Six: Load up your car and haul the clothes to the consignment store of your choice. When you get back home, relish the new look of your closet!

By following these six easy steps, you'll soon be collecting the cash that was hiding in plain view in your closet.

Monica Ricci has been an organizing specialist since 1999, and her motivational presentations teach effective organizing and simplifying techniques for home and work. She also offers free email tips and ideas on how to make life simpler and more organized. Her topics include clutter control, paper management, time management, organizing space and procrastination. Contact Monica at 770-569-2642 or Monica@CatalystOrganizing.com.

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