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Lifestyles

Away with clutter



By Dana Korey

Clutter weighs you down, slows you down

Clutter is stuff you don't need and don't want. It's mental fat. It weighs you down and slows you down. Your personality and potential get suffocated under layers of stuff. Like fat, clutter grows over the years, hassling you, eating away at your energy. It distracts you and blurs your focus.

Clutter means you can't find anything, have regular panics about lost items and keep buying new things because you can't find the old ones. It demands your time. It has to be dusted, filed or otherwise unproductively dealt with. It's in the way, so you keep shifting it around before you can put other things away.

Clutter takes up space in your head, not just your closets. It nags at you with reminders of unmade decisions, unfinished projects. It's difficult to move forward if you keep tripping over reminders of how you used to be; of what you thought would be right for you once, but wasn't;

leftover from past dreams and past failures; things which you've grown out of or moved on from; decisions you haven't made and things you just haven't gotten round to. Clutter doesn't just make it hard to close the doors on cupboards, it makes it hard to achieve closure in your life.

It's estimated that we use 20 percent of what we own 80 percent of the time. Much of the other 80 percent of our possessions we'll just be clutter.

How many times have you heard yourself say:

"I can't throw this away, it cost good money"

OK, but it's served its purpose. Think of it like a vacation or an evening out, a temporary pleasure. You've had your money's worth out of it, now its history.

"I might need that someday"

Yes, but are you cluttering yourself for years because of something you could buy another of (if you did ever need it!) for a few dollars? You can't keep everything. Clutter is anything unused or

unloved. Ask yourself this, "Do I want to be a library or storage facility for every object that comes my way? Do these items bring value to my life or just take up space? Can I find this somewhere else like on the internet?"

"I'm so used to it"

Familiar clutter can be a security blanket, reassuring you as to who you are and holding back the fear you might feel if you were free to move uncluttered into a new and challenging future. But you know how irritating it is when family members persist in treating you as you were, not as you are? Well, clutter can be just as limiting as outdated family viewpoints, keeping you stuck in the past.

Dana Korey, a Del Mar resident, is founder of Away With Clutter and is a Nationally recognized speaker & member of the National Association of Professional Organizers. She provides organizing services and conducts workshops on how to get organized. www.awaywithclutter.com