

(5)Part 1: Laying the Foundation

(14) What's Holding You Back?

(15)Causes of Clutter:Three Levels

(16)Level 1:Technical Errors

Mechanical mistakes in the organizing system that can be easily fixed. Equivalent to tightening a screw

(18)Level 2:External Realities

Environmental factors that place limits on your ability to organize... recognizing them can be helpful in creating realistic expectations of your organization system

(23)Level 3:Psychological Obstacles

Internal forces which create a mental block against organization and make you drawn towards disorganization

(34) Living or Working With a Disorganized Person

(35)2 Realities of Living with Disorganized People

(35)Reality 1:You Can't Motivate Someone Else to Get Organized

People only change when there is an internal, driven goal.

Ask the question:

What is the Clutter Costing Them?

(36)Reality 2: Their Mess is Not an Expression of Disrespect

The other person's clutter usually has nothing to do with us. Adopting a more compassionate point of view can save many headaches.

(37) Three Solutions to the Problem

(39)Solution 1: Let it Go

Love them despite their messiness, and just pick up after them.
Often, other's messes look worse because we don't know what they are.

(41)Solution 2: Codesign Shared Spaces

Learn to live together by acknowledging you have different styles and codesign common spaces.

(44)Solution 3: Help the Person Get Organized

Help that person in designing a system that will work for them, assuming it's their space that needs organizing and that they asked for help.

(38)Helping Someone With ADD or OCD

If a person has been diagnosed with ADD or OCD, their organization problems may have a biological basis.

(47) Part 2: Secrets of a Professional Organizer

(49) Analyze: Taking Stock

You need to do a personal needs assesment so you'll have necessary information for creating a plan of action. List responses on a sheet of paper. Be honest and specific.

(49)Five Basic Needs Assessment Questions

(50)Question 1: What's Working?

Look for the tiny bits of organization amid the chaos. Study your environment for natural habits and tendencies, see if you can work with rather than fight against them. Examples pages 49-51.

(51)Question 2: What's Not Working?

This will help figure out what needs to be fixed. List absolutely everything. Be specific and thorough... don't self censor.

This is important because if you don't get everything, unorganized things will spill back over into the organized things and create a downward spiral.

(53)Question 3: What Items are Most Essential to You?

By looking at the items that are most important to you, you can give direction to your sorting and purging processes later down the line.

(55)Question 4: Why do you want to Get Organized?

Organizing takes time, effort, and concentration. By taking the time before you start to figure out what motivates you, you can create your own coaching tool to turn to for inspiration.

Post this motivation sheet on the wall of the area you're going to get organized. When motivation begins to wane, look back at the sheet for inspiration.

(56)Question 5: What's Causing the Problems?

Using the Three levels for Causes of Clutter (Page 14), diagnose what the problem is, this will vary from room to room and space to space, so make sure to do this for every area you're organizing.

(57) Strategize: Creating a Plan of Action

(59)2 Secret Weapons for Organization

(60)Secret Weapon 1:The Kindergarten Model of Organization

Everything is divided up into activity zones, where things can be used and put away for a specific activity.

(66)Secret Weapon 2: Estimate the Time

The biggest mistake people make when organizing is being unrealistic about how long a job will take. Overestimating leads to procrastination, underestimating leads to frustration.

Most rooms take between one and two days to complete. Estimate how long each phase of organization will take.

Phases:

- 1.Sort
- 2.Purge
- 3.Assign a Home
- 4.Containerize
- 5.Equalize

After you have estimated the time schedule it. Example of a schedule is on page 67.

Part 3 of the book has more about how much time each thing will take.

(69)Attack: Getting The Job Done

(71) Three Laws of Visible, Dramatic Results

Visual display of dramatic progress will keep you inspired and driven.

(69) Five Stages of the Attack Phase

(70) Stage 1: Sort

In this stage, you have to go through everything and group it into categories. Make sure not to ignore the big unappetizing piles in corners... everything needs to be done.

(72) Stage 2: Purge

In this stage, you decide what to get rid of and what to keep.

Start out with "no-brainers"... things that are so irrelevant, broken down, or useless that it would be silly to keep them.

(73) Stage 3: Assign a Home

Now you decide where each item in each zone is going. If it hasn't been done yet, move the furniture to the appropriate activity zone to see how the design looks and figure out if you have enough storage space.

Avoid being vague about where things go. Apply the "Select One" rule by giving each item a single, consistent home. This is very important for trusting your system.

(74) Stage 4: Containerize

Containers will keep your categories grouped and separated within their assigned homes, making retrieval, cleanup, and maintenance a breeze. It will also allow you to limit how much "stuff" you can accumulate in any one category. Finally, containerizing allows you to be creative and put your own style into the system.

(77) Stage 5: Equalize

In this stage, you make adjustments to your system and make sure you stay on track.

(79) Part 3: Applying What You've Learned

(81) Where to Start Guide

(81) Where to Start

Start in the most important place. One of these places:

- The space you spend the majority of your time.
- The most irritating in terms of clutter.
- The place that's keeping you from reaching your personal or professional goals.

Many people shy away from these important spaces in favor of less important like attics garages, or basements because they're filled with junk and they think decisions will be easier. However, this will be a big investment without a big change to your life, and you'll find yourself losing motivation.

(82) Starting Small or Starting Big

You can either choose to start small or start big. Starting small will see more immediate small results. Starting big will see less immediate large results.

(84) Gathering Your Supplies

Before starting, it's prudent to get the supplies you need. This will stop you from getting distracted by looking for or shopping for materials.

(86) Organizing Briefcases and Handbags

(86) Analyze

(88) Strategize

(89) Attack

(94) Organizing Suitcases

(94) Analyze

(95) Strategize

(98) Attack

(105) Organizing Traditional Offices and Filing Systems

(105) Analyze

(108) Strategize

(111) Attack

(122) Organizing Home Based Businesses

(122) Analyze

(124) Strategize

(129) Attack

(134) Organizing Cubicle Workstations

(134) Analyze

(136) Strategize

(137) Attack

(142) Organizing Mobile Offices

(142) Analyze

(144) Strategize

(146) Attack

(154) Organizing Household Information Centers (Decks Etc.)

(154) Analyze

(156) Strategize

(158) Attack

(169) Organizing Attics, Basements, and Garages

(169) Analyze

(170) Strategize

(173) Attack

(181) Organizing Bathrooms

(181) Analyze

(183) Strategize

(184) Attack

(190) Organizing Bedrooms

(190) Analyze

(192) Strategize

(194) Attack

(198) Organizing Closets

(198) Analyze

(201) Strategize

(204) Attack

(211) Kids Rooms

(211) Analyze

(213) Strategize

(215) Attack

(221) Organizing Kitchens

(221) Analyze

(223) Strategize

(225) Attack

(237) Organizing Living Rooms

(237) Analyze

(239) Strategize

(241) Attack

(247) Organizing Photographs

(247) Analyze

(249) Strategize

(251) Attack

(259) Part 4: Tacking Time and Technology

(261) Time Management

(261) Analyze

(264) Strategize

(268) Attack

(276) Organizing Technology

(293) Appendix A: Organizing Project Worksheet

(297) Appendix B: Resources for Organizing Projects

(301) Appendix C: Suggested Further REading

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