

Spring Cleaning – House and mind!

By Diane Malloy

Should I toss it or keep it? Do my kids want this? Where should I put all of these wonderful pictures? • If I only had someone to move these things for me...If you are asking yourself any of these questions, then keep reading—maybe there are some solutions...

Clutter is stress. It nags you and drags you down. The things you keep should be beautiful, useful, or well loved. Does it give you pleasure? Ask yourself this question. If yes, keep it! If not, toss it! It can be overwhelming to start but if you break it into rooms or sections of your house, you can clean up and clear out clutter and enjoy the freshness of spring. Put a few hours on your calendar to devote to this activity, and honor that, like you would a doctor's appointment. If you need motivation, bring in a friend and take turns - spend a morning working on your kitchen and an afternoon working on their den.

First consider: How do you use this room or space you are thinking about cleaning? Is it my office, bedroom, TV room? Make sure the space is solely devoted to that use.

Next, sort things into three piles:

1 = Keep 2 = Toss 3 = Donate/Sell

Sentimental memorabilia is the most difficult to part with. If family and friends aren't interested, then donate or sell it, and feel good about the fact that someone is enjoying it and you are helping to make that family or person better off.

Pictures should be organized into albums or uploaded onto a computer. Contacting a historical preservation group is another idea for those pictures that may commemorate a specific community event.

If you have duplications of things; for instance, in the kitchen (spatulas or wooden spoons); pick your favorite one or two and put the rest in the donate pile.

Finally, tackle the most distasteful task first: the place that drives you the craziest. Your angst will diminish, and you'll be much more motivated to continue. Make a decision and act on it. If you hate that lamp, don't put it in the closet...get rid of it! Put it in the "donate" or "sell" pile.

I could go on to closets and medicine cabinets, but I'll save that for another article. Let's get started. Pick that one spot or room and begin de-cluttering. IT'S SPRING!

(For more information, a recommended article is Linda Abbit's "Too Much Old Stuff: How to Bust the Clutter" on www.seniorplanet.org.)

Looking for a good place to donate to? The Morrow Church Turnover Sale begins taking donations late June each year, and all proceeds go to support their mission work. Call (973) 763-7676 for details and to find

Part 2

First things first - find a place to put the clothes/items from your closet that you are giving away or donating. Don't just throw them on your bed. Find an area where you can go through them easily, or even use a large standing rack for sorting. Don't forget to have a large black (garbage) bag handy.

Next ask yourself these questions:

1. Does it fit?
2. Have I worn it in the past 12 months?
3. Is it "damaged" in anyway? And most importantly:
4. If I went shopping now, would I buy this?

Start clearing things out by category (blouses, pants, sweaters, accessories, scarves, shoes etc.). The order doesn't matter. What does matter is the progress you will see! Keep the basics - they won't go out of style. With the rest, Donate, Swap or Toss.

Several groups will pick up, including Vietnam Vets (1-888-944-3767) or the LUPUS Foundation 1-888-445-8787). Church turnover sales are another option. Morrow Church Turnover is in July. Give Back Box (givebackbox.com) provides prepaid shipping labels and a tax deductible receipt. There are several drop off boxes for charities in church parking lots and one in the new parking lot on Baker street in Maplewood.

Need help getting through the process of de-cluttering and keeping things simple? I'd be glad to help. Call (201) 341 7268 or Email dmalloy@victoriacarter.com