

Making Clutter Work for You

We all have clutter and stuff. Some of us are just more organized at how we store it. I think you would be surprised at how many people have spotless counters but drawers and boxes jammed full of stuff.

Although I focus on helping you turn your clutter into cash, clutter also has other hidden costs. Clutter has an unconscious cost.. It can drain you of your energy both mentally and physically. I know that my eyes and mind are always racing and telling me “I can make that dish. That project looks simple, I am sure I can make that. Once that room is painted this item will look great on the shelf.” On and on it goes. So we purchase the object, magazine or project and our great intentions pile up.

As projects, magazines, books, newspapers, etc. pile up our self-esteem and confidence in our ability to make our dreams come true deteriorates. Not because we are not talented enough to do all these things but because these piles are screaming out for our attention and energy. Every time we look at the piles we feel we don't measure up because we have these uncompleted items staring us in the face. Part of what holds us back is the fact that we have spent a lot of money on these items and we feel guilty about getting rid of them.

Start to lift the emotional weight off your shoulders. It can be difficult to get organized but you owe it to yourself to free up your health and work toward your dreams. I found it helpful to take only a half hour each day to work on my clutter. It doesn't sound like a lot of time but to be honest it is too painful and self defeating for me to work at it much longer at any one time.

If you aren't concerned about the money you spent on the items and won't feel guilty about it, give your clutter away to Goodwill, the Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity and other charities who can use it. If they are items of clothing, ask a true friend to help you go through your closet. A true friend will even tell you which clothes to throw out.

If the money you spent on the items is making you feel guilty here are some tips for putting some cash in your pocket and some room and energy back into your life:

1. Hold a garage sale. Ask your neighbors if they want to have one on the same day. We live off a main street so my pre-teen made a very colorful sign and put it at the end of the street. We had a lot of traffic and saved on the cost of advertising.
2. Take your items to consignment stores. For higher quality items such as furnishings and clothing, you will usually be able to sell them at a higher price here than at a garage sale. I have found garage sales really aren't the best place for clothing. The store does all the work and takes a commission for their assistance in moving your items. I have known commissions to be as high as sixty per cent. Remember to check out a few places and be sure you clearly understand the terms and conditions of the sale. One of things you will want to

- inquire about is the length of time an item remains on the regular sales rack prior to being moved to the clearance section of the store.
3. Do you have mismatched earrings, broken bracelets, wedding rings from a previous marriage which you will never wear? Consider looking into selling your gold to a reputable jewelry who will give you cash for these items based on weight and purity.
 4. Pawn shops also give you cash up front and the opportunity to get your items back if you have a change of heart.
 5. Used stores allow you to get your money up front instead of waiting for the consignment store to actually sell your items. This works well with books, CDs and sports equipment. If you have children who skate and play hockey or football, places such as Play It Again Sports stores are a great place to take in the old and pick up the new gently used equipment for this season.
 6. Auctions are also another venue through which you can move your items. If you think your item is of value, have it appraised. Again, be very clear on the terms and conditions of the agreement. Find out if you can set a reserved price on your items.
 7. Classified ads in local newspapers, professional organizations, churches and community group newsletters work as well. Find out if there is a word limit, whether a picture maybe included and if the paper also has an online version.
 8. Online ads and stores such as Kijiji, Craigslist and eBay help you reach a wider audience. When considering this medium leave room for shipping costs as well as the time it will take you to prepare the goods and materials to be sent. Make sure your item is priced correctly and not costing you to sell it in the end. Depending on the category you wish to be in, you can have some fierce competition. Monitoring your category for a few days or weeks to see how things are moving will give you a better indication of what is required in order to be successful on these sites.

To protect yourself and to screen potential buyers, I would suggest you setup an online free email account through Gmail, Hotmail or Yahoo. You can set one up for each item or category and use it exclusively for the purpose of selling your items. This keeps your personal email private, free from spam and focused on your important daily messages.

How you sell and organize your clutter is as individual as your own DNA. Only you know how much time you can devote to freeing up your space and energy and putting cash in your pocket.