



Is Clutter and Disorganisation Causing Stress and Tension in Your Life?

Decluttering has become a much used buzz-word but many people still don't know how it actually works. It's quite simple in practice, but with our busy lifestyles, we often don't get time to dedicate a few hours to sorting our desks, filing cabinets, computer files, database systems, or homes. It can also seem overwhelming when confronted by cluttered rooms, paper strewn desks, and cupboards which are full to overflowing.

There are many different methods employed in the decluttering process, from aggressively throwing out anything that hasn't been used in 3-6 months, to a more gentle and facilitative process. Many people will have an attachment to articles such as greeting cards, favourite toys, knick knacks or clothing, which may have been in their possession for years. Often these items will have a sentimental significance and they can choose to either work through the letting go process, or retain those favourite items as 'memorabilia'. For those items that the client decides to let go, worthwhile charities are grateful recipients and will often come and pick them up; or items can be sold on.

Working alongside the client, the task is immediately divided in two and it becomes easier, and in fact can be fun. As the clutter and confusion disappears, it becomes much clearer how to organise a room to best suit its occupant, and its designated use.

Homes present a range of 'clutter-areas' from the childrens' bedrooms, to the kitchen cupboards, to the living room full of toys, books and discarded newspapers. Often it may be a matter of re-arranging furniture, creating storage systems, and removing anything that does not relate to that room, for example kids toys belong in their bedrooms. Working with a goal of being organised, once and for all, everything is relegated to its own area so it becomes second nature to put things away where they belong. It is immensely satisfying as everyone in the household gets used to finding what they're looking for, without the frustration of a harried search, and the home becomes a source of pleasure and comfort.

Home offices abound now as many of us choose to work out of our living environment. While it's a real pleasure to miss busy peak-hour traffic and work to our own schedule, a home office offers its own challenges. Often times the kids toys will end up on the office desk, or conversely, work papers will find their way into other rooms of the house. A home office needs to be compartmentalised so that it is a dedicated working area, and treated as such. Creating workable systems in the home office, with spaces clearly defined, makes life so much easier and allows you to sit at your desk and focus on the task at hand.

Garages are a favourite storage place for 'everything' from empty appliances boxes, to outdated file boxes, old clothes and things that no longer work. A two-car garage that only fits one car, or no car at all, is commonplace. Once sorted and organised, items can be put to one side for a garage sale, boxes are deconstructed and put in the collection bin, and storage is found for such items as tools etc, and the cars can once more get out of the rain and get into the garage.

Wardrobes often carry clothes long out-worn, which no longer fit, or are no longer appropriate. A wardrobe-declutter every few months means you only have before you clothes you actually wear, that fit well and look good, and getting dressed in a hurry becomes a breeze. Clothes can be categorised by season, by type, and/or by colour. Out of season clothes ideally get stored either in a spare wardrobe in another room, or packed away in storage containers so you are only dealing with items which are in season. Categorising by type is usually the easiest method i.e. group shirts, tops, trousers, skirts, dresses, suits and jackets. This makes separates dressing efficient, and often you'll find new combinations which work together.

Many store their extra goods in storage units, especially if they have downsized to a smaller home. Obviously storage units have their uses and short term can be very useful. However, if you have had items in a storage unit for a long period of time chances are you will never use those items again – after all you haven't used them for a long time and may have even forgotten what you have stored away. Rather than pay monthly rental charges, declutter the storage unit and either sell on, donate, or use the stored items.

Decluttering and organising your environment does need some dedicated focus. However, there's no that once done a sense of peace and harmony can be found, stress diminishes and one finds a feeling of relief at being 'back in control'.