

The Essence of Getting Organized

 **Appreciate the Value of Getting Organized** - Getting more organized can save you money and time, and it is good for your health, your safety and your relationships. It can help you focus, be productive and creative, and foster peace-of-mind. I've come to see it as a form of self-care, and even a personal growth opportunity. Reflect upon how outer *space to breathe* encourages inner *space to breathe*, and vice versa.

 **"Organize with Purpose"** - Getting organized is not an end itself, we don't do it just to have a neat house! Identify your goals and aspirations, and let them inform this process. Think about how getting organized can help you achieve your larger personal goals. When stuck, remember these goals and let them motivate you.

 **Make a Commitment to this Process** - Set aside official blocks of time in your calendar, and stick to them. Get support from others if you need it, e.g. friends and family, an accountability partner, decluttering buddy, or professionals such as ADD/ADHD coaches, psychotherapists, and professional organizers. As the "business of life" has gotten so complex, it is not uncommon these days to need a "personal trainer for your stuff"!

 **Encourage Yourself to Take One Small Step at a Time** - This is a brain-friendly approach that prevents overwhelm. If your step was a decluttering project, honor that area as "sacred" and do what you need to do to maintain it. If you are cultivating a new habit, remember that it can take a month's worth of daily repeating to have it stick.

 **Aspire to Have Everything in Your Environment Put There Consciously** - Do I love it? Does it energize me? Is it useful? In Feng Shui they say to touch each thing in your home once a year and give it permission (or not) to stay.

 **Deal with Your Issues about Letting Go** - In our materialistic and paper-full society, lots of stuff keeps coming in, and lots of stuff needs to be regularly going out too! As you "let go," know that you are creating room in your life for "the new," and facilitating "flow." The sentimental items can be particularly difficult to deal with. Be selective, don't hold on to things out of guilt, and be realistic about how much room you have and what you can take care of.

 **Expect Resistance and Backsliding** - See them as normal hurdles to find a way to jump over. In fact, there is no way for real change to occur without them.

 **Be Compassionate with Yourself about Whatever Happens** - Most of us were never taught organizing skills and strategies, nor had role models who were dealing with the stresses that we have now, 24/7. Watch out for perfectionism, shame, blame, and any other negative self-talk. Stop them, and bring yourself back to a more balanced place.

 **Remember that Maintenance and Good Habits are Essential** - Probably the biggest organizing mistake we can make is thinking that getting organized is a "one and done" project. Build in regular time to keep things decluttered and up to date, and work on creating new habits, if needed. The best habit to cultivate is "closing down" things at the end of the day, e.g. putting your desk in order, straightening up the kitchen, helping kids neaten up their rooms or any shared family space. 5 or 10 minutes, with a timer, can go a long way toward setting you up for the next day.

 **When in Doubt: Stop and Take a Break** - Take a few long slow deep breaths, stretch and move around, adopt a mindful attitude. All can help to keep you focused, motivated, and in balance.