

Greetings,

Through my experience and listening to other folks with this same passion, I've compiled a list of basic guidelines. Some seem universal. Enjoy the process. If I can be of any help, feel free to reach out.

info@JPDesignArt.com I do not address living with children in your home, that is a whole other field and full of other tips.

*Jeanne Petrosky*

### **Do you use things or do things use you?**

Are you using all that you have or are items using you? Have you store them, maintain them and even frustrate you? This whole process is not about just getting rid of things, it's about living with the things that bring you value. Living in a way that you can really appreciate the things you have. Living in a way where your time is spent on things that matter to you.

I think there are two forms of clutter: Physical and Mental.

First the Physical:

### **BENEFITS OF DECLUTTERING & ORGANIZING**

- You KNOW what you have
- You USE what you have
- You can FIND what you have
- You can CLEAN MORE EASILY
- You have LESS MAINTENANCE
- You can FOCUS better
- You have MORE TIME because you are not looking for things
- You have BETTER HEALTH because you are less stressed, frustrated and generally irritated.
- You have MENTAL PEACE

### **TERMS**

"Get rid of" & "Let it go" If the items is truly trash, then so be it, but otherwise find a different home, they will be grateful, and you will feel great. It doesn't get much better than that. Giving it to your local donation center. Check out homeless shelters, transitional housing places.

### **BASIC TIPS FOR DECLUTTERING**

- **WHY?**

None of this will stick if you are not clear on YOUR Why, not should. The urgent why would be moving, but if that isn't the case, then how about:

"I'm tired of hearing myself keep saying...One day I'll do that. I want to put my words into action."

"I can't find things and it is sooooo frustrating. I want to live more focused."

"I'm tripping over stuff and want I want to live with more freedom."

"I don't want to leave this mess to my kids. I want to be kinder to them."

"I seem to be more calm when things are in order, and I want my environment to be more calm, so I can be more calm."

- **SET A TIMER** You may not even want to start the project because it is overwhelming. Set the timer for 15 min, start , then stop when the timer goes off. If you want to do a bit more, go for it. It is \*  
\*IMPORTANT : Follow the "Piles" guideline, shown in the next point, so you can easily put them aside when your time is over. It makes the decluttering less messy and overwhelming.
- **\*PILES** Have a Bag or Box for:
  1. TRASH (use a BLACK bag)
  2. DONATE or GIVE AWAY (use a CLEAR bag)
  3. SELL ( if possible use a WHITE bag)  
The color coded system makes it easier to make sure you are hitting the right pile.  
If using boxes, label them. It may get frantic when you start getting into the process. Things can go flying!
  4. KEEP
  5. NOT SURE - Put the current date on it. If after your designated time period you haven't missed it or have someone ask about it, then it's time to let it go.
- **TAKE IT TO WHERE IT GOES** You're cleaning out a clothes closet, and you come across something that belongs in the garage, scan the closet to see if there is anything else that can go to the garage and then TAKE IT THERE. When I say scan, I mean scan. Don't go digging through the rest of the closet. [This may be counter intuitive but is hugely helpful! When your timer goes off, you want to be able to put your boxes and bags aside and not have even more piles to deal with.](#)
- **GATHER ITEMS THAT ARE ALIKE** that way you can easily see what you have and get rid of the excess.
- **90/90** This comes from ["The Minimalists"](#). If you haven't used it in the past 90 days and don't plan on using it in the next 90 days, it's time to let it go. This period of time covers seasonal clothing. Of course this is a guideline and make your own time frame.
- **COUNT or CONTAINER**

COUNT refers to the amount of items you have. This works well with towels, dishes, and clothing.  
Let go of the excess.

CONTAINER - this could be a drawer or an actual separate container. Whatever fits in it, that is all you keep. If you put more things in there and they don't fit, you have to get rid of something else. Not suggesting you go out and buy lots of containers so you can fit all your stuff.  
This is AFTER you have gotten rid of the excess.
- **SENTIMENTAL FURNITURE** These are tough since there are so many memories and feeling attached. But let's face it...how much furniture can you fit in a room? Take a photo of the piece and then let it go.
- **SENTIMENTAL LETTERS** Another really tough area. Try the CONTAINER approach. Whatever fits in the container, keep. If you have to let it go, try holding the letter or card to your heart, thank them, send them a blessing and let it go.

- **PAPERWORK** Ughhhhhhh!  
 Mail - touch it once. Containers are key. Recycle, Bills, Read. Remember, there is always new more mail coming. Careful of magazines stacking up. If you aren't making time to read them, it may be the right time to unsubscribe.  
 Manuals - You can find most manuals on line. Download them and get rid of the paper.  
 All other paperwork  
 IF YOU WANT TO KEEP THE PAPER make sure your file folders are well labeled and in some logical order. If possible, go through them once a year and get rid of outdated items.  
 GO DIGITAL Have a scanning party and file them on our computer or cloud.
- **30 DAY GAME** As seen on "The Minimalists". Find a friend , family member, or coworker who's willing to minimize their stuff with you next month. Each person gets rid of one thing on the first day of the month. Two things on the second. Three things on the third. So forth and so on. By the time you are finished, you've gotten rid of about 500 items! What a great start!
- **HIDDEN CLUTTER** Emails & Newsletters. If you aren't finding value in them anymore, time to unsubscribe. Watch the time you take looking at social media.
- **STUCK?** Take a photograph of your area. You'll be able to see it without the emotion and proceed accordingly.
- **ALWAYS PUT IN SAME PLACE** This is very helpful for keys and anything you use daily. The time you save from hunting and getting anxious is invaluable.

## MAINTENANCE

- **A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING and everything in it's place.** Once you have whittled down your possessions, make sure you have this rule, not guideline, in place. IF YOU LIVE WITH OTHER FOLKS, put labels on areas where possible. It helps with the clarity.
- **IN & OUT** When you bring something else in, you need to get rid of something. Some organizers say if you bring in one item, you need to get rid of 5 items. Extreme? Maybe, but it makes you stop and think.
- **FINISH** When you find something out of place or you are finished a project, put the things away. Don't just make a pile of things that need to go upstairs, to the basement, wherever. Take the few moments and take it to where it needs to go. Be kind to yourself and others that will be using that item.

## MENTAL CLUTTER

Just as physical clutter can create mental peace, check in with yourself if you are storing excess mental things: grievances, regrets, unforgiveness. This is just a short list of things that clutter your mind, prevent you from deep breathing and living a calmer life.