

21 TIPS TO CULTIVATE CLUTTER-BUSTING HABITS

by Rita Emmett

Our clutter does not come from being messy, lazy or disorganized, it comes from four goofy habits:

- Saving things that we never need or use**
- Insisting on bringing in things that we never need or use**
- Never deciding on a place for things to be put**
- Setting things down instead of putting them where they belong**

So how about trying to incorporate one new habit to counteract clutter habits?
Here are 21 ideas:

1. If you haven't used it in a year, get rid of it.
2. Every day, before turning on your computer, toss or put away three things on your desk.
3. When you buy 1 thing, get rid of 1 thing. (a toy for a toy, a shoe for a shoe)
4. Glance over your left shoulder every time you leave a room. Pick up the clutter you spot and take it with you to where it belongs.
5. Decide now. Clutter is often caused by putting off decisions.
6. Make a place for everything, such as special papers, and each child's school papers. Make a place for mittens, scarves, hats, boots, and so forth.
7. Put everything in its place. Teach your family to put things where they belong. (One way to teach: "If everything is where it belongs, you can come with to the mall or you can watch TV. If not, you can't.")
8. If you take it out, put it back.
9. Ask a "non-clutter friend" to help you sort through your closet or other clutter. Some people will be delighted to help you de-clutter. All you need from them is help in deciding what to keep or not keep.
10. Take five minutes whenever you can to tackle a small section of clutter (or do it during the commercials of the first hour of watching TV).
11. Find a person or organization that will love & cherish your stuff as much as you do. That makes it easier to say good-bye to things you don't use or need.
12. Decide on one place to put your keys (a hook or bowl near the door, a certain section of your purse) and cultivate the habit of putting them there always.

13. Live simply so that others might simply live.
14. When you want to buy something – no matter how sensational or adorable it is – think if you have a place to put it. Even if it's the greatest bargain in the world, don't buy it if you don't have a place for it. What a life changing way to think!
15. Always open mail next to a wastebasket. Get BIG wastebaskets for every place in your home that you need to encourage tossing or recycling paper, magazines, catalogues, newsletters, newspapers or other paper clutter.
16. Never leave a room empty-handed until the only things in the room are ones that belong there.
17. Never go up or down stairs empty-handed as long as there is something that should be taken up or down.
18. Have company over once in a while so the house gets cleaned.
19. Pay bills, fold laundry, sort through catalogues & magazines, and so forth during TV commercials or while visiting on the phone.
20. When de-cluttering a room, start at the doorway & go right or left. Then if you're interrupted, you can see where you stopped.
21. Don't de-clutter & clean the same day. You might keel over, poor thing.

Just making one of these habits a regular part of your day will impact the amount of clutter in your life.

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