

De-Cluttering:

Most people think of de-cluttering as getting rid of stuff. But it actually has roots in people's feelings about their stuff. Until you can get past the identification that people have with their stuff, really de-cluttering is tough.

People's "stuff" has history, it has meaning, and it has all sorts of emotions attached to it. Understanding those concepts makes it easier to help people let go of their stuff.

Step 1: Set A Goal. What do you want the space to be or look like. Make a plan.

Step 2: Get Ready. Gather your supplies such as garbage bags, boxes, and some time.

Step 3: Sort. This means Keep, Donate, Toss.

Step 4: Purge. Get rid of things you don't want or need

Step 5: Store. Find appropriate places for the things you've kept – use bins or storage containers for like items

Tips:

- Do NOT buy bins or storage containers until you have removed any items you are not going to keep! You don't know what you need until you actually see what you have.
- Don't obsess about items – look at them objectively and ask the questions: Do I love it? Do I use it? How does it make me feel? If there isn't a positive answer to at least one of these questions – you don't need it.
- Stop getting catalogs and junk mail to reduce your paper coming in. Call or email the catalog companies and ask them to stop sending them. Use one of the websites (I listed them below) to get off mailing lists.
- Make de-cluttering fun! Play some wild music, bring in a friend, set a reward for when you are done (chocolate is a good thing!).
- Use contractor grade garbage bags – the regular kitchen bags rip and shred. You can pick these up at any home center like Home Depot or Lowe's. You can get free boxes at grocery stores or places like Target – just ask and they'll give you as many as you want in most cases. You may have to put them back together – all you need is packing tape.
- Don't try to do too much at one time – it can get overwhelming. Pick a set area or a set amount of time and stick to it. Take baby steps – every little bit counts.
- Figure out where you can donate your items. Visualizing a great place that could really use your stuff can make it easier to let things go. I like to donate books to the Williamson County Library book sales and animal related items to Happy Tales.
- Remove things from your house as quickly as possible so you are not tempted to bring them back in. Go NOW to the dump or the thrift store or the charity and get the things out of your house so you can enjoy what you have left.
- Set a goal of how you would like your life to be – and recognize that physical clutter leads to mental clutter. Clearing out the clutter can lead to mental clarity and a better sense of peace in one's life. Plus it can recharge your batteries letting you be creative and accomplish your goals.

Places to get off junk mail:

www.optoutprescreen.com (reduce or eliminate credit card and insurance offers)

www.dmachoice.org (get off junk mail lists)

www.greendimes.com (get off catalog and junk mail lists)