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**Lightening the Load: Time to Stop Living With the Past**

**By Janet L. Hall and Paula Langguth Ryan**

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**Ryan**

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Someone recently wrote to share how her husband and his siblings banded together to \*clean out\* her father-in-law's home, which she likened to an indoor junkyard. After they had filled the dumpster, her sister-in-law pointed at the contents and said to her father, \*This is what you were loving while we were growing up. These were the children you were spending time with and we grew up with them and hated them and were jealous of them.\*

He never knew they felt this way. And he certainly wouldn't have chosen to lighten his load this way. Yet it's sometimes a hard fact that the treasures and \*stuff\* we accumulate during our lifetime have a profound impact on our families, on ourselves and on our ability to have a prosperous life.

Luckily, there are a few simple steps you can take to free yourself from the clutter of the past and mend fences in your family.

## Lightening the Load: Time to Stop Living With the Past

Start by asking yourself a few simple questions about the things you are hanging on to:

~~ Why are you afraid to get rid of these things?

~~ What do they represent to you?

~~ How long are you going to carry this stuff around with you?

~~ How have your treasures and \*stuff\* affected your family?

~~ Are you hanging on to some stuff \*just in case?\*

~~ Who said you have to hang on to these things?

Take action now to lighten your load before someone else decides to lighten it for you. Here are seven tips to get you started.

1: Invite your children and grandchildren over to come get the things that were theirs during their childhood. Donate, auction off or simply throw away anything that's left. Brenda, a client in her sixties, was holding on to her daughter's childhood dolls, thinking she would one day want them. When Brenda asked, she discovered her daughter didn't want them after all. She was free to sell them, which brought her some extra income and freed up valuable space.

2: Make a list of the treasures you're ready to part with now. Then write down the names of friends and family members who have admired these items. Write down or record a story for each item, then throw a dinner party for these friends and family members. Share the stories with them as you pass along the gifts. Or give them as holiday or birthday presents.

3: Tap into the flow of giving and receiving by passing along treasures you want people to inherit, so you can see the joy in giving and in receiving while you're still around. Be

sure to write down and relate a story about the item.

4: Weigh an item's cost to you in terms of stress and upkeep. If you have a number of valuables — such as collectibles, antiques, linens or pictures — the expense of insurance, the worry of possible theft and the time spent on cleaning can be overwhelming. One 77-year old woman, Mary, has so much Depression-era glass on display in her house it takes her three days a week to dust them all. What's your joy-to-stuff ratio on these items in your home? Passing along or selling these items now will cut down on your stress level and save you money on insurance premiums.

5: Avoid any fighting and bickering over who gets what items. Write a letter like the one Janet's mother-in-law wrote, that simply states: \*I hope we raised you well enough not to argue over possessions. Your family and dedication are more important than things. So I'm sure you won't argue over who gets what.\* As you tell your tales, explain why you selected a certain person to receive a certain item. This will go a long way toward alleviating any ill feelings. Remind them that it's the memory that matters, not the item itself. Encourage anyone who isn't the keeper of the item — but cherishes the item as well — to get a copy of the story about the item. They can always read the story, and visit the item.

6: Eliminate items that truly don't have value any more. How many button boxes or jars of nails do you really need? Most of what you're saving isn't probably usable anymore anyway. Partially opened tubes of caulk, cans of paint or stain, tape, old twine, old spools of thread and elastic all go bad over the years. Throw out anything that is cluttering up your home and drawing your attention away

from your family.

7: Unburden yourself from things that are tying you to the past. Is your basement or attic still packed with things from yesteryear? One man's basement had a six-foot mirror that had been shipped over from Europe, and was still in its shipping crate - nearly fifty years later! Do you have a \*shrine\* to a late mate or beloved child? Keep one or two \*memory items\* and release the rest. Otherwise, you'll always be indebted to the past instead of free to face the future.

Above all else, don't make excuses, don't assess blame and don't postpone the need to lighten your load. Too many seniors today are faced with a limited income and worries about how they will make ends meet. Your clutter is acting as a stopper to your

prosperity. You can generate much needed income and free up space for even more money to come to you simply by releasing some of your treasures. You'll spend less time cleaning and dusting, and have more free time to do all the things you want to do.

Travel, take up a new hobby, volunteer, play with your grandchildren, create a playroom for yourself or your grandchildren. After all, what do you want to be remembered for - your possessions or your joy for life?

Professional Organizer Janet L. Hall and Contemporary Prosperity Advisor Paula Langguth Ryan are the originators of the Enough Is Enough! seminar series. Their unique 3-hour adventures in money, clutter and time management are designed exclusively to help you tap your true potential and achieve better balance in your life. For more information about upcoming local seminars, and their services and products, visit <http://www.overhall.com>

## **6 Signals You're Living in the Present**

**By Louise Morganti Kaelin**

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There is much written in the personal growth literature (heck, just in my own newsletter, 'The 3–Minute Coach!') about living in the moment. Keeping your eyes squarely on this moment may be one of the most positive things you can do for yourself. There are scores of articles on why to live in the moment, but I thought it would be helpful for you to recognize the 6 Signals that you're doing it successfully!

1. You feel fully present and alive. It's an 'all systems go' kind of feeling. You seem to know exactly what's going on in every cell of your body. Your senses are sharp and alert to everything going on around you.
2. There is a complete absence of fear or guilt. When you feel guilt, you are focused on the past; when you feel fear, you are focused on the future. This moment, the one right here, you can handle this one.
3. What you do feel is a sense of calm and focus. Even with 'all systems go' as described above, you feel connected to your wisdom.
4. You can see the trees, but feel connected to the forest. There is a big difference between living 'for' the moment and living 'in' the moment. Living 'in' the moment implies there is a plan for the future. You know the direction in which you go and how what you're doing now (the trees) brings you towards that future (the forest).
5. You are conscious of each choice you make as you go through your day, and recognize that life is created through these 'little' choices, or non–choices, for that matter. You experience joy with each choice you make.
6. There are no awkward relationships. When you are fully present in the moment, the past slips off your shoulders. This is true even if you have not yet completely healed the past. When you are fully present in this moment, you allow the other person to be fully present in the moment, and you see them as they are now, not as they used to be. (This can often be the beginning of healing the past).

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Allow yourself to be on the lookout for these signals, and congratulate yourself every time you notice yourself living in the moment!

(c) Louise Morganti Kaelin. Louise is a Life Success Coach who partners with individuals who are **READY** (to live their best life), **WILLING** (to explore all options) and **ABLE** (to accept total support). Find many free resources to assist you in living the life of your dreams at <http://www.touchpointcoaching.com> For her free newsletter of insightful, practical suggestions for creating your best life, email [mailto:on-536@ezezine.com](mailto:mailto:on-536@ezezine.com)



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