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Getting Started

Fall 2009

Getting Started -- It's Tough.



Some of us think we have an organization problem. Yes. "It bugs me that the guest room is a disaster from not putting away last year's Christmas ornaments." Or "the basement is a mess because every time there is an extra cardboard box lying around, I toss it down the stairs." Or I'll hear: "I do get around to these places eventually - at my leisure, so to speak. And that works fine as long as I don't get a surprise visit from friends or family!"

Some people deal with a more chronic, daily disorganization that creates adjunct problems - lost bills, lost time looking for things, and a general distraction with clutter that makes the home feel less welcoming or even functional for the entire family.

In this newsletter, I hope you'll find solid approaches that will stick - ideas to help you create priorities, set your own deadlines, and generally Get Going! Fall is the perfect time to reenergize your efforts and see results before the holidays. Or give yourself a gift this year. Focus on you, your environment, how you want to feel in your home.

As always, if you have specific questions, need a jumpstart consultation or coaching to address your specific situation, please reach out and call or write.

To your organized life,

MIND GAMES

How to Get Started

One day, you looked around the room you were sitting in and you said "I have too much. We have too much. What is all this stuff? Is this all important? " You didn't feel this way last year, but the economy seems to have given you more clarity on what's important - to your home, your space, your time.

Or maybe you've been discussing putting your house on the market -- but "Oh my. Where do we start? How do we make our house look appealing to buyers, like those TV shows?"** "They have so much less stuff. We have the books, the toys, the coats. When would we ever find the time to go through the whole house like they do?"

Key Questions to Ask Yourself: Do I have trouble starting a project, sticking with it or maintaining what I have put in place?



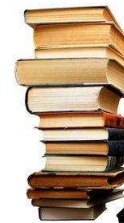
When and Where to Get Started: You don't have an external deadline so what's going to get you started? Here are some ideas.

1. Start with the room that bugs you the most.
2. Start with the room that affects your life daily.
3. Start with one category or collection.
4. Start with the hardest project first - the others will seem easy.
5. Manufacture deadlines and create an accountability or buddy system.

For example: Do you always have to clear the kitchen counters and table before you sit down to eat? Or do you work at the dining room table because the alleged home office has become a storage place for papers, not a productive office space? Start here because clearing this space will feel good *every day*. Feeling the new benefit every day will motivate you to continue on with other parts of your home.

Or maybe you're wringing your hands over **your books?**

Children's toys - books or toys, they seem to be everywhere in the house. If you're dreading going through a **collection**, whether it's books, toys, or Mickey Mouse statues, this could be a great place for you to start. Yes, it will be difficult, but think how you'll feel when you conquer the hardest project first! If you can do that, I promise, the rest of the house will seem easier.



To work on a collection, aim to keep your favorites. Choose them first. Think "reduce," not "eliminate." These are precious items you've purchased and preserved, perhaps for

years. Keep the most treasured, the favorites, the ones with the warmest memories. Take a picture of the full collection if you want a way to remember all of them. Think about who might enjoy adopting some of them to care for, just as you have. Share the joy.

Setting deadlines is the key to accomplishment:

Maybe you're someone who needs **structure, deadlines, goals** - but we have none here yet, so how can we introduce structure for the planners and goal-seekers. We can manufacture them. They are real, but they are deadlines to others in your life.



Example: One woman decided Valentine's Day would be a perfect **manufactured deadline**. She would lovingly give away jewelry to her granddaughters. With Valentine's Day as her inspiration, she not only simplified her jewelry collection, but also her entire bedroom (including the closets, always tough!). Or how about

the upcoming December holidays? Clear a guest room in time, or decide what you'll give to your children. Last year, we each got a box of our memories, saved by my mother. I LOVED going through it all!

Going through older items, perhaps from **your parents' home**? A deadline could be an appointment you make with two antique dealers (always get two estimates, never just one from the person buys the items from you). Make the appointment *before* you go through your parents' things and you'll have your own manufactured, self-imposed deadline.

Another way to add goals/deadlines: Thinking of putting your house on the market early next year?

Take 1-2 rooms each month and focus only on downsizing and decluttering these rooms. The following month, pick two new rooms. The focus is what makes this work and feel less overwhelming.



Or our old standby. **Set a timer for one hour**. Or play one album by a favorite artist for one hour. Just to get yourself started.

You like to **reuse or recycle**: So before you start working on your project, decide whom you can donate to. It's much easier to give away some less-favorite things if you can picture someone else enjoying your good quality things.

Example: Vintage/costume jewelry: In our downsizing class last week, we heard about a group that wants your jewelry - they recycle the beads.

Example: Someone in your family is moving into a new apartment, out on his/her own for the first time. What a gift to receive your kitchen items. Think how they'll feel. Might make it easier to give away, don't you think?

Or in the room you're focusing on, **post something to inspire yourself**, something you'll see often as you simplify/organize the space.

Examples include:

A favorite quote (I have a few on downsizing if you want them; just email me.)

Or a photo to represent your vision of your "new" room.

Or if you're clearing a space so that you and a child/grandchild can work on crafts or hobbies together, keep a photo of the two of you in plain view!

So now the big question (the one you thought I might ask!) **How or what will inspire YOU to get started?**

See section **Upcoming Classes, below, for getting your home ready to sell. Co-hosted by a stager and me.

The Answer to My Most Frequently Asked Question

"So, Are You Ultra-Organized?"

People often think an "organizer" should have a very organized house and be a master of his/her schedule, priorities and time.

Well.... my house is "organized enough," for my needs. I call myself "casually organized." This means I've learned to work around, compensate or outsmart my organizational challenges. And if you lived with me, yes, you'd be subjected to - oh, about quarterly - bouts of organizer inspiration around the house. Things change!

My schedule is organized enough. I don't miss appointments. I rarely miss deadlines. I get done what I say I'll get done. My schedule occasionally has too much going on, though! And so, I weed out, so to speak.

But behind the doors of this organizer's home office, there's a procrastination story to be told.

There's the dragging of the feet throughout. The starting of a lot ...but finishing is hard.

And there's our heroine who has difficulty sticking with deadlines I make with myself (not with others).

Deadlines I make for myself are for moving projects along. When they don't work, they really don't work. I just can't get started. Or I can't finish. What am I to do?

So what have I learned that might be of use to you?

My challenges are ...

When something is *brand new*. Never done it before. Don't know if I can do it. Not sure it'll turn out as well as other things I know I'm sure I'm good at.

When there's a *part of the project* I know I won't enjoy, that stops me from starting. All four paws in park, as a cat would stand, stubbornly.

When the fun of the new and creative idea wanes, and there are lots of details to be handled, my interest wanes and stops me.

What to do about it? Coincidentally (Think so?!), my coaching certification requires six meetings with an advanced level coach. Guess what my issue was at our last meeting? Yes, exactly.

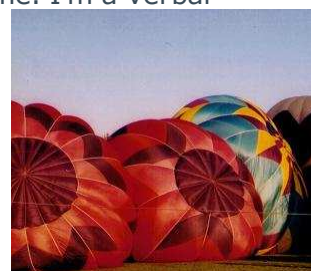
How can I stop dragging my feet, once and for all?

A big question deserving quality reflection time.

What did we figure out about -- how to rewrite this procrastination story?

Brainstorming Out Loud. When something is brand new, I now ask someone to brainstorm with me. I'm a verbal processor, so talking out loud about the new project is key.

It gets me connected to my critical and creative thinking abilities - getting me started, *somewhere, anywhere*.



I gain confidence this way when something's new. By breaking it down or *pulling it closer to me* I figure out what to do next.

Like the balloons as they come closer to land softly.

Know how you think and how you process. They're your keys to finding a way to get started.

What's that one small step that will get you started? If you're downsizing, will you talk out your thoughts on how to get started? Visual? Draw a floor plan of your house and figure out where to start. Kinesthetic/movement? Take a house tour

and write down your ideas. Or go buy the planning notebook.

How we talk to ourselves is key to change. I have always thought that the word "try" was a negative. "I'll try" means no commitment (or so I used to think). What's the result; will you make it or not? I've now relaxed a lot on this point. "Try" has a different meaning (after coaching).

Now, a favorite expression is "I'll take a crack at it." Or "I'll just try it." I use these phrases for myself, not for client work or anything I owe to someone else.

To get started on a brand new project, saying to myself "I can take a crack at it" is a big deal. Because I can't fail at trying. "Try" means it doesn't have to be perfect, A+ quality the first time.

So, give this new language a try and see if it helps get you started. Take a crack at a business plan, a new idea, or at downsizing. Get started -- just for half an hour!

I'll have more to say on my blog and in the next newsletter!

Resources of the Month

A new consignment shop in Milford!

Consigning for Good

603-249-9481

172 South Street (RT 13 near Milford oval)

Milford, NH

11-7 p.m.

Keep your profits or donate to a local non profit organization.

Books: Lots of ideas for recycling/donating/selling on my blog: <http://organizenh.com/wordpress/>

Recycle anything! Look it up here.

<http://earth911.com/>

Upcoming Classes

October 14th 6-8pm

Selling your home? Need to stage and declutter?

Attend our do it yourself workshop (at a private residence in the Manchester NH area).

Julie Chrissis of New England Staging Group

& Sue West of Space4U Organizing

Contact me for more info or check my Facebook page!

<http://www.facebook.com/SueWestSpace4U>

January - March

Organizing Ideas for the New Year
January 27th, evening program at the [Rodgers Memorial Library](#) in Hudson, NH.

Downsizing Dilemmas - Solved
2 hr program at Rivier's Institute for Senior Education ([RISE](#)).
5 week program, RISE, Spring semester.

How Can Space4U Help Me?

Downsizing Workbook Now Available

Whether you are staying or moving; do it on your own with our workbook. Advice, forms, expertise:
<http://organizenh.com/store.htm>

Need a Jumpstart?

We offer a flat rate, 2 hour, "Jumpstart" consultation. Ideas, expertise and a plan to get you started on your own. The do-it-yourself option!

Coaching Services

This option might be for you if...

- You want to organize on your own, but aren't sure where to start;
- You need check-in dates, so you keep at it;
- You are too far from southern NH to have an in-home consultation, but want to collaborate on organizing;
- You want to establish new habits. They can be hard to instill on your own!

Coaching time can complement side-by-side organizing assistance, or has proven to be valuable on its own. Hourly basis, by telephone 3-4 sessions monthly or as needed.

Please contact me if you are thinking about this as an option, have questions, or think this might work for you.
(603)765-9267 or Sue@OrganizeNH.com

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