
Life SPACES

Ideas to help you claim more time and space on life's journey • Published by Space4U • Volume 2, Fall 2007



Back to School or Back to Work: Fall Means Calendars 101!

Have you noticed that after Labor Day there's more energy in the air?

From childhood we learn that summer is an easier, slower time and the "school year" schedule means we gear up for a faster pace and reschedule our lives.

Doesn't it feel good to return to a predictable schedule though? If we can organize our days, then we have more time – for ourselves, each other, for fun or work, for our dreams!

The earliest calendars had little to do with the seasons. Calendars were based on the time from one new moon to the next. But calendars changed over time to meet the practical needs of the day. The ancient Egyptians *added* five days to bring their calendar into line with the solar year. The Romans, superstitious of even numbers, made the months into 29 or 31 days (except February with 28). Julius Caesar decreed the year should begin with the first of January. And the chief Gregorian reform was to make every fourth year a leap year *unless* it is a century year.

There are still issues of

consistency with the calendar, but this is the tool we use to plan our weeks and our days. Just as the ancients reorganized their calendar, you're thinking "There's got to be a better way!" There's work, errands, karate class, music lessons, soccer practice, family activities, projects around the house, and more! Why choose one calendar over another? How often are you in the house vs. on the run? How much help do you want around the house? These answers help you decide which format will work best.

Some people like a *one page-per month, hanging wall calendar*. Choose one that inspires you; you're more likely to use it. The wall calendar, unlike a portable day planner, is visible to everyone in the household. It is a great way to begin a discussion of getting more help—for instance, kids do their laundry; someone other than you prepares weekend meals, etc.

Others prefer a *family calendar*. This is a special type of day planner, less business-focused and organized around household and/or family needs. The special sections for items like meal plans, groceries, errands, and 'to do' lists

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Are You Left-Brained, Right-Brained, or Brainwashed?

Organization works better when it's geared to your unique mental process.



"Human brains are not all alike. People are wired differently. Some brains ...think in association. ... Others love linearity, closure, order, numbers. Our thinking preferences are part of our gifts. Let's not try to change our fundamental structures, but learn to use both sides to our advantage."

~ Marilyn Paul, Ph.D.

[It's Hard to Make a Difference When You Can't Find Your Keys](#)

Keeping our time and even our space organized is a *mental* exercise. Where will you put this newsletter so that when you need it again, you'll find it quickly? For organizing systems to last, they need to be set up intuitively, according to how

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Spacing Things Out

Live Life In Chapters



Sue West, Owner, Space4U

Live your life in chapters.
Think of your life as a book. Books have chapters and so does your life – each chapter has a different primary focus.

Here's a sample "life in chapters" outline:

1. College education
2. Building a career
3. Marriage - building a partnership
4. Career success
5. Children growing up
6. Children are older; begin to explore a next career
7. Children on their own; time for your next career or volunteerism - could be a completely different focus this time around!

Living in chapters allows us to live each day fully, knowing we are focused on our number one priority for this time. Writing down our number one priority, or even outlining the chapters, helps us live a simpler and less overwhelming life.

Maybe you want to home school your children but also work full-time, volunteer at church, work at a non-profit group, train for the marathon and go back to school. Can you reasonably handle it all, giving your best to each? Which one is truly your priority, during this chapter of your life?

Create your life's outline of chapters. List your top priority in each chapter. Only one! Use this technique to help with the inevitable competing demands on your time.

Write down your number one priority right here:

This chapter's #1 priority: _____

So in this chapter, you may decide your #1 priority is staying involved with your children's lives. You participate in parent-teacher organizations, carpool, chaperone trips, and attend all events. When an interesting business workshop arises, it's an easier choice; you know your priorities for this chapter.

Because you're living in chapters, you will be more comfortable with choices you make. We're not giving up on other dreams. We buy the boat now, but not the cottage because we don't have time to care for both and

handle our other responsibilities. But next chapter, maybe we'll rent or buy that cottage on the Maine coast because we'll have more time.

Write your own book. What chapter are you in? What's your priority during this chapter? Then go back to that daily activities calendar and see what is really important.

Keep your chapter priority and your list of life chapters alongside to help you make tough decisions about time.

Write your own book. What chapter are you in? What's your priority during this chapter?

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Calendars 101

make it easy to keep organized. You can easily see *each* family member's activities. See our featured product (pg. 4) for a great example.

People who want to create their own system will use the *classic business planners* (e.g., Franklin-Covey®, Day Timers®). These have sections for contact information, mileage, expenses, and several calendar views. But keep it simple. It's easy to spend more time *organizing* the planner than doing the things that need to get done.

People who like efficiency, gadgets, and the latest "thing" like *hand-held PDA's* such as the Blackberry®, the Treo™, or the iPhone™. If technology will help you stay more organized, then this is your tool. Make sure you are comfortable with the small screen.

Make the most of the calendar you choose:

List everything on the calendar. Include errands, household chores, projects, school and work deadlines, preparation for and follow-up from events/appointments.

Resist the temptation to have two calendars. It's easy to double-book, not book, or lose the book.

Review the calendar daily. In five minutes, you will feel you have control. Sunday night is a good time to regroup from the weekend and review the week ahead. This kind of routine prevents *last minute-itis*. Review schedules, 'to do's,' meals, budgets, and family issues. At a minimum, do the scheduling. Talk about everything else during the week. Try each way for a few weeks. See which fits your lifestyle the best.

Welcome to our second issue of *Life Spaces*. Most of us get disorganized at one time or another, especially when we go through significant life events – family grows or changes, business grows, we move. Space4U helps equip people with new ideas, advice, creative problem solving, and hands-on assistance to figure out new ways to handle what life throws our way. If you missed out on the first edition of *Life Spaces*, or would like a friend to receive a copy, visit www.OrganizeNH.com or call 603-765-9267.

Donating Feels Good to Both Parties Not All Children Get A New Backpack



Nashua Children's Home is committed to the care, welfare and educational achievement of children and youth within its Residential and Educational Programs, and the successful transition to adult living of young men and women in its Transitional Living Program. It provides care and stability to boys and girls unable to remain with their families, special education and housing for youth that have "aged-out" of care.

This fall, fifty children have headed back to school. The following items would be greatly appreciated: new and gently used clothing, larger-style backpacks, 3 to 5 subject notebooks and general school supplies. There may be items your children have slightly used, like pencil cases or a calculator, for instance. Then they received a new one. Or you may be school shopping and decide to let them pick something for NCH, in addition to their filling their own list.

To donate, please contact:
Nashua Children's Home
125 Amherst Street
Nashua, NH (603) 883-3851
Contact person: Lori Wilshire
Lori@nashuachildrenshome.org

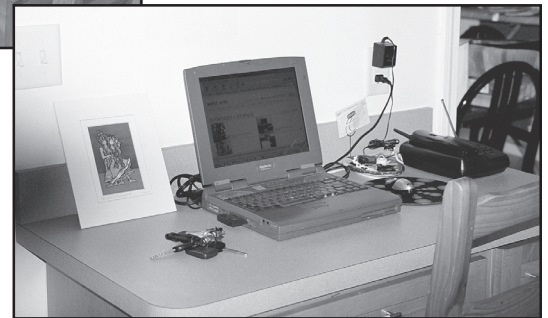


In each issue of *Life Spaces*, we highlight a local charity to give our readers an idea of the different needs in the community that might be filled by our decision to create more time and space in our lives.



No more "counterproductive" clutter!

This miracle was created simply by using a calendar! How, you ask? Call Sue to find out how you can have a clean counter and know where to find every last slip of paper.



Counter catastrophe? Almost everyone has it.

Brain Wiring from page 1

you think and remember. Using tools that support your thinking and organizing style will help keep your life organized and calmer. These two scenarios illustrate.

Sarah called after a diagnosis of ADD. She runs a business out of her house and manages the household. We figured out that she needs to have business hours separate from personal time, with clear boundaries. She tried many times to mix up her day. But after grocery shopping, she consistently found it too difficult to get back to work. Now her workday begins at 8 a.m., ends at 5:30. Only emergency personal tasks are handled during the day – often at lunch hour. This structure allows her to manage both worlds successfully.

Kate asked for help managing her time as well. She has a home-based business, takes care of her parents, and manages her household. On a green index card, she keeps her business 'to do'

list. Her personal 'to do' list is on a yellow index card. She carries both index cards with her throughout the day. When she's finished a task, she looks at both cards and decides which list her next task will come from. This works very well. Her hours are longer, because she mixes business and personal time.

But the variety of tasks and knowing that she can handle both worlds during the day are motivating. Now imagine if Sarah and Kate traded ways of

handling personal and business hours. They would not be as successful because they would be working against their *intuitive processes*.

Understanding how your brain is wired, how you think, what motivates you, how strict your boundaries need to be and even how to outsmart yourself will help you determine the appropriate tools, techniques, and systems to reclaim your space and your time.





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COMING EVENTS

Get Motivated. Get Focused. Get Organized. October 10, 2007. Nashua.

Gather a group of 10 or more for a customized organizing workshop. Are you a scrapbooker or quilter? Are you in a business group that could use help on office or workflow issues? Get a group of teachers together for a workshop on classroom and time organization.

“Ask the Organizer” events at the Staples office supply store, Nashua.

Does the holiday season stress you out? Simplify everything from gift-giving to parties.

Business Owners: Watch for January’s “Get More Done in a Day” time management workshop.

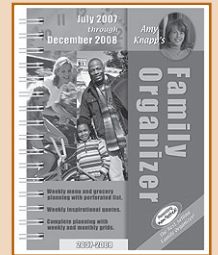
Space4U workshops pull everything together. You find a tip in a magazine, hear one on Oprah, jot yourself a note... sometimes it happens, sometimes it doesn't. Sue makes it stick! For more information on the above dates or to organize a workshop, see www.OrganizeNH.com.

Because you read Life Spaces . . .

Just mention that you read Life Spaces or share your issue with a friend and you'll receive 10 % off a Back-to-School or Back-to-Fall Organizing Consultation. Ready for all the artwork, permission slips, school papers, extra-curricular and team information to start coming home? Ready for schedule changes? In just two hours, Sue will give you tips and tricks on how to manage it all! Call 603-765-9267 or visit www.OrganizeNH.com.

Hot New Product!

Are you the family CEO? Help is on the way.



Amy Knapp's Family Organizer is Parenting™ tested and mom approved. Gain control of your busy lifestyle!

- Weekly and monthly calendar grids
- Weekly grocery lists – perforated to tear out and go!
- Weekly menu planning saves time and money.
- Weekly ‘to do’ lists and inspirational quotes
- Color-coded stickers

Check it out at at www.familyorganizer.com or at Barnes & Noble.