

# THE ORGANIZED LIFE



HOW TO OVERCOME CLUTTERED  
MIND AND TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chapter 1: The Clutter Effect .....</b>	<b>8</b>
What is Clutter? .....	9
Which Areas of Your Life Does Clutter Affect? .....	10
What Causes Clutter? .....	12
<b>Chapter 2: Cluttered Home = Cluttered Mind: How to Reduce the Mess.....</b>	<b>15</b>
The Problem of the Cluttered Home.....	15
How Does a Cluttered Home Lead to a Cluttered Mind? .....	16
The Areas to Tackle .....	18
<b>Chapter 3: A Guide to Organizing Your Home.....</b>	<b>21</b>
A Systematic Approach .....	21
Tackling the Floors, Drawers and Closets.....	22
Bringing in Help.....	26
Top Tips for Home Organization.....	27
<b>Chapter 4: The Disorganized Workplace = The End to Productivity .....</b>	<b>30</b>
Why is Disorganization at Work a Problem?.....	30
How to Become More Focused .....	31
Eliminating Virtual Mess.....	32
<b>Chapter 5: Making Your Workplace Organized – A Guide.....</b>	<b>35</b>
How to Tackle Organizing Your Desk.....	35
Tackle Your Hard Drive .....	36
Top Tips for Work Organization.....	38
<b>Chapter 6: Is Your Life Disorganized? .....</b>	<b>40</b>
What is a Cluttered Life? .....	40
Why do our Lives Become Disorganized? .....	42

The Problems of an Overloaded Life.....	43
<b>Chapter 7: A Guide to Organizing Your Life .....</b>	<b>47</b>
How to Reduce Your Obligations and Commitments .....	47
A Guide to Reducing Social Media Use .....	48
How to Reconsider Your Routines .....	49
Just Say No .....	51
<b>Chapter 8: Could I Benefit from a Friendship Organization? .53</b>	
Could Some of Your Friendships be Causing Your Problems? .....	54
What is a Toxic Friendship? .....	54
Label Your Friendships for Clarity.....	55
How to Feed the Positive Relationships in Your Life .....	57
<b>Chapter 9: Clearing Your Mind – The Truth About Happiness .....</b>	<b>61</b>
The Signs of a Disorganized Mind.....	61
The Benefits of an Organized Mind .....	62
<b>Chapter 10: A Guide to an Organized Life .....</b>	<b>66</b>
Make Lists and Journals .....	66
Learn to Let Go.....	68
Avoid Multi-Tasking.....	70
Make Decisions and Stick to Them .....	71
Be Kind to Yourself.....	72
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>74</b>

# Introduction

Are you struggling to focus on anything in your life? Do you feel stressed and anxious? Are you finding it hard to motivate yourself to get anything done? The problem could lie in your cluttered mind.

Modern life is busier than ever before. Most of us feel rushed from morning to night. Dealing with family commitments, work obligations, a social life, and personal issues all take their toll. The sheer number of chores, tasks, and responsibilities that we have to fit into each day can seem overwhelming. It is precisely this that causes mental clutter.

The good news is that, even if you're finding life hard to control at the moment, by putting some simple organizational techniques into practice you can make an enormous difference to your mental and physical well-being. You can take back your life, improve your focus, reduce your distractions, and eliminate your stress points.

When you banish the mental clutter and organize your mind, you'll find that you'll get more done and you'll feel a lot happier overall. With greater organization comes greater control and clarity, so you can see more clearly the direction in which you're heading and concentrate on the areas that are most important to you.

# CHAPTER 1

## THE CLUTTER EFFECT





# Chapter 1: The Clutter Effect

These days, we've all become more used to living with a lot of things in our lives. Yet, when those things get out of control it can lead to us feeling overwhelmed, becoming less productive, struggling to focus, and lacking in motivation. This is the "Clutter Effect".

Yet, many people have no idea just how disorganized their lives have become. They have become so used to juggling the many elements in it, from relationships and children to careers and friends, that they can't see the wood from the trees. Eventually, though, the confusion will become so great that they won't be able to function effectively at all. Therefore, knowing what clutter actually is, how to identify it and how to eliminate it lies at the heart of achieving overall happiness and success.

## **What is Clutter?**

When you think about clutter, you probably imagine piles of magazines and paperwork strewn over your countertops and mounds of junk on the stairs waiting to be taken up. It's true that this is clutter – but it's only the physical kind. Your mind can become cluttered too.

Intrusive thoughts, an ongoing list of “must-dos”, regrets of missed opportunities, unfinished work, and worries about things that might never happen are all examples of mental clutter that make us feel out of control. The less organized your mind becomes, the less you feel able to deal with the challenges that life throws your way.

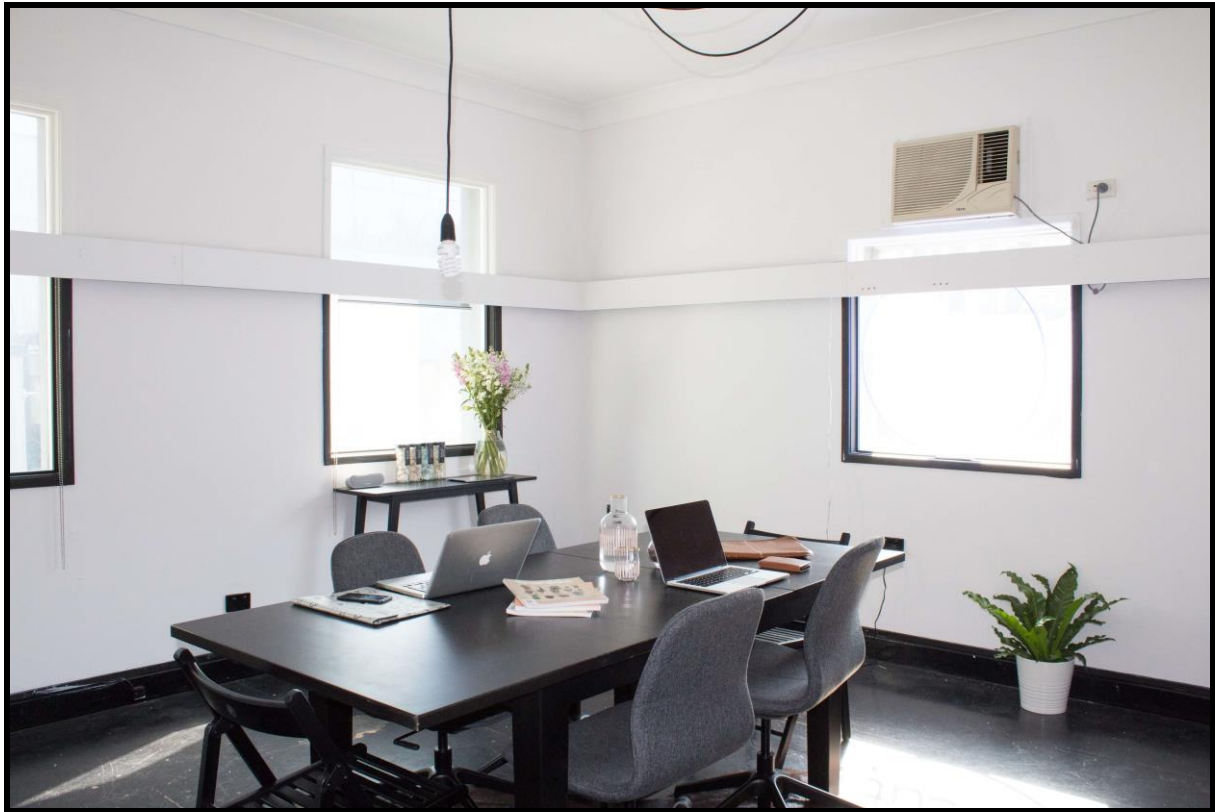
There is an endless cycle formed between physical and mental clutter. The more disorganized your mind, the more disorganized your home, workspace, and life in general will become. Meanwhile, if you're living and working in a cluttered environment, it's inevitable that your mind will become cluttered and disorganized too. The vicious circle leads to ongoing problems as you lack the ability to break the chain, get rid of the mess and take your life back.

## **Which Areas of Your Life Does Clutter Affect?**

As we've already pointed out, clutter affects both your environment and your emotional and mental well-being. Both types of clutter can have a major impact on various areas of your life.

The first obvious area that can feel the impact is your home. Mess can begin to build up as tasks get left undone. Soon, a pile of magazines has grown on the coffee table, a stack of shoes is thrown in the corner in the front porch, and clothes are piled up on the bedroom chairs. The more messy and more disorganized your home becomes, the harder it is to get motivated to sort it out, and the more negative the mental and emotional impact becomes of living in such an environment.

The second key area that is badly affected is the workplace. A lack of organization in the office leads to all kinds of issues. Low productivity, an unprofessional first impression for visitors or clients and poor morale are just some of the problems that arise from a disorganized working environment. Again, once the office has become cluttered, it becomes more difficult to take action to organize it. As the mess mounts up, the worse the associated problems become.



The third area that feels the impact of clutter is your personal relationships. This is something that can often be overlooked when considering the effect of disorganization on your life. A messy home puts a strain on your family life and can lead to serious tensions with your partner, children, or other loved ones.

A disorganized workplace can make working relationships with colleagues, employees, or managers more challenging and can lead to disagreements that cause long-term problems in your career. Not only that, but clutter in friendships can lead to toxicity, further stress and even more obligations that need to fit into your already overloaded schedule.

## **What Causes Clutter?**

There are many causes of clutter. Some are physical, and others are emotional or mental. Some are also a lot more obvious than others.

Perhaps the first, and most obvious cause of clutter has to be excess physical possessions. Most of us are guilty of accumulating items simply because we can't bear to get rid of them, even if we don't really want or need them. There are gifts that we've received for birthdays and holidays, souvenirs from vacations gone by.

Odds and ends have piled up over the years that should really have gone in the trash but which have, inexplicably, been put in a drawer or on a shelf for later and allowed to remain there. The trouble with this type of clutter is that it builds up slowly over time, so you don't really realize how much it has gotten out of hand until one day you look around and see the extent of the problem.

The second cause of clutter is having excessive commitments in your schedule. We've already mentioned how busy modern lives have become. Whereas in the past, lives were much simpler – people went to work, came home, spent time with their family or

their friends and then went to bed ready to do it all again the next day.

These days, there is so much more to consider. Careers have, in many cases, become considerably more high-pressured, with the expectations placed on workers at all levels much higher than ever before. Family lives are also more complex than ever before, with many people having divided or blended families. Struggling to fit in contact with children, dealing with stepchildren or having to handle an ex-partner along with a current one can all increase the pressures on everyday living.

Then, of course, there are all the other elements that weigh on our minds. An endless stream of social media and 24/7 access to the news can easily lead to us becoming overwhelmed with negativity. Meanwhile, we feel the pressure to make the most of our limited leisure time by caving into the demands from friends, colleagues, and family members to attend different events and participate in various activities.

Add to this the additional pressure that we pile on ourselves to work out, to improve ourselves and to be the best that we can be in every respect. It's no wonder that so many of us struggle to cope as we sink ever-deeper under a heap of obligations, commitments and requirements.

# CHAPTER 2

**CLUTTERED HOME,  
CLUTTERED MIND**



# **Chapter 2: Cluttered Home = Cluttered Mind: How to Reduce the Mess**

First, let us take a look at the home. A cluttered home leads to a cluttered mind. Then, we'll examine some ways that you can reduce the mess so you can regain some essential control over your life.

## **The Problem of the Cluttered Home**

Why do we end up acquiring clutter in our homes? There are several reasons behind this. Let us look at some of the most common:

- You don't know when it's time to get rid of items – in many households, there is a lot of confusion about when the time has come to sell, donate, shred or throw away items when they're no longer used or needed.



- You don't have anywhere to store things properly, or you just don't know how to store it.
- You have no organization routine to follow in the home.
- You don't have sufficient storage space or solutions.
- You persistently keep common clutter sources around.
- You regularly buy things that you don't need or use.
- You lack the ability to let go of items, especially those with some sentimental value.

Many of us can relate to at least one of the above statements. The key is to identify which are applicable to you so that you can then work on ways of addressing them.

## **How Does a Cluttered Home Lead to a Cluttered Mind?**

Clutter in the home ends up having a negative impact on your mind, your body and your overall health. There is a direct link between high levels of stress and excess clutter in the home, and this has been proven in several studies over the past few years. Why is this the case?

The home is supposed to be an oasis of calm – a peaceful refuge and a comfortable space where you can unwind and chill out.

How can you do that if there is disorganization and mess everywhere?

Clutter in the home impacts negatively on your ability to concentrate and focus. There are distractions everywhere and this causes your mental faculties to become worn down. Frustration is then the inevitable result which causes stress to build up. When you can't focus properly, your ability to problem solve and be creative is also inhibited.

Tests have shown that people who have increased clutter at home also have higher cortisol levels in their bodies. Cortisol is a stress hormone that triggers a flight or fight response. When levels of this hormone are high, we cannot truly relax or unwind effectively, and we're constantly in a state of high alert. Meanwhile, those whose homes are tidier and more organized have happier and less stressed lives.

One further problem that clutter can cause in terms of mental health is the feeling of guilt that can build up over time. Knowing that you should be keeping your home spotless but not seeming able to find the motivation or the time to get the job done can increase anxiety levels. That makes it even harder to relax or enjoy yourself during your potential downtime. You're

constantly thinking about all the many tasks and chores that are incomplete and that still remain to be done.

## **The Areas to Tackle**

The average home has many areas where clutter can begin to gather and accumulate. However, there are four key areas that you should look at first when preparing to get organized and to take back control of your life.

First – take a look at your floors. Do you have piles of items in the corner of the room? Are there furnishings that you simply don't need to take up space in your home? Take another look at your home's footprint and decide how you can use the space more effectively so that you can move more easily between rooms and enjoy maximum openness throughout.

Secondly – take a look at your drawers. Are they full of junk? Have they been emptied and sorted recently? Are there items in there that should really have gone in the trash years ago? Even if there's no junk in there, have they been tidied and organized?

Thirdly – take a look at your closets. Do you really wear all those clothes? Are all those shoes really necessary? Is there a better

way to store those sweaters? Could you find new storage solutions to maximize the available space in your closet?

Fourthly – take a look at your shelves. While these may be the last area that you consider organizing, it can be the place in your home where most clutter appears. How often have you put a book, a toy or a pen on a shelf and thought you would move it soon, but then never got around to it? Do you regularly tidy up the books, CDs or DVDs in your units? It's time to give them a once over to get rid of any items that don't belong on a shelf.



# CHAPTER 3

## A GUIDE TO ORGANIZING YOUR HOME



# Chapter 3: A Guide to Organizing Your Home

Are you ready to organize your home to reclaim your life but aren't sure where to start? Then here is a complete guide to help you begin the task.

## **A Systematic Approach**

To be successful in organizing your home, the key is to take a systematic approach. Decluttering your home is a major task, so tackling it in stages is a good idea. You may decide to begin with a single room and thoroughly sort it out before you move on to the next room.

Or you may choose to tackle a single zone within one room, for example the cabinets, before moving on to other elements within the space. Either way, taking a systematic approach allows you to see results, albeit small ones, from every task you complete, and helps to increase your motivation to continue.

There's no need for any fancy tools or equipment when it comes to decluttering your home. All you need is five bins or baskets. You should label them as follows:

- Put away – the items you put in here will be those that have somehow strayed from their original storage space. They need to be put back in the correct location.
- Recycle – this is for items that require recycling like paper, glass, and plastic.
- Mend or fix – this container should be used for any items that need repairing, cleaning, or mending.
- Trash – if the item is no longer needed by any household member, and it would be no good to donate or recycle, throw it in this bin to put into the household trash.
- Donate – if you don't want an item anymore but a charity or another person may want it, you can put it in this basket.

## **Tackling the Floors, Drawers and Closets**

Once you've got your baskets prepared and your strategy laid out, you can begin tackling the floors, drawers, closets and cabinets. It makes sense to begin in a single room, work through it completely, and then move onto the next.

It may be a good idea to begin with your bathroom since the clutter here is likely to be relatively minimal. Begin with the medicine cabinet – discard any outdated products, makeup or medications and immediately put all items to keep back in the cabinet. Move onto the drawers.

Take everything out, decide what needs to be kept and what needs to be thrown out then put the items you want to keep back in the drawers. Repeat with the tub and shower and any other items from under your sink. If any items remain that are not trash, sort them quickly into the five baskets so you can deal with them later.

The bedroom is a bigger task. It makes sense to begin with your nightstand. Remove anything that doesn't belong and sort it into the appropriate basket. If there are any items you don't use, like an empty tissue box, a broken charger or a pen that doesn't work, get rid of them.

Next, move on to the chests, bureaus and dressers. If any clothing is strewn around, put it in the laundry basket if it needs washing, or into the put-away bin if it needs to be hung up or folded into a drawer. Empty your bureau, drawers and cabinets and put any items that are still in good condition but that you no



longer wear into the donation basket. Put away all of the remaining clothing neatly.

No matter how tempted you may be to simply put items back into drawers or cabinets, avoid that temptation. Put them into the put-away basket and deal with them later. Throw away or recycle any items that haven't been used for six months or more.

The closet is the next big job. The easiest way to tackle it is to sort clothing items by type. Go through each category and sort your items into five piles. One will be to keep and put back in the closet. One will be for any items that are in the incorrect place. One will be for dirty laundry. One will be for items to be dry cleaned or repaired, and one will be for items to be donated.

Moving on to the entryway, you'll find that even the smallest space will have some clutter to be dealt with. If you have a side table, console or desk, tackle that first. Remove all items in the drawers and decide whether to toss or keep them. If you have a hall closet, declutter it in the same way as your bedroom closets.

The kitchen is a major space to address, and it can also be the most challenging to keep clutter-free in the long-term since so many activities take place there, from cooking and eating to socializing. You'll therefore have lots of items in it. You can opt

to either go through each zone one at a time or focus on a single category of an item before moving on to the next.



Completely empty your chosen space. Evaluate each item. Throw away anything that is unnecessary then put the other items back tidily. The upper cabinets and pantry are a good place to begin before moving on to the drawers, under-sink area and lower cabinets. Last of all, focus on the countertops and try to move as much as possible into storage spaces.

The final area to tackle is the living room. This is an especially difficult space to address since it sees a lot of use and may lack storage. To begin, decide on where you're going to store all your

commonly used items like your books, magazines and remote controls. Then begin decluttering your side tables, console, and bookcases before moving on to your entertainment center and coffee table. Put any books away. If there is any paperwork to deal with, put it to one side, and fold up any blankets.

Check your electronic items and get rid of any that don't work. Store any gadgets, controllers, gaming equipment and chargers in a convenient but hidden location. Lastly, if there are any toys lying around, assess them for damage and check if they still work. If your kids don't play with it anymore, recycle it. Put any remaining items away tidily.

## **Bringing in Help**

When you're trying to organize an entire house, it can be a major job, especially if you're living in a large household. If this applies to you, it's time to bring in some help in the form of your friends or family.

Draft the kids in to help declutter their own rooms and to put away their own items. Make sure they know where key items will

now be stored away so they know where to put them back after use.

If you have no friends or family to help you, you may be able to find a cleaning service that will give you some assistance with the task.

## **Top Tips for Home Organization**

Need a few more top tips to help you organize your home and your mind? Here are some of the best:

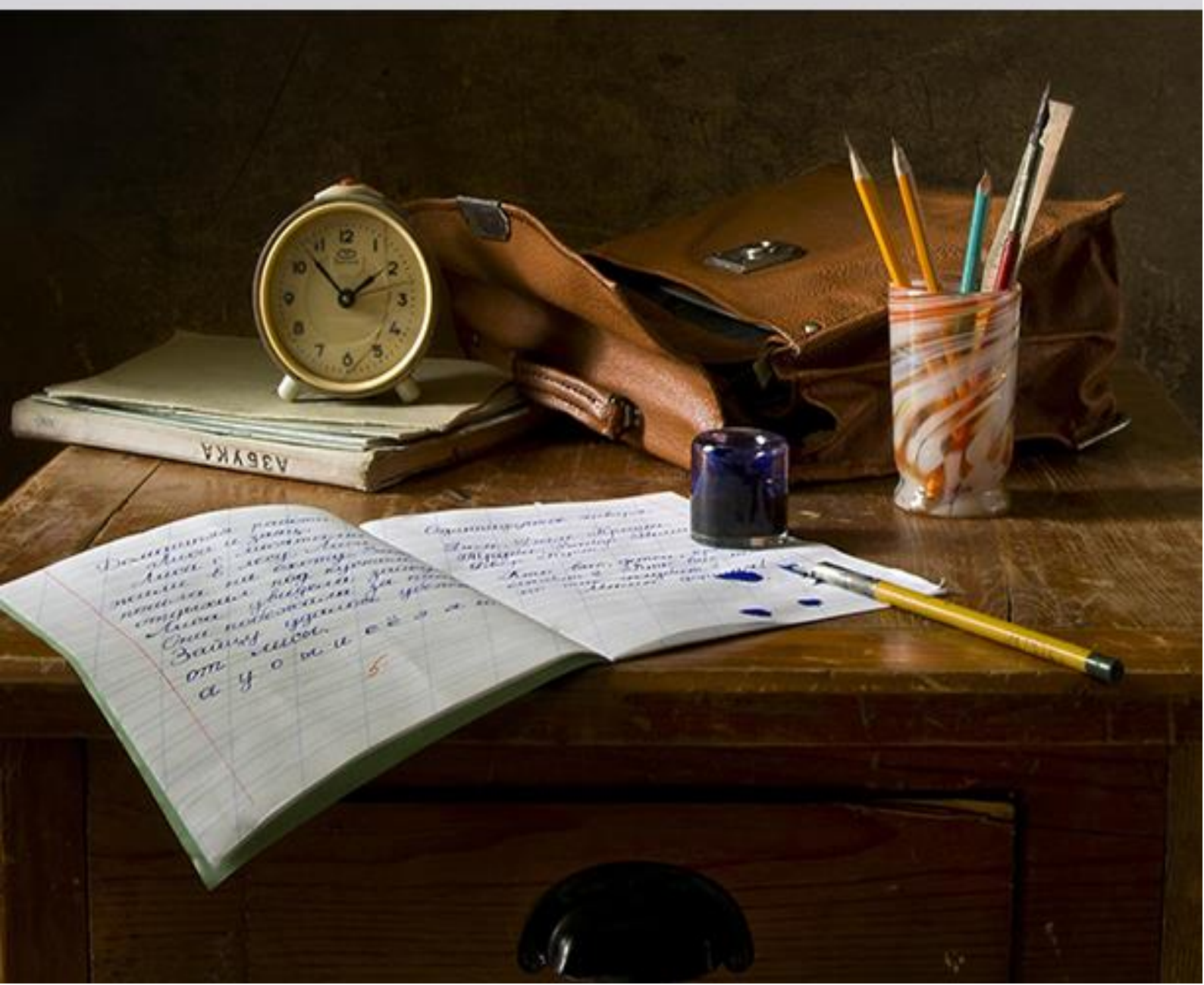
1. Begin in one place. Decide which space is your top priority and start there. Focus on it until it's completely finished before moving on.
2. Allow enough time. Have realistic expectations of how long it'll take you to thoroughly reorganize your home and schedule a few hours every day to the task in hand.
3. Take an inventory. After any unwanted items are removed, inspect what remains and decide if it's in the right or wrong place. Anything that would be better off somewhere else, move it there.
4. Check for wasted space. Are there any additional areas that could be put to work for you? Spaces under beds, over doors

or under sinks may be overlooked but may hold valuable storage room.

5. Think vertically. This is especially important if you live in a small home. Maximize your storage by shelving right up to your ceiling.
6. Divide up spaces. If you add more shelves to a single shelf or use stacking containers or baskets, you can divide up vertical spaces, maximize storage and keep everything looking neat.
7. Consider wheeled storage units that can be moved around or stored in a closet when not being used.
8. Remember the keywords – flexibility, accessibility and visibility. Choose transparent containers or ones that you can label easily to save you time. Ensure that you've put the most frequently used items in a space that is easy to access and choose an adaptable storage system that can be reused and reconfigured to suit your changing needs.

# CHAPTER 4

## THE DISORGANIZED WORKPLACE



# **Chapter 4: The Disorganized Workplace = The End to Productivity**

Now that we've looked at addressing disorganization in the home, it's time to move onto the workplace. Here, we look at why clutter in the office causes so many issues.

## **Why is Disorganization at Work a Problem?**

When you're in a disorganized workplace, there are hosts of issues that begin to arise. Some have a personal effect on you, others affect your colleagues or employees, and some will even impact negatively on the success of the business.

When the workplace is cluttered, messy and disorganized, anxiety can begin to build up amongst staff members. Not knowing where to find anything can lead to arguments, disagreements and a negative atmosphere in the office as well as high stress levels.

With no efficient system in place and mess getting in the way, it naturally follows that the entire team becomes less productive. Valuable time is wasted on trying to find lost items or trying to rearrange items that are getting in the way. Employees are also less motivated in a messy, disorganized environment, so productivity levels drop all around.

Let's add into the mix the fact that a messy office creates a bad impression for anyone visiting the premises. Whether those visitors are customers, clients or business contacts, when they see a disorganized workplace, they immediately get the wrong impression about the company and think that it's an unprofessional organization. This also negatively impacts on the success of the business.

## **How to Become More Focused**

The first step to becoming more focused at work is to eliminate any physical mess. Desktops, drawers, cabinets and other surfaces in the workstation should all be given an overhaul and any unwanted items should be thrown away, recycled or put back where they belong, neatly and tidily.



When your immediate work environment is tidy, clean and organized, it becomes easier straight away to concentrate on the tasks in hand. You can quickly see the items, files and paperwork that you need so no time will be wasted. You'll also feel a lot less stressed and anxious when everything has a place and stays in it.



## **Eliminating Virtual Mess**

Bear in mind that disorganization in the workplace doesn't end at your desk surface. Virtual mess is another serious problem that can begin to pervade through your mind and cause reduced productivity, low mood, poor motivation and general stress.

Your hard drive and email folders can be a source of anxiety for you if they aren't kept in some kind of sensible order. Virtual clutter can cause just as many problems as physical disorganization, or maybe even more. If you can't find the important file that you need to send to a colleague, or you're trawling through endless emails trying to find an urgent message that you've lost but need to respond to quickly, your stress levels can go through the roof.

Tackling this virtual mess is an important component in decluttering your workplace. It will make a surprisingly big difference to your mental well-being.

# CHAPTER 5

## MAKING YOUR WORKPLACE ORGANIZED



# Chapter 5: Making Your Workplace Organized – A Guide

If you're ready to begin making your workplace more organized but aren't sure where to start, here is some valuable advice.

## **How to Tackle Organizing Your Desk**

The first step to tackling your desk organization is to declutter any visual distractions. Artwork done by your kids, hundreds of photos of your last vacation, motivational sayings – all of these could be halting your productivity and preventing you from focusing at work.

Take a look at the items that are on your desk. Do they all belong there? Any files or papers that should be put away in the correct locations should be stored away now. If there are pens lying around on the desktop, check to see if they work and if they don't throw them in the trash.

Are there old articles, newspapers, or advertising materials lying about? If they're unneeded, recycle them. Look again at any old binders or files to assess the contents. If the information and papers inside are old or won't ever be needed again, get rid of them. Be ruthless.

## **Tackle Your Hard Drive**

A virtual mess can have just as negative an impact on your mental well-being and on your productivity as a physical mess, so begin by reorganizing the computer desktop. If documents have been saved there for years or icons are cluttering your whole screen, you'll struggle to identify the ones you need quickly when you need them most. Delete any unwanted files or icons and tidy up the others so you can have a well-organized screen.

Tackle your email inboxes too. It's all too easy to allow your emails to get out of control, especially if you receive hundreds every day. However, setting some time aside to sort out your folders and to delete the trash will help to make things manageable again. If you spot any overlooked messages, reply to them and file them neatly in a folder where you know you can find them again.



Once your inbox is tidy, it's important to stay on top of the task. Set aside time each day to check emails and handle them appropriately. Make it your aim to have zero inbox messages before you go to bed.

# Top Tips for Work Organization

Do you need more tips to successfully organize your workspace? Here are a few pieces of expert advice that will stand you in good stead.

- Chuck the junk – have you used an item in the workplace recently? Are you realistically going to use it again? Just as you would at home, create separate piles to be dealt with later. Three piles should do here – a trash pile, store pile and to-do pile.
- Create an effective storage system. As long as it makes sense to you, it will get the job done.
- Tackle the to-do pile. Make folders for every project or client you're working with. As soon as the project is complete, go through the folder and throw out any unimportant documents inside. Then, store away the folder in an appropriate location.
- Maintain a clear desk. Once your desk surface is visible, set aside time every week to keep on top of this. The one-touch rule can help with this. Basically, as soon as a piece of paper touches your desk, deal with it straight away. Bin it, take action on it, or file it. This applies to emails and messages too.
- Use technology in the best way to save yourself time and effort. Keep an online organizer to combine your to-do list, calendar and address book in one convenient location.

# CHAPTER 6

**IS YOUR LIFE  
DISORGANIZED?**





## **Chapter 6: Is Your Life Disorganized?**

Now that we've addressed the clutter that builds up in the home and the workplace to cause disorganization, chaos and poor mental health, it's time to look more closely at your life. It's very likely that your life is also suffering from some severe disorganization if you feel as if you're lacking control.

### **What is a Cluttered Life?**

As we've already said earlier in this book, we tend to think of clutter as a physical thing, however all-too-often it can be mental or emotional too. When your life is cluttered, all of that mess and disorganization is invisible – it's inside your head. Yet, that doesn't make it any less stressful to deal with. In fact, it makes it even more challenging to manage.

What does a disorganized life look like? How do you know if you have one? There are several signs that you can look out for to tell you that you're suffering from this problem.

Firstly, you have a schedule that is overloaded with activities. You seem to be busy for every single hour of the day, with no time to spend on yourself. You feel as if you're constantly at the beck and call of other people, whether those people are friends or family members, and you struggle to fit all of your obligations, commitments and activities into your already strained lifestyle.

You feel as if you have absolutely no leisure time when you can unwind and enjoy yourself. Or, when you do manage to grab a few moments for yourself, you feel guilty that you're not tackling the many other tasks that you have lined up ready to go.

You feel under increasing pressure to be a better person, to improve yourself, and to fit the mold that the media tells us we should be in. You feel guilty when you don't have the time to cook an elaborate vegan meal from scratch or fail to get to the gym again this week or didn't manage to get to your foreign language class so you could broaden your horizons.

If you can relate to any or all of this, you have a disorganized life that needs to be de-cluttered urgently.

## Why do our Lives Become Disorganized?

There are several reasons why your life may have become disorganized. Not all will apply to everyone, but if you're experiencing the feelings we've outlined above, you'll almost certainly recognize some of them.

- You're neglecting your own basic needs and are, therefore, making poor decisions. This can lead to stress, anxiety and obsessive thoughts that prevent you from focusing on more important areas of your life.
- You have FOMO or fear of missing out. This is a very 21<sup>st</sup> century problem, and a very common one. It's something that propels you to sign up to the gym when you simply don't have time. You take an extra class even when you're struggling with the ones you have. You scroll through Facebook for another hour rather than going to bed. Or, you head out for a night at a club with friends even though you know you have to get up for work early the next morning. While FOMO comes from a place of wanting to enjoy a better life, it can end up making your life worse by adding more stress, anxiety and distractions.
- You struggle to let go. This may apply to both physical and emotional baggage. Even if something is causing you pain, or is making you unhappy, you still struggle to release it and this causes you to dwell on it, over and over again.

- You haven't learned what enough means. You still feel that you somehow have to be better, to be more perfect, to acquire more things so you can be worthy of acceptance, love and praise. You haven't grasped the concept that good is good enough and this leads you to obsess over things in your head that make you unhappy, unfocused and non-productive.
- You can't say no. Some people just don't feel able to put their foot down, even when they really don't want to do something. They're too worried about the reaction they'll receive or about upsetting someone and losing their friendship if they stand up for what they want and need.
- You feel obliged to do things, even when they aren't your responsibility. You haven't grasped the idea that delegation is a good thing, and you worry that you'll lose your importance if you allow someone else to take on a job that has always been yours.

## **The Problems of an Overloaded Life**

When your life is overloaded, a host of problems can follow. The disorganization of an over-packed schedule leads you to suffer from poor mental health. You become increasingly anxious and

stressed about how you're going to fit everything into your crowded day, week or month.



You also end up with no quality time for yourself – something that everyone needs from time to time to recharge their batteries. When every second of the day is accounted for, you just don't have enough time to wind down, relax and let go of all the frustrations that you've encountered.

Falling into the bed at the end of a long and hard day will often lead to poor quality sleep as you struggle to process all of the stresses and strains you've gone through. This only serves to

make it even more difficult to find the energy and motivation to cope with the challenges that life throws at you.

When your life is disorganized, you'll also find that your relationships become increasingly strained. Eventually, you'll become more frustrated, more angry and more likely to snap at your family members and friends. This will increase tension at home and make life even more stressful and difficult.

**CHAPTER**

**7**

**A GUIDE TO  
ORGANIZING  
YOUR LIFE**



# **Chapter 7: A Guide to Organizing Your Life**

Are you ready to take control of your life once more and learn how to organize it so you can enjoy better mental well-being? Then read on to discover a few top tips.

## **How to Reduce Your Obligations and Commitments**

The first step is to look at your various obligations and commitments. Do you really need all of them in your life? Are there some activities that you could quit to give yourself more time to unwind or spend with those who really matter?

It's time to weed out anything that you can live without or that makes you anything less than happy. If it isn't necessary and you don't love it, and it's possible to ditch it, then let it go.



Next, be selective when taking on any new activities or pastimes. Before you agree to anything or leap right into something new, take the time to think about it. Do you really want to do this new activity? Will it add something positive to your life? Or will it be a drain on your emotional resources? Make a decision based on your answers to those questions.

## **A Guide to Reducing Social Media Use**

Social media is proven to be one of the biggest causes of FOMO. It stands to reason that we look at other people's profiles and often feel jealous of the lives that other people seem to be living. However, it's important to remember that in most cases, people present the image of their lives that they want others to see rather than depicting the real truth of their situation. A family can appear to be perfect on a Facebook profile, but the members could all be suffering on the inside, without those scrolling past recognizing it. Never compare your inside to other people's outside.

If you're finding social media platforms are causing you to struggle mentally, or you're finding that you're spending more and more time scrolling through pages rather than getting on with your life, it's time to reduce your social media usage.

How do you get started with this? Short of actually deleting your profiles, you might find that a simple place to begin is simply to sign out of your profiles when you've finished checking them. If you have to go through the rigmarole of signing in every single time you want to check your notifications, you'll soon begin to reduce your usage.

If this doesn't work for you, you should try leaving your phone in another room or in an inaccessible location for part of the day, and never keeping it by the bed at night. This will help you to limit the amount of time you spend on social media.

## **How to Reconsider Your Routines**

Are your routines causing you mental strain? Then it's time to give them an overhaul. It can be all too tempting to stay stuck in a rut because change is scary, but that's rarely a good course of action when you've lost control over your life.

Take a look at how you spend each day. Is it working for you? Which elements are causing you to struggle? How could you move them around to make life easier or less stressful?



For example, if you've scheduled a workout at the gym before you go to the office but you're struggling to get out of bed because you're so exhausted and then find it difficult to focus at work for the rest of the day because you lack energy, it's time to look at how you can make adjustments. Consider moving the gym to after work, or even to your lunch hour, and take some extra time in bed so you can be well-rested and increase your productivity at work.

## **Just Say No**

One of the best things that you can do to organize your life more effectively is to just say no. Don't be afraid of hurting other people or of losing their friendship or love. Nobody who cares for you will think any worse of you if you back out of an ongoing commitment that you don't have time for, or if you refuse to attend an event or participate in an activity because you simply can't fit it into your life.

Saying no can be very difficult, especially if you've never really done it before. However, once you start practicing, you'll find it very liberating. You will never need to accept an invitation that you don't want to accept again. You'll never need to go to an event that you dread or participate in a time-consuming activity just because someone else wants you to.

Sometimes, it's ok to put yourself first, and when you're trying to take back control of your life and improve your mental well-being, it's perfectly acceptable to decline politely.

**CHAPTER**

**8**

**BENEFIT FROM  
FRIENDSHIP  
ORGANIZATION**



## **Chapter 8: Could I Benefit from a Friendship Organization?**

All too often, we end up in friendships that cause us more problems than happiness. Most people will recognize the scenario of a so-called friend who only seems to be interested in their own problems – who always seems to be asking you for help but then never seems to be around when you need their assistance in return.

Many people are extremely aware of having a friend who only ever seems to come around when they want something, or when they want to complain and whine. If you have a friend who brings you down rather than lifts you up, it's possible that you could benefit from some friendship organization.

## **Could Some of Your Friendships be Causing Your Problems?**

Cluttered friendships are one final facet of a cluttered life that can lead to a disorganized mind and poor mental well-being. If you constantly feel as if you're having to put someone else first without that person having the same approach to you, you're probably in a toxic friendship.

It's human nature to try to cling onto the friendships that we've formed, but sometimes, those friendships simply aren't worth saving. When a friendship brings you misery and not happiness, it's time to consider letting it go in order to declutter your life and boost your mental health.

### **What is a Toxic Friendship?**

How do you recognize if you're in a toxic friendship? It can be hard to spot a toxic friend. It's possible that they were once a best friend who was kind and helpful towards you in the past. It can be difficult to see how a relationship like that can deteriorate over

time, and so you might overlook the tell-tale signs of toxicity for a long time.

Often, jealousy is the root cause of a toxic friendship. Perhaps you got a better-paid job, found a new partner, started a family, or lost weight. Your friend may find it hard to cope with their own feelings of inadequacy and may begin to put you down, treat you badly or even blank you.

## **Label Your Friendships for Clarity**

Labeling your friendships will bring you more clarity in your life. You can divide your friends into two groups – drains or radiators.

Does your friend bring warmth into your life and make you feel happy and good about yourself? If they do, that's great. They're a radiator.

However, if they drain all the love, positivity, strength and happiness from your life, it's a toxic friendship and your so-called friend is a drain.



Once you know which of your friends are drains, you can take action.

You may be able to cut your toxic friend completely out of your life. If they are someone you only saw irregularly anyway, you can just stop texting, calling and arranging meet-ups. You can delete them from your social media. Yes, you'll probably feel awkward and guilty, but it's for your own good.

On the other hand, if it's someone that you're still going to see regularly, you may need to take a different course of action. You can hide them on social media so you aren't subjected to their negativity on a daily basis. Unfollowing someone means that they won't be aware you can't see their posts, but you'll be free of the toxicity and back in control.

Since you can't change a toxic friend's personality, you'll need to change how you react to them. Don't allow them to make you feel small or bad about yourself. Instead, tell yourself that your friend has the problem and that there's nothing wrong with you. It can be slow progress, but over time, you will gain back power and control.

If it's possible, try to reduce the amount of time you spend with your toxic friend. If you're in the same place at the same time, try

to form a buffer with other people. On the other hand, if this person constantly puts you down in front of others, just walk away from the group when she approaches or reply with a non-aggressive, calm response that turns any snide comments back on the giver.

We naturally want to gain praise and acceptance from the people in our lives, but if you have a toxic friend, you can end up feeling much worse about yourself. When you've been hurt in this way, try listing all the things you feel good about yourself for. Write them down and read the list whenever you feel this way.

## **How to Feed the Positive Relationships in Your Life**

Once you've identified which of your friends are radiators, you need to feed those positive relationships so that they grow and thrive. Spend time focusing on those good friendships. Try to spend as much time as possible around people that make you feel good about yourself.



How can you foster those positive relationships? Here is some expert advice to point you in the right direction:

- Take time to listen. Listening skills are vital when it comes to boosting your friend’s self-esteem and feelings of self-worth. Not only do you need to listen to what your friend has to say, but you also need to work to understand what they are communicating to you so that your interactions can be as effective and successful as possible.
- Be present. Just because you’re physically with someone doesn’t mean that you’re really there. If you’re dwelling on something else instead of really listening to what your friend

is telling you, or if your mind is wandering instead of really paying attention to what they have to say, you aren't fostering a positive relationship. The connection you make with your friends is the foundation of that friendship's success, so you need to devote enough time, effort and energy into building up and developing the relationship so that it can grow and thrive.

- Give feedback and take it in return. Be prepared to offer advice but also be willing to take it from your friend. This is a key part of a strong friendship.
- Be trusting. It takes courage to trust someone. However, whatever your baggage, it's important to remember that the more you trust in your friend, the more open you are to positivity.

# CHAPTER 9

## CLEARING YOUR MIND



# **Chapter 9: Clearing Your Mind – The Truth About Happiness**

The key to happiness is to clear your mind of all the mess and clutter that is blocking and impeding your mental well-being. But how do you go about clearing your mind? How do you even tell that your mind is disorganized in the first place?

## **The Signs of a Disorganized Mind**

How do you know if your mind is disorganized? There are a few tell-tale signs to look out for.

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Poor focus
- Lack of motivation
- Insomnia
- Low productivity

If you're experiencing any or all of these symptoms on a regular basis, you're almost certainly suffering from a disorganized mind.



## **The Benefits of an Organized Mind**

The steps that we've outlined earlier in this book about eliminating the clutter from your relationships, life, workplace and home can all help you to reap the benefits of a well-organized mind. So, what are those benefits?

Perhaps the biggest advantage is the sense of calm and well-being that you'll experience once all of the chaos is freed from your head. Once you've gotten rid of all the mess and clutter, you'll be able to gain a renewed focus on the things that really matter. You'll be able to increase your productivity by being able to concentrate on the task in hand without any unwanted distractions due to the ideas and thoughts churning around in your head.

You'll also become more decisive. Once your mind is clearer, you'll learn to gain more control over the choices that you make in every area of your life, and you'll learn how to take those decisions wisely and with clarity. You'll soon be able to see the way forward clearly and will be able to move in that direction without any concerns or distractions getting in the way.

Your stress will be greatly reduced too once you've weeded out all of the unnecessary trash in your head. When you're no longer permanently in fight or flight mode, you'll be better able to relax, unwind and take time out for self-care. This will allow you to enjoy better well-being, both physically and mentally, as your body adapts to a more laidback lifestyle.

Finally, the most important benefit of all is that you will achieve greater happiness. When you have control over your life, you can



experience inner peace and positivity. In turn, when you feel happy and positive, you're in a good place to get even more out of life, feeding a positive feedback loop that will make your day to day existence a much better one.

# CHAPTER 10

A GUIDE TO  
AN ORGANIZED  
LIFE



# Chapter 10: A Guide to an Organized Life

So, now that you understand all of the benefits of an organized mind. You've got some ideas of the areas of your life that can be improved by taking back this control. You need to know how to get to that point.

We've already looked at the practical steps that you can take at home, at work and in your personal life to get rid of the chaos and clutter. This can make life simpler and happier, but how can you take practical steps to organize your mind?

Here are a few top tips to get you started.

## **Make Lists and Journals**

Many people find that making lists or starting a journal is a good way to clear their minds. It will get rid of all the clutter that prevents them from moving forward in their lives.

You may find that you're unable to focus on the tasks that you need to accomplish because they seem to be running over and over in your head. Composing a list of all the jobs and chores that you need to accomplish will help to set those intrusive thoughts free. Having a checklist of everything you need to get done will help you to see at a glance all that must be got through by the end of the day, week or month. When you can tick each one off, you will experience a great sense of well-being at a job well done.

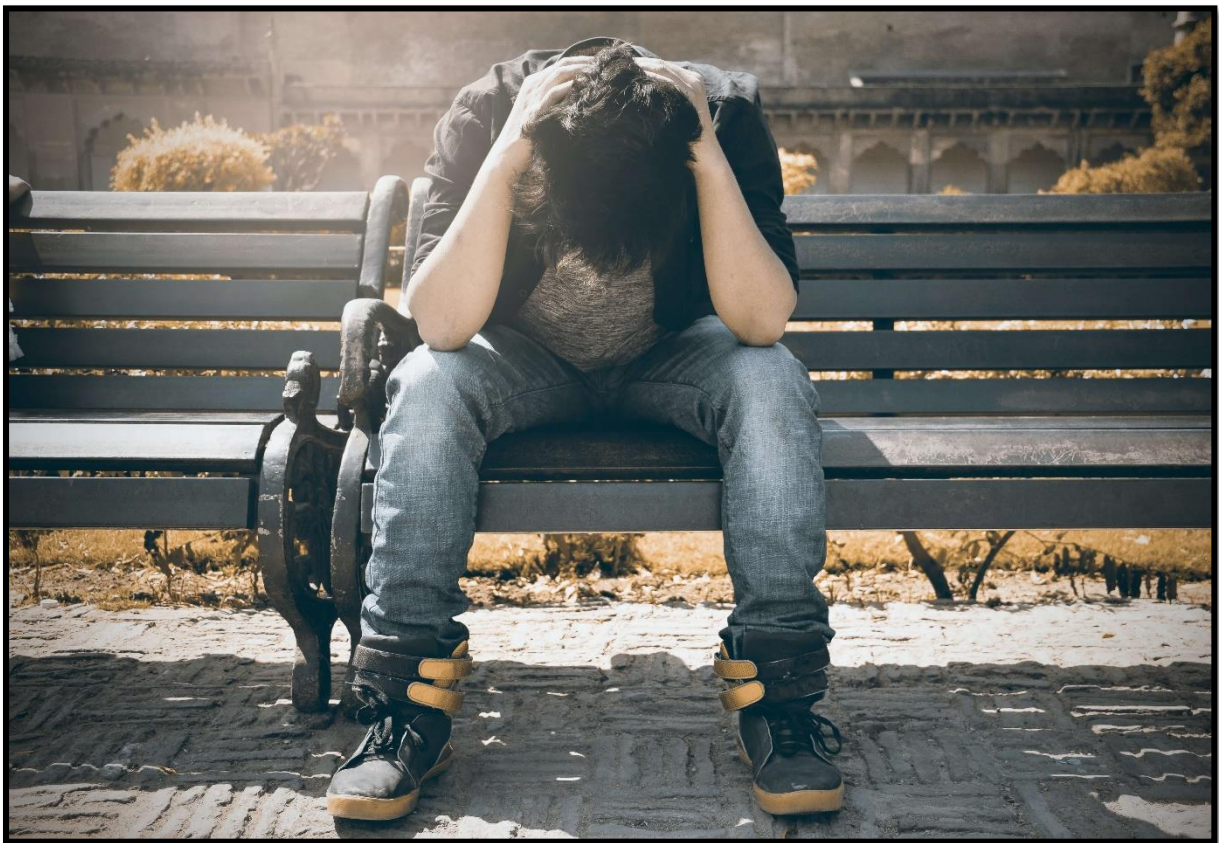
Journaling is another useful strategy. It can be used to great effect to clear your mind and get rid of the clutter that prevents you from moving forward with your life.

You may be feeling anxious, stressed or depressed about situations in your life. Keeping notes in a diary or journal will help to bring some clarity to the situation, put it into perspective and enable you to find a way forward. It will also help you to release the tension that builds up when you're unable to express yourself and unleash the feelings that are causing you misery.

Journaling also helps you to spot patterns in your life. It helps you to identify precisely what makes you feel miserable, stressed, angry or anxious. You can take action to avoid those triggers or address them in a healthy way the next time those situations arise.

## Learn to Let Go

It can be hard to learn how to let go since many of us are raised in an environment where we cling onto things, whether those be possessions, emotions, or relationships. Unfortunately, this tends to apply to both the positive and negative ones.



Everyone will go through times in their lives when they feel unhappy, angry, or frustrated. This is completely normal and is something that cannot be avoided. Nor should it be. The key to overcoming those feelings, though, lies in how you deal with them. Do you dwell on them, and ruminate over them

repeatedly? Or do you find a way to release them from your mind and let them go?

Mental clutter and chaos can ensue if you don't let go of the negative emotions and feelings that you're clinging onto for dear life. The longer you spend focusing on them, the less time and energy you have available for the positive emotions that you need to get the most out of life.

While all of this makes sense, it can be harder than you imagined to let go of those negativities. So, here are a few expert tips to help you:

- Face the pain. If you're feeling anxious or stressed, your kneejerk reaction will be to protect yourself and hide from the emotional upheaval. However, you need to go through this negativity to begin the process of recovery. If you delay the process, you'll never be able to completely overcome what you're feeling.
- Don't lie to yourself. Identify every part of the negative emotions you're experiencing. Don't try to convince yourself that things aren't as bad as they could be. Instead, acknowledge it, recognize it and then accept it.
- Remember nothing will last forever. Negative emotions are stronger than positive ones but you must bear in mind that, no matter how bad it feels, they won't last forever.

- Self-reflect. Don't get trapped in a negative downward spiral. Reflect on what's happened and work out how you can avoid descending into a pit where more bad things will inevitably happen.
- Don't fear the future. Although you have negative emotions now, the future is bright and you can rise up and embrace it only after you let these negative feelings go.

## **Avoid Multi-Tasking**

We're all trying to juggle more than at any other time in history, so it isn't too surprising that we all try to multitask. Yet, this isn't as helpful as you might imagine.

Multitasking will make you less, not more, productive. Evidence has shown that if you shift between tasks, you can waste as much as 40% of productive time. While you feel like you're achieving more, the chances are that you aren't. If you put all of your focus on one task, it will be completed more efficiently and also more effectively. Multitasking has a negative impact on the quality of the output you produce.

It's even been shown that multitasking impacts negatively on the way your brain works, slowing it down and making it less

efficient. That means you need to eliminate unnecessary distractions that are causing your mental clutter and narrow down your focus to the task in hand.

## **Make Decisions and Stick to Them**

When you're able to make a decision and stick to it, you can really weed out the indecisive clutter and chaos that fills your head when you haven't planned a specific course of action.

While it may sound simple to make a decision, the reality isn't always that easy. Many of us waver between possibilities and struggle to come down on one side or the other when there are two different options.

The key to effective and decisive decision making is to focus on what's really important and to bear in mind that gratification will almost certainly not be immediate. You must be self-disciplined once you've committed to a course of action and not be tempted to fall at the first hurdle. If you don't stick with the decision you've made, you'll never be able to achieve a clear mind and take back control of your life.



## **Be Kind to Yourself**

If you're to truly organize your mind and find inner peace, you'll need to learn to start being kind to yourself. While most of us agree that kindness brings better quality to your life, many of us still fail to show ourselves the self-care that makes us happier and more positive.

But what does being kind to yourself actually mean? How does it look in practice?

Essentially, you have to learn how to nurture yourself. After all, you can't rely on kindness being shown to you by strangers, but you can always show it to yourself.

Being kind to yourself means looking after your own physical and mental well-being. It means having disciplined health habits and living a balanced lifestyle. This comes in the shape of getting enough quality sleep, taking exercise to strengthen your muscles, keep your heart healthy and help you stay flexible, and drinking plenty of water. It means going to the doctor if you experience a health problem and adopting healthy coping mechanisms to get you through the challenges and stresses of everyday life.

Remember, too that being kind to yourself is an ongoing process. It doesn't mean taking a couple of days to nurture yourself if

you're feeling especially low or distressed. It means taking regular time every day and week to look after your well-being. Don't wait until you're sick to care for yourself. Don't wait until you're exhausted before you take a break. Prevention is better than cure, so make sure you adopt a maintenance self-care regime.

# Conclusion

No matter how hard we try to keep a clear head, it's inevitable that we'll all experience mental clutter from time to time. However, the key to happiness and taking back control of your life is to find effective ways to achieve clarity and to get rid of all that chaos in your mind to find a positive way forward.

Clutter comes in many forms, from physical mess in the home or workplace, to emotional baggage that you lug with you wherever you go. Clutter can even come in the form of toxic friendships. Someone who is supposed to care for you may only cause you more anguish and distress instead of happiness and positivity.

In this book, we've looked at the many ways that you can take steps to organize your life in all its various facets. We've looked at how you can begin to declutter your home so that you can live in an organized, welcoming and positive environment. We've also examined how you begin to organize your workplace, both in terms of physical items and virtual clutter in your inbox and on your desktop.

We've even looked at how you can take steps to bring more organization into your life. You can give your schedule an overhaul. Learn how to say no to activities and events that you simply can't fit into your schedule. Identify the things that really matter before adding new commitments into your life.

We've addressed how you can limit your social media usage to help you become more productive and less caught up in the mental stress of comparing your life to that of other people. We've even examined how you can spot a toxic friendship and how you can then go about dealing with it while also helping to nurture and nourish the positive relationships in your life.

Finally, we've considered how you can clear the clutter in your head. Use strategies like writing lists and journaling to get the feelings and emotions out of your brain and onto the page. Letting things go, avoiding multitasking and being as kind as possible to yourself are all vital components in taking back control of your life. It will allow you to move on to a positive, organized future.