

## The Business of Life



**Productivity expert Barbara Hemphill describes a relatively new phenomenon she calls “The Business of Life™.”** She believes that running our homes and lives in this increasingly complex world is very much like running a business – and it is similarly challenging. She concludes that it is impossible to run this “business” without an efficient business-like home office area, and good paper management skills.

**But who taught us to manage the flow of papers in our homes and run the business of our lives? For most of us, no one did.** The technological revolution has stressed us all, bringing paper overwhelm, information overload, and continual changes, all on a 24/7 basis. Previous generations had exponentially less to deal with.

**Don’t despair! Take a nice long slow deep breath.... Here are some of the basic things you can do to improve your handling of “the business of life.”** Working on just one or two will make a difference:

- **Come to terms with the fact that you can’t avoid “the business of life,”** and that it has become more complex in these fast-paced, technologically-driven times.
- **Create a designated permanent place in your home for these tasks** – ideally in an area that is pleasing, comfortable and peaceful. Good lighting, well functioning equipment, a comfortable chair, and even colorful attractive supplies will all support you in getting things done.
- **Make sure you have everything you need to efficiently run your “business”** – including suitable office supplies, bins and boxes for categories of papers (e.g. bills to pay, papers to file, action items, items going “in” and going “out”), a trash bin, recycle bin and shredder, a good filing system, a way to manage your contacts, a good calendar and a planner or to-do list system. If you can’t set up a good system on your own, get yourself some help. As I said, no one taught us these skills.
- **Once your space and systems have been set up, set aside a specific time (and enough time) in your calendar each week for “working the system”** – for the paper management tasks you need to do to keep things up to date. If you don’t make an actual appointment with yourself, your time can easily get filled with “putting out fires” and doing more enjoyable activities!
- **If you hate these tasks - this required paper management and maintenance, get yourself some help.** You may benefit from an accountability partner, an assistant, a bookkeeper, or a professional organizer.



## Karen G. Kramer - Space to Breathe

*Professional Organizing Services for Your Home and Office*

- **Update your goals on a regular basis.** Without knowing where you are going, it's hard to make decisions about what to keep and what to let go. And before you know it, your home office can become cluttered and disorganized. So be clear about your goals, make decisions about what's really important to have around, and keep moving forward.
- **Now take another nice long slow deep breath.....**  
Remember to include self-care regularly in your schedule, too, and trust that it will aid you in accomplishing your goals.



**We can't avoid "The Business of Life,"** but working on a few of the suggestions above will definitely make things flow more smoothly in your home.

For related "getting-organized" articles (e.g. **Shredding Advice**, **Stopping Junk Mail**, **Records Retention: What to Save**, and **Clutter-Prevention Habits**), see my website's Advice page. Barbara Hemphill can be reached at [www.barbarahemphill.com](http://www.barbarahemphill.com).