



PATTY McPHERSON, PROF. ORGANIZER / HOME STAGER

Orderly Manor

www.orderlymanor.com

774.269.6519

Here's this month's edition with organizing and redesign ideas.

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Sell or Donate After Decluttering??

The spring and summer are popular seasons for yard sales. It gets me a tad worried about people purchasing more clutter to add to their homes. However, for the yard sale host, selling the unwanted items is a great way to declutter. Many times clients have identified what they don't want to keep or throw, but would like to try selling or donating the rest. What are some options?

Garage/Yard Sale The pros are the potential to make some cash while getting rid of items and that you can do it at your house. Cons include: no guarantee of selling anything; your time sitting outside with your stuff on a weekend; costs of promoting the sale; whatever



doesn't sell, you still have. Often people wait until they have enough to make it worthwhile, so in the meantime, a pile builds up. And what about wintertime? Sometimes yard sales are worth it, sometimes not.

eBay With eBay and the like, you can make money from the comfort of your home. All you need is a computer, online access, and a digital camera. Unfortunately, you need to consider that there's no guarantee you'll sell anything. Other cons are your time to take digital photos, write listings, and monitor list-



ing; cost of listing plus final value to eBay for whatever sells; if items don't sell, you still have to deal with them. The things that seem to sell best on eBay are brand names and unique/antique or collectible items.

Freecycle The pros of Freecycling is that you get rid of items by gifting to someone else. You don't have to go anywhere; just list online through Freecycle.org and if someone wants, they'll pick up. There's no guarantee that someone will want your items, and sometimes Freecycleers don't show to pick up the items. Furthermore, not all towns have a Freecycle group. But it feels good to recycle/reuse with people in the community.

Local Charities I'm a big fan of this option because: your stuff goes to a charity; you feel good about donating; you receive a tax deduction receipt; your item(s) leave your house. Depending on the organization, you may have to bring the items to the charity, not all charities accept all kinds of things or all the time, and for whatever they don't accept, you still have.



Give to Friend/Family/Other The pros of giving to someone you know is that you get rid of usable items to people that you know who receive the benefit of your donation. However, it might be hard to find someone who wants your stuff; or it may be time-consuming to coordinate the donation. Often clients plan to give things away but never get around to it, so stuff sits around at their house.

Consider the pros & cons before you start decluttering, and limit the number of outlets for your

stuff. Don't have too many categories -- "I'll sell this, donate that, give that to Aunt Jane, save those for my neighbor Sue, and do a yard sale for the rest". It's unrealistic and slows down your process for reducing clutter. The key is to *do something!*

Be Realistic in the Kitchen

Despite its small size, the kitchen is a place where lots of stuff hides. Is it because of all the cabinet doors? The upper and lower levels of storage? When you really sort through your kitchen inventory, I bet a lot could get purged.

- How many of you are at home? Do you really need all of those [insert items]? I once had a client who lived by herself but had 2 refrigerators and a full-size freezer all in the dining room. (I wish I had that storage and I have a family of 4!) How about 4 mugs instead of 10?



- Maybe you used to entertain or have large dinner parties, but do you still? Do you need to have all the specialized partyware in the kitchen or even at all? Keep your *current* lifestyle in mind, not what you used to do or might do in the future.

- What percentage of your cabinet space is dedicated to food-stuffs and how much holds cookware or servingware? Often clients have a lot more space for that which *holds* food, rather than the food itself. Things you use less often do not need to be within arms' reach taking up valuable storage space.

Another reason the kitchen stays cluttered stems from the need to be prepared. Whereas you might think you're being organized by having extra items, sometimes there's too much of a good thing. You have to deal with the storage of the regularly used items plus the extras you're keeping. Here are some thoughts on the rationale I sometimes hear:

"I need all of them because

sometimes when we have parties or people over, we need that many". Use an annex or pantry to store extra food-stuffs, servingware and utensils as well as special or one-occasion kitchen items. That way, when you need them, you have them. Things you don't use often should be taking up valuable real estate in the kitchen.



"This item is for (insert special task) and that one is for (insert another task). I cannot possibly toss them or use that one for something else". Back in the olden days, when there were fewer options, people survived. Just remember, the more stuff you have, the more you have to store, clean, move, and manage. Consider whether you're creating rules and procedures that really don't need to be in place.

"We use all of those." It is highly unlikely that all the kitchenware we own is used on a regular basis. Normally we use then wash things, and then likely grab the same item the next time it's needed. One trick is to take the contents of a drawer out and put them into a box on the counter. During the week when you need an item, pull it out from the box. When you're done with it, the item goes back to its original drawer. At week's end you'll know what you use regularly, and whatever's still in the box is *not* one of those!

