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What Clutter Clearing Can Do For You

By Stephanie Robertss

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You can get a pretty good idea of the benefits of clutter clearing simply by imagining your life free of all the negative effects of clutter: lack of focus and clarity; feelings of being professionally, creatively, spiritually, and/or romantically stuck; insufficient time and attention for self and family; increased stress, irritability and depression. Wouldn't it be great to be free of all these?

No matter what other factors may be dragging you down, I guarantee you that clearing your clutter will dramatically improve your mood and energy. And then any other problems you are confronting won't seem quite so bad.

When you first start clutter clearing you may be surprised at the emotions triggered by the simple act of dealing with your stuff. You think you're just cleaning out your home, but what you're really doing is rooting around in dusty corners of your psyche and coming eyeball-to-eyeball with unresolved business from the past. The personal relics that lurk within your clutter – college papers, family memorabilia, detritus from a long-dead marriage – can be easier to ignore than to carry to the dump, which is why they've been haunting the back of your closet for so many years.

As you persevere with clutter clearing a moment will come when you realize how much lighter and happier you feel. In the process of coping with your clutter, you've reconnected with your inner self, with dreams and wishes long ignored. Those you've outgrown can be released with a fond smile. Those that make your heart leap with recognition and longing... well, now you have the space, time, and energy to pursue them.

Clutter clearing gets you out of your rut. It shakes loose frozen aspects of your soul and allows them to journey into your heart where they belong and where you can listen to and act upon them.

Eventually, you will find yourself turning to clutter clearing instead of aspirin or caffeine when you notice that you're not as clear-headed, focused or insightful as you'd like to be. If you're feeling

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lethargic and don't want to exercise, you'll know to examine whether you've allowed a zone of stagnation to creep in around the couch (where you are most likely to be having lazy thoughts in the first place). If you can't seem to decide on priorities for your business, you'll realize it's time to clear off the desk and catch up on paperwork. And if you're not eating as well as you should, you'll remember that clearing off the kitchen counter and cleaning out the fridge will help get your eating habits back on track.

What this all boils down to is that managing your clutter helps you feel like less of a victim and puts you back in control of your moods and your life. You have greater confidence in your abilities and decisions, so you feel more hopeful and optimistic about the future. You respect yourself more, and will probably find that other people treat you better as well. You feel less stressed, and have more courage to try and do new things. You stop turning to material objects to make you happy, because you are content with less.

Clearing out your clutter creates space for possibility. You may find yourself deciding to go back to school, change your career, start your own business, go out on a date, take up painting or singing or ballroom dancing, try out for a part in a play, or... what's your dream? (No wonder clutter clearing can be a little scary! Suddenly there are no more excuses for why you can't pursue that dream.)

Your friends will say you look terrific. They'll wonder where that sparkle in your eye came from, and how you manage to look both energized and serene at the same time. It's because you have released from your life everything that is no longer useful to you. You have let go of the past and are no longer hoarding for the future. You have made space for living freely in the present, where peace resides.

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[excerpted from "Clutter-Free Forever!", Lotus Pond Press, 2003]

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Letting Go of Clutter In Your Office

By Angie Dixon

Some people would say I'm the last person in the world to be writing about clearing out clutter; I seem to accumulate so much of it. But I also get rid of it, when it reaches the point of bothering me.

That's the first thing about clearing out clutter. Everyone has a threshold at which the clutter starts to

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bother them. My husband's threshold is much lower than mine, and when he starts clearing out, I jump in and help him. But in my office, things go to my threshold and no further—usually. Recognizing your threshold and working within it is the first key to letting go of clutter. If it's really not bothering you, and you can find everything you need, it's not essential to tackle it right away.

The second key to letting go of clutter is to bring the recycle bin (for paper without staples) and the large kitchen trash can (for everything else) into your office and put them beside the desk, which is clutter central in most offices. Get a box of manila file folders, a box of hanging file folders, and a plastic file box, the kind with a handle that you can get for about ten bucks at a big office supply store. And a pen.

Pick up every piece of paper off your desk, one sheet or sheaf at a time. Start with paper because there's usually more of it than anything else. Don't touch anything twice. When you pick it up either put it in the recycle bin (remove staples first), put it in the trash if it can't go in the recycle, or put it in a folder, label the folder, and put the folder, inside a hanging folder, in the plastic file box. Don't worry about organizing the files. Just get everything out of site and off your desk. Get two or three boxes if you need them. They stack nicely out of the way against the wall.

Once the paper is off your desk, you should be able to see the surface, which will probably be littered with books, pens, soda cans, memo pads, and CDs, if it looks anything like my desk. Take one category at a time, like CDs, and put all of them away. Then books, and so on.

The rest of your office may be cluttered in the same way as your desk, with stacks of papers and books scattered around. Use the same method. Start with the paper, don't touch anything twice, and declutter by category—CDs, books, etc. after the paper.

De-cluttering doesn't have to mean deep-cleaning, though you may get motivated and do that. Really it just means getting the clutter out of the way so you can work. Letting go of it is as simple as realizing you don't need it where it is right this minute, and putting it somewhere else—even if that somewhere else is the recycle bin.

A good rule of thumb is, if you can get that piece of paper again, especially by printing it off your computer, you don't need to keep it. Now, you might, if it's important. But just use this as a rule of thumb.

Happy clearing!

Angie Dixon helps small business owners get their acts together. She is a personal development coach specializing in helping people integrate their home and work lives so they feel less stretched and more balanced. Get her FREE EBOOK on balance at

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to discover how coaching can change your life, contact Angie at

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