

ORGANIZATION MATTERS



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WELCOME!



Hello
Every-
one!

Organizing is a continuous process. As life changes, you have to change your routines, systems and the look of your home. Remember, you're not too busy to get organized — you're too busy NOT to get organized! Good luck and enjoy!

Feel free to email me any thoughts at patty@orderlymanor.com.

Dealing with Kids' Artwork and School Papers

Sort through the papers and artwork using a 2-pronged decision-making method: either *keep* or *toss*. Although it might be hard for you to toss things, imagine the amount of things you'll have to deal with for each year of school (preschool through 12th grade) *times* the number of children you have! Pick representative pieces to keep — i.e. one math, one language arts, one artwork (be sure to add the date). Once you gather the *keep* items, sort through again where the 2 options are *keep for you* or *share with others*. In other words, the items are special enough to save but some can be given to other family members or friends.



- For the papers and artwork

you keep: You can put them in a "holding tank" container (i.e. under-the-bed clear one), one per child. At the end of a school year, go through the container again to decide if you *really* want it long-term. Use photo albums and scrapbooks to save special items for posterity. Put up a clothesline and clip artwork on it. A bulletin board is good as long as the items pinned there are rotated regularly so it doesn't become useless. Once the board's full, no more art.

- For the things you want to keep but are too bulky, large or awkward to save: Use the computer to scan artwork or take digital photos of artwork or 3-dimensional projects. Put printouts and photos in scrapbooks or albums. That way, the artwork can be tossed but you still have a record of them. (p.s. this also works well when you or your child doesn't want to part with a set of toys or a collection — take a photo of the owner with his/her special things, then donate/toss the items).



- For the things to share with others: You can turn your children's artwork into cards, wrapping paper or decoupage them onto surfaces. If you mount several seasonal pictures to a large piece of cardstock, you can laminate it to create placemats with easy cleanup and durability. Purchase inexpensive calendars and glue your child's artwork to the generic picture. It makes a great gift for relatives and uses up 12 pictures quickly and creatively!

Obstacles to Organized Spaces: Fantasy & Sentimentality

Why do we hold on to some things? Julie Morgenstern, in her book *Organizing From the Inside Out*, discussed the pitfalls of "fantasy" and "sentimentality" as it relates to kitchen gadgets and stuff, but they can be applied to all things in your house.

Fantasy is all the scrapbooking, gourmet cooking, craft projects, home decor projects et al you say you're going to do 'some day' when you get to it. It is the contents of shelves and bins that represent 'stuff we are planning to do but haven't yet'. We imagine the activities or plans for the items, but it is all in the indeterminate future. It is not that your idea is not a great concept; there is just no value in something taking up space or time that is not being utilized.

The solution for fantasy cluttering? Ask yourself how long you have held on to it. If you haven't gotten to it by now, is it possible that it is not truly a priority? Morgenstern says: "Face it, if you haven't found the time yet, that's because you prefer investing it in other quality-of-life interests that are more important to you". Could it be that your life-style has changed and that activity or item is no longer a part of it? Be realistic. Fantasy clutter takes up space that could be clean or empty or hold day-to-day items. If you are holding on to supplies for these 'some day' projects and tasks, toss or donate them to someone who will make time to do them. This process can actually be quite liberating because there's no more guilt or pressure when you see the items.



Holding on to sentimental items is a touchy subject, I know.

Clients are hard-pressed to let go of items of special memory, and I don't just want to throw them away. What I want, and urge people to do, is to display things that are special, not keep them up in the attic in a dusty box. According to Morgenstern, "We all inherit flatware, dishes, silverware, and stemware that, for emotional reasons, we want to hang on to even though we never use it." If you love it, show it or use it. And remember, just because you don't have the item anymore, it doesn't mean you won't have the memory of the person anymore -- physical objects only *re-mind* us; they are not a replacement for someone who you've lost.



Sentimental clutterers enjoy mementos and keepsakes such as children's clothing, greeting cards, postcards, etc. The problem is there's so much to remember that items get lost, buried, or never looked at again. It is important to manage your mementos so they don't keep cluttering up small spaces. Otherwise, you run the risk of becoming, according to the book *Let Go of Clutter*, a "memorabilia": someone who accumulates vast amounts of personal memorabilia — the things we keep that evoke personal memories, pleasant feelings, bittersweet emotions, or a sense of historical connectedness. Usually it has value *just to us*.

Consider photographing surplus sentimental clutter before letting it go. Reduce the mass of mementos to a more reasonable amount; why not keep 1 piece instead of the whole set? Sort it out, choose the best, keep the memories and dump the rest!



