

# *Passion for Life Coaching*

*Making Deliberate Choices for a Fulfilling Life*

Newsletter by Suzette Langley, Life Coach and MSW

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## **Spring Cleaning**

*For every minute spent in organizing, an hour is earned. – Benjamin Franklin*

If you know me, you know cleaning and organization are near and dear to my heart. I am not a packrat. I don't like clutter. I dislike crowded places and surfaces. What can I say but I like things clean and simple. Now, do not make the mistake of thinking that I am obsessive compulsive about cleaning or keeping things neat. The truth is I spend little time engaging in these activities because I have developed an organizational system that works well for me, fits naturally, and is easy to maintain.

Many people struggle with getting organized. I hear statements like, "I have never been organized!" or "It takes too much time" or "I clean up but then it all falls apart." However, what people often do not recognize are the costs of disorganization. Disorganization has emotional, mental, and financial costs. Emotionally, you become frustrated, annoyed, and discouraged with the messes you encounter daily. Each time you walk into a cluttered area, you expend mental energy to recall where you have placed things. This is a distraction that costs you time, energy, and focus that can be devoted to more important tasks. Financially, you may lose money buying duplicates of an object because you cannot locate the original. A common area of disorganization can be the home office. Most of us receive several pieces of mail daily. We may stack the mail up intending to get to it but keep getting distracted. Each day the task becomes more overwhelming. By the time we finally gear up to tackle the paper, our desk is covered, bills are misplaced, maybe overdue, and we bought more stamps because we could not find the ones we purchased last month. What should have been a simple task has turned into a half day project.

Another excuse often offered for not reducing clutter is "I am emotionally attached to it. I will feel sad if I throw it away." I can sympathize with these feelings as I have had to sort through the belongings of deceased love ones. Certain items can evoke powerful emotions that one would rather avoid by just leaving things alone. An approach that has helped me with emotional attachment to objects has been to recall how often I remembered I owned this object before I "discovered" it in my closet. Generally, the answer is "never." The memories of my parents and childhood are in my mind and heart not in objects I own. I have chosen to keep things I refer to as "highlights." The highlights are objects that evoke my fondest memories. These are the items that bring back the clearest pictures and make me smile the most often.

An additional perspective to consider if you experience a strong emotional attachment to objects is whether or not a particular object still holds meaning in your life. Some items that you keep make you recall significant moments in your development and stand out as events that made you who you are. Too often, we hold onto things that we have outgrown, that remind us of negative experiences, and no longer represent who we are. If the object no longer fits who you have become, get rid of it.

Here are some additional tips to help you get started with spring cleaning:

- Make a plan. Where do you want to start? What is your personal style? What items need to be placed where for most effective use? Visualize how you want areas to look. These steps will give you a direction and a place to begin.
- Work in small areas. If you need to organize a room, don't expect to finish it all in one day. Start with a part of the room such as the closet. If that is too much, start with a drawer or a shelf.
- Give yourself a time limit. You are more likely to stay focused and not get caught up in the sentimentality of objects.
- Consider making "Action Piles." I like to use the following labels: Throw It, Donate It, Keep It, and Don't Know. Then, act on the labels.
- Take your Don't Know pile and put it away for 2-3 months. (Remember to mark your calendar to remind you of this time frame.) If you have not thought about or needed these items, get rid of them as appropriate (Throw or Donate).
- Reward progress. Go out and celebrate. Or, invite others over to show off your new space.
- Still overwhelmed?? Consider a professional organizer or coach!

As Florynce Kennedy once said, "Don't agonize. Organize."

#### Additional Resources:

Organizing from the Inside Out – Julie Morganstern

Unclutter Your Home – Donna Smallin

How to Simplify Your Life – Tiki Kustermacher

I am partnered with Big Vanilla Athletic Club. As an integral part of the holistic services department at the club, I address the mental and emotional aspects that are part of overall well-being and life success. Visit the club website at [www.bigvanilla.com](http://www.bigvanilla.com). Wellness services are open to members and nonmembers.

On May 4, I will be a panel presenter with two area coaches at the Home-Based Business Showcase at Office Depot in Severna Park, MD. The topic presented will be "Marketing and Networking Made Easy." Our presentation time is scheduled for 2:00pm.

To learn more about coaching, visit my website at [www.passion-for-life-coaching.com](http://www.passion-for-life-coaching.com).

If you found valuable information in this newsletter, please pass it along. I welcome new subscribers! To subscribe/unsubscribe, please send an email to [passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net](mailto:passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net). I also welcome feedback and topic ideas.

Feeling overwhelmed with your stuff? Are you drained by disorganization? Coaching can help you gain perspective on your clutter and identify an organizational system that will work for you! Experience the energy and freedom of a clutter-free life. **If you live in the Annapolis area, I offer on-site consultation to manage your mess and simplify your stuff.** To find out more, contact me at [passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net](mailto:passionforlifecoaching@verizon.net) or 410-757-7326 to schedule a complimentary 30-minute session. Coaching sessions are generally conducted by telephone so you do not need to reside in the same area as the coach.