

**Clearissa
Coward's
Command
Center**

Organize Your Life

in 21 days!

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About The Author

Clearissa Coward is a lifestyle blogger with an emphasis on organization and redesign. She is an organization enthusiast and consultant with a flair for design on a dime. There are times however, when she delves into the realm of love, life, family, friendships, feelings, fantasy and the reality of life.

Her website (www.clearissacoward.com) is a conglomerate which includes, **Divinely Organized** - Professional & Personal Organization & Redesign, **Customized Virtual Business Solutions (CVBS)** - a full service virtual assistant business, **Clearissa's Craft Boutique** - an eStore with a variety of one of a kind crafts and other home and personal items, and **Clearissa's Avon Boutique** - a 24/7 shop till you drop skin care/glam site where the focus is on looking and feeling good.

Although there are several tendrils to her business, they are all centered around living an uncluttered, successful and feel good life. She is blogging about her passions. Join her on the journey.

INTRODUCTION

Last year, I ran a 21-Day organization campaign for my followers. During the 21-day challenge, I provided 10-minute daily challenges and tips to organize different areas of the home, car and even ladies' handbag. Each challenge was scheduled for 10 minutes and could be anything from organizing a junk drawer to organizing the trunk of the car. Since then, several of my followers suggested the tips would be more helpful if they were all pulled together into one easy to reach location. This e-book is the result of those suggestions.

Organize your life in 21 days

I am dedicating my e-book to my organizational hero, Peter Walsh. I started following Peter years ago when he was on a little (that's a joke the show was immensely popular) show called *Clean Sweep*. Walsh is Australian born and organizing with Peter is even more fun because of the accent. There were several wonderful organizers on this show and on many other shows but Peter is the truth. He is straightforward and has a solution for every organization issue. He was my hero then and he is now. Peter made me feel good about being organized. He was the first person I ever heard call themselves a professional organizer and I knew I wanted to do that. Thank you Peter Walsh.

Be sure to have *storage bins, trash bags, labels, a labeler (if you have one), permanent markers in different colors, scissors, a journal or notebook of some kind, and shelf paper* on hand before you begin the organization process. I would also suggest purchasing a couple of over-the-door shoe storage bags as they will come in handy down the line for organizing several areas in your home. You can pick those up [here](#). If you have the basics on hand you can pick up other storage systems as you need them or even better...create your own.

Remember these are quick 10-minute fixes because we do not want anyone to become overwhelmed and give up. This is your starting place and if you stick with it, you will see a definite difference which should give you the incentive to take it even further.

I want each of you to modify the assignments of this challenge to fit you and your lifestyle because my desire is to make the organization process personal for each of you. Organization is not cookie cutter or one size fits all. If you do not find what works best with your personal style you will not stick to it. And I so want you to stick to it. If you get bogged down in the process, pop me an email or contact me on social media and let's discuss what it is that you need to make this journey a pleasant one for you. I am a consultant and we can figure out a personal plan for you on the phone, via email, social media outlets, or in person, if you prefer. So, never give up! We can find what works for you.

Let's get started and I hope you will enjoy the process.

DAY ONE

Under the Sink in the Master Bathroom

If we allow it, this space can become a product graveyard. We buy all these hygiene, hair care and makeup products that we think will be great when we first get them, and then something newer and more improved comes along and the once best product ever ends up pushed to the back of the cabinet. Our guideline today – if you have not used the product within the last 6-months, it is no longer useful to you and should not be taking up this valuable real estate.



1. Remember to set a timer or your cell phone alarm so that you do not get involved and spend more than the allotted 10 minutes, unless you have more time, then by all means, take it.
2. Pull everything out of the cabinet.
3. Place all items you have not used within the past 6-months in the trash bag (remember eye liner, mascara, etc. have expiration dates).
4. If you have your medications under the sink area, check each one for expiration dates.
5. Wipe out the bottom of the cabinet (change shelf paper if you can do this within the 10-min time frame).
6. Add storage bins and/or boxes back in the cabinet.
7. Replace the items that you have decided to keep.
8. If you have a labeler and time left, label your storage containers to make it easier to recognize what is in each one.

DAY TWO

Night Table Drawers and Surfaces



1. If there are 2 nightstands, I believe you can remove everything that does not belong within the 10-minute allotted time but if you need more time and have more time...take it.
2. Remove all items that that belong elsewhere. At this time do not concern yourself with where the items belong, just place all items that can be trashed into the trash receptacle and put items that should be moved to another location into a box to be distributed to the correct areas later. Only leave items in the night table that belong in a night table. If you don't use it...loose it.
3. Do not overload drawers. Keep only items you would use while in this area – reading glasses, TV remote, hand lotion, reading material (not a library, maybe a couple of magazines or one book), a pen and a pad.
4. Your sleep area should be the least stressful place in your home, therefore the less clutter in the area, the less stress in your bedroom.
5. You can use small organization bins and containers to coral items in this area. Be creative, utensil organization is not relegated to the kitchen.

Note: As you go through this process, I suggest you keep an organization journal. For instance, when you have more time, you may want to revisit this area and add shelf paper. No it's not necessary but it will add that style, that oomph that can add a big impact. Although you may not have the time to add shelf paper within the 10-minute time frame, you can make an entry in your redesign journal to add this as a separate project. The design journal will become very handy as you continue the process. I have a decorating and home improvement journal as well. More on that another time.

DAY THREE

Shelf in the Master Closet

Do not panic...we are focusing on the shelf only. We will leave purging the clothing for a later date. You can add purge and organize master closet to your redesign journal because you will need to tackle this someday soon.

1. Remember to set your timer or alarm on your cell phone so that you do not get involved and spend more than the allotted 10 minutes (that would be a disaster). Just kidding, I realize sometimes organizing can become addictive.
2. The first move is to take everything down from the shelf. With your boxes, baskets or bins for separation in place, trash whatever you find that is no longer in good condition, place items that you wish to donate in your donate bin, place the items that belong someplace else in the house in a basket/container for transport, and the things you want to take to a consignment shop in a separate bin. Do not think about the items too long, remember the timer is ticking and you only have 10 minutes.
3. Once you've removed all of the things you no longer want, it's time to organize the items you will keep. Personally, in my master closet there are shoe boxes that hold my overflow of shoes. Yes, I love shoes but this is a non-judgmental zone therefore, judging the author is prohibited. ☺ I use clear shoe boxes purchased from the [Dollar Store](#). They work great because I can see through them and know exactly which pair of shoes are in which box. Secondly, I stack them by color. Black stack, blue stack, red stack, etc.
4. If you have sweaters on this shelf, I suggest shelf dividers to keep them folded nicely and separated and to avoid the dreaded tip over. You can buy dividers [here](#).

Note: Today's journal entry for me would be, when I have time, I will label my shoe boxes with the color and heel height of the shoes. Although the boxes are clear, I think the labels will add the final step of organization to my master closet.

Day Four

Food Storage Containers



1. Remember to set your timer or alarm on your cell phone so that you do not get involved and spend more time than you have on this task.
2. First step, take all of the plastic ware out of the cabinet. Again, with your boxes, baskets or bins for separation in place, trash any plastic bowls that no longer have tops, or are discolored or otherwise not in good condition.
3. If you have several of the same size bowls with lids, downsize and place the extras in the donate bin. Plasticware is relatively inexpensive so do not hang on to pieces that you do not currently need.
4. Match lids with containers and place them in the cabinet ordered from largest to smallest.
5. Do not think about the items too long, remember the timer is ticking and you only have 10 minutes.
6. This cabinet may also house the many plastic drink containers as well. You know the ones I'm talking about, the ones with logos that you've kept to take to the gym with you so you can have water on hand. I have dubbed them adult sippy cups. When I cleaned out my plastic cabinet about six months

ago, I had at least 15 adult sippy cups. I donated all but 4 of them. Quite a purge.

Note: Today's journal entry - slowly replace all of plastic ware with glass storage bowls with lids. With all of the talk about bad plastics and how dangerous it is to reheat leftovers in plastic containers, I suggest we all change from plastic to glass.

Note: I have replaced all but 2 large and 2 medium and 2 small plastic storage containers. I have replaced all of the others with glass containers and I no longer heat my food in the plastic containers.

Day Five

Family Affair

It is day five of the 21-Day Home Organization Challenge. Let's make this day a family affair. Today I challenge each member of your family to spend 10 minutes in their personal space purging things they no longer use. Include the children. Any toys they no longer use or have outgrown will be donated to children who have less. Not only is this an organization challenge it can also become a teaching moment.

The areas to purge can be as diverse as each family. Choose areas that you feel need the most family attention and go for it.

Family Involvement Day



1. It is especially important to let each family member know that you are all on a timer. You may want to increase the time, but letting them know there is an end to the process will help everyone remain focused.
2. First step, asks each family member to spend their time in their room(s) purging.
3. The children can concentrate on toys they have outgrown or no longer find interesting.
4. Children can also clean their desks and dispose of old papers and/or books they are no longer reading.

5. Again, use this as a teaching moment and explain the importance of helping others and that the books and old toys will be donated to children who are less fortunate. This is also a good time to teach them how to use the “donate”, trash, and sell bins that you have used all week.
6. Trust me, they will feel a part of the process when they get to choose which toys, books, etc. they want to purge.
7. Because you have been purging all week, you can use your 10 minutes today as the project manager of this particular challenge and go from room to room making sure everyone else is on track and watching the timer.
8. If hubby or wifey is involved (and they should be) they can spend their time in the garage, man/woman cave, or any other area s/he claims as his/her space. If he/she is the cook, he/she can spend his/her time in the utensil drawer in the kitchen. Remember to address areas that need the most help first.
9. The areas to purge can be as diverse as each family. Choose areas that you feel need the most family attention and go for it.
10. Remember not to set your expectations too high. This is a process and anything that wasn't completed can be added to your journal and finished another day. The important thing to remember is that this is a beginning so pat yourself and your family on the back and keep it moving.
11. Plan to do something fun, as a family, after you're done. You all deserve it. Keep it light and make the entire day fun.

Day Six

Review & Organize



Today instead of physically working on your 21-day project, I would like for you to review what you have accomplished this past week and to give yourself a pat on the back. With what I am certain is a busy schedule, you have managed to etch out a few minutes each day to organize a small piece of your life. It gets easier as we move along.

It would also be a good thing to review your journal. I hope you've added to your journal daily. Now is a good time to organize it into categories, such as notes, future projects, family projects,

home improvements, etc. This journal can be an excellent reference for you for years to come as you continually improve your living conditions and remained organized.

You can also ask your family how they felt about their first purge. Get a feel for if they understood the importance of taking responsibility for their spaces within the home and also if the children understood how important the donation process is to helping others.

Below are some helpful notes from me to you. You can add them to your journal if you like as a reminder of the importance of giving everything in your space a home. In other words, *a place for everything...everything in its place.*

Note: It's easy for things in your space to get lost if they do not have a home. Keeping your life organized means keeping your things in their proper places. Organized people keep order by storing things properly and some of us even label storage spaces. Be warned, labeling, like organization can become habit forming. I purchased my first handheld labeler about a year and a half ago and I am in love!

Note: Make easy-to-access storage spaces for things you use all the time, and don't let your storage spaces get cluttered. Be creative about finding places for things. In addition, as a BIG NO: never label a storage space as "miscellaneous!" Miscellaneous give you permission to toss any and everything in that bin and we do not want that. That is the beginning of disorder.

Day Seven

Day 7 – Spice Cabinet

Did you know that dry spices tend to lose their “*umph*” after six months? By the way “*umph*” is a very technical term that only organizers understand. And if you get it, then you are well on your way to becoming an organizer extraordinaire. Today we are checking expiration dates and organizing our spice cabinets.



1. Remember to set your timer or alarm on your cell phone so that you do not get involved and spend more than the allotted 10 minutes (that would be a disaster). Just kidding, I realize sometimes organizing can be fun and you may not want to quit after 10 minutes.
2. First step, by now you know the routine, pull all of the spices out of the cabinet.
3. Check expiration dates and although I dread saying this...toss all spices that have exceeded the expiration date. Yes, you can keep and continue to use them; however, just know they will not have the same flavor. I had to learn that as well and once I did, I started buying my spices in smaller more manageable sizes and it's working for me. Also smaller bottles are easier to store.
4. Now that you have tossed the out dated spices, it's time to wipe out the cabinet and restock the spices that are still valid.
5. If you do not have a pre-planned system for storing your spices, at least replace them in the cabinet alphabetically. I am betting that once you begin this exercise, your creative juices will begin to flow and you begin to think of ways to creatively organize this cabinet in the future.

Note: If you do not have a planned system in mind for your spices, this is a good time to begin thinking this through and coming up with a plan.

Example of a journal entry for the spice cabinet: Currently I do not have a system in place, per se'. My goal is to have all of the spices in the same type bottle and labeled in a consistent way by date (00/00/0000). I will line the cabinet and possibly add a stackable storage system.

Day Eight

The Cabinet Under the Kitchen Sink.

Today we are going to take a chill pill. Have a cup of tea/coffee, perhaps go to the cloud and choose your favorite song and slowly move into our challenge. What I'm trying to do here is set a mood because organization does not have to hurt. And after all, our challenge is only 10 minutes of your day.

1. First step, that's right, you've got it, pull everything out of the cabinet.
2. Now that the cabinet is empty, let's consider our options. You can either wipe it down or put the stuff back, you could add new and fresh shelf paper or you can do what I've done and add peel and stick floor tiles. Let me explain why I chose peel and stick floor tiles for this particular cabinet.
3. *Cost - they are inexpensive. You will probably only need one box of the tiles and because it's in a cabinet, you certainly do not need to purchase the most expensive tiles.*
4. *Variety - there are so many patterns and colors. You are going to have so many options. Allow your creative juices to flow and have fun with it.*
5. *Durability - these tiles are made for the abuse a floor has to withstand. I am so pleased with how easy this cabinet floor is to maintain. I can wipe it out at will without issue.*
6. Decide how you wish to proceed and clean the bottom of the cabinet.
7. Put an eagle eye on the things that you keep under your sink. If there are products you have not used in six-months to a year...why are they there? Sometimes we outgrow certain products. Let them go.
8. Take inventory and decide if you can place other products in a different type of container. For instance, my dish-washing liquid is stored in a pretty bottle with a

pouring spout on my counter top. Only overflow is stored in the bottom cabinet.

9. Wipe down the products you decide to keep before you place them back in the cabinet. The outside of the containers can get pretty grimy and sticky over time

10. Personally I like to have these containers contained. You get it? Contain the containers? That's a little bit of organizational humor. I have two boxes under my sink that I have covered with a pretty wrapping paper. I store all of my cleaning products in the boxes. And I have tiled the bottom of the cabinet, just a couple of ideas for future use. I think I will blog that processes later...stay tuned.

11. I realize I added a few ideas here and there. However, the bottom line for the 10-minute challenge is to remove all of items under the sink, toss those that are no longer used and/or otherwise are grimy, wipe out the cabinet, and replace the remaining products (preferably corralled in some sort of container).

Note: Although I threw several suggestions/ideas out there, this project doesn't have to cost a cent. The suggestions are for future reference.

Suggested Journal Entry: I would like, at some point, to replace the boxes with clear containers where I can actually see what is stored in the boxes. The ability to see what is in the boxes will alleviate the issue of buying duplicate items. Cha Ching! Saving time and money.

Day Nine

The Medicine Cabinet



Today's assignment is a serious one. We all have old, unused medications, both over-the-counter and prescribed. Disposing of old and/or unused medication requires some thought and planning. I have done the research and there are several legal and safe ways to clean out and dispose of old medicine.

1. If you are like I as before my research, you think flushing unused or outdated medications is the proper way to dispose of them; however, it is not always the case. Visit the **FDA** website for a list of medications that are safe to flush. There is great information on this site.
2. You can also contact your pharmacy or city or county government's household trash and recycling service to see if there is a medicine take-back program in your community. This organization can also explain any special rules regarding which medication they will take.
3. If your community does not have a take back program, the FDA suggests the following for disposing of your old medications with your regular house hold trash.
 - a. *Mix medicines (do NOT crush tablets or capsules) with an unpalatable substance such as kitty litter or used coffee grounds.*
 - b. *Place the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag; and*
 - c. *throw the container in your household trash.*
 - d. *Before throwing out your empty pill bottle or other empty medicine packaging, remember to scratch out all information on the prescription label to make it unreadable.*
 - e. *<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicin>*

4. Let's move on to the steps for organizing your **medicine cabinet**.
5. Remember to set your timer or alarm on your cell phone so that you do not get involved and spend more than the allotted 10 minutes (that would be a disaster). Just kidding, I realize sometimes organizing can become addictive.
6. Pull everything out of the cabinet and wipe it out. Always start with a clean slate.
7. Now that the cabinet is empty and clean, inspect your medications.
8. Separate the expired or old medications and the ones you intend to keep.
9. All expired medications should be disposed of in one of the ways suggested above.
10. Ensure the meds that you are keeping are in child proof bottles.
11. Return the medication that you are keeping to the medicine cabinet or drawer.
12. Remember to scratch off all of the information on the labels of the medication bottles before discarding. Labels should be unreadable.

Note: Be sure to follow the FDA guidelines to properly dispose of old medications.

Sample Journal Entry: Schedule 10 minutes every six months to check my medicine cabinets to make sure old medications are disposed of. Remember medications include over the counter medicine (aspirin, allergy and cold remedies, even old band aides that will no longer stick, etc.) as well as prescription drugs.

Day Ten

Organizing Your Magazines

Remember to set your timer or alarm for the time you have allotted for this project.



1. First step, gather all of your magazines into one place. Don't cheat, get the ones you have hidden in the bathroom as well.
2. Let's get our thinking process into place. We have to decide on the criteria we will use for disposing of the beloved magazines that we all keep because there is a special recipe or an article we think we will refer to someday. Do not start the timer until you have decided on the criteria.
 - If you are saving a magazine because there is a recipe you want to try or a room with a style you want to duplicate, tear out the page(s) you want to keep and start a scrapbook/binder or put them in your journal.
 - If you are saving a magazine because you think it's going to become a collector's item...well I don't want to tell you how to invest, but do you know how long you will have to keep that magazine. And besides, we can now read magazines online.

I'm just saying.

- Finally, if you are keeping the magazine for sentimental reasons - don't! Let it go!
- The only reason I can fathom to keep a magazine over 2-months is because you are going to share it with someone else. That means get it out of your space and into theirs as soon as possible.

1. Now you can start your timer.
2. Separate your magazines into three piles, the ones that are in horrible condition and are good for nothing except the recycle bin, the ones in good condition and can be donated to hospitals, doctor's offices or, depending the subject matter, schools, and finally, if you think there is a market for it in your area, the ones that are in great condition that you may want to try to sell for less than you paid. No you will not make a profit, but you will get something back. My neighbor does this every time she has a yard sale and I thought she was nuts. But recently I read a blog where someone suggested the same thing. So there must be something to it. I'm game because every penny counts.
3. Okay so the rest is simple. Pull the pages you think you want to keep. I hope they are tagged in some way, or this project could take a bit longer than 10 minutes, and place the magazine in the recycle bin.
4. Put the good ones in a basket and place the basket in your car. I am betting that if the basket is in the car and not in the house, you are more than likely to drop them off sooner at the hospital or doctor's office. I do this, they will be so grateful.
5. Finally, the ones you have decided to sell at a yard sale should be placed in another basket. But please set an "if not sold by date" and if the magazines are not sold by that date, you will share them with a non-profit as well. I would suggest a month because by that time, you are purchasing a new magazine. As an idea, you could advertise them on Instagram, Twitter, or one of the other sites that can help you get the word out. Some folks won't mind at all being a month or so behind if the price is right.

Note: Do not keep magazines under the guise of selling them just to keep them in your possession. Be honest with yourself or this challenge will not work.

Sample Journal Entry: Although I love the pages of a magazine I will read more of my favorites online and save those special pictures I want to archive on my computer, cloud, Pinterest, etc. You see, the possibilities are endless.

Day Eleven

Organizing Your T-Shirt Drawer

Side note – hubby hates it when I organize our t-shirt drawers. For him a t-shirt isn't comfortable until it's really ugly and disfigured and with a hole or two.

1. Remember to set your timer or alarm on your cell phone so that you do not get involved and spend more than you have allotted for this project.
2. First step, pull all of the t-shirts out of the drawer and go through them to decide which are good to keep and which should be tossed.
3. If your t-shirt collection is like mine, you don't have any that are worth donating. If that is the case, you will only have two piles. *Keep and discard.*
4. I know how difficult it can be to let go of a comfortable t-shirt. Comfortable usually means it has a hole or two, is really stretched out and mine have different colors of paint or stain from projects past. But we must be strong and let them go.
5. Toss all t-shirts that are too small, too large, discolored; with stains from God knows where, etc. Do not hesitate, do not think about it, throw them in the trash NOW! NO REMINISCING! I was not yelling, it's just my stern organizer voice.
6. Now it's time to fold the t-shirts you've decided to keep. ***Real Simple*** has a great instructional video that shows you how to fold t-shirts to take up less drawer space.

Note: I hope the [instructional video](#) is helpful but if you have a folding system that works for you, use it. You must start out like you will holdout. If you fold in a way that is too complicated, you will not follow through. You choose.

Sample Journal Entry: I will organize a t-shirt drawer each week until I have completed the t-shirt drawer of every family member.

Day Twelve

Self-Assessment - Organizing Your Personal Mentality

1. Does it seem like there aren't enough hours in the day, or dollars in the bank? Is your car usually running on empty, and your trash can full? You are suffering from a common affliction of being too busy - you have no time to spare, and no time to unwind. The good news is that there's a cure for that - Organization! Follow these simple steps below, and you'll be enjoying regular bouts of relaxation and peace of mind very soon. WhooSah!
2. **Determine the cause of your lack of organization.** Why do you feel all cluttered and overwhelmed? For some people, busy schedules get in the way, making organization difficult. For others, a simple lack of motivation or know-how is the culprit. To start organizing your life, you need to acknowledge the cause of your disorganization and make a decision to change it.
3. **Consider what needs to be organized.** Although it's easy to say "everything," chances are there are specific areas in your life that have more clutter than others. Where are you the most disorganized? Consider your skills when making plans, cleaning house, or running errands. Which of these is the most stressful for you to accomplish? Remember to consider your work life, friendships, and general thought processes as well.
4. If you do think that everything in your life needs to be organized, make a list and choose one thing from your list to focus on. Then move on to another item when the first is complete. Continue this process until you have completed everything on your list.
5. **Use a calendar.** If you have a busy schedule (or even if you do not!) purchase or make a solid calendar and place it somewhere you will see it on a regular basis. This could be near your keys, on the fridge, in your home office, and of course electronic. Take a few minutes to fill out the entire calendar with important dates and upcoming events.
6. Avoid filling out common activities that will clutter your calendar. Add the things that you have firm plans to actually do. This could include classes, your work schedule, doctor's appointments, and major events such as weddings, shopping with friends or PTA meetings.
7. Review your completed calendar and check your weekly schedule often. When are your breaks? Do you have short periods of time between events that you can use to your benefit? When are you busiest? Always schedule time for you as well. Time to go to the gym, meditate, take a nap or whatever it is that recharges you.
8. **Stop procrastinating.** Possibly the toughest item on the list, procrastination is a major detriment to organizing your life. Instead of putting things off, go

ahead and get them done. Force yourself to start and COMPLETE items on your to do list. If it can be done in two minutes or less, always do it right away while breaking down larger tasks into smaller pieces to make them manageable.

9. Set a timer for fifteen minutes and work like crazy during that time. Do not get distracted, take any breaks, or stop for any reason but an emergency during the time your timer is running. Then, allow yourself to stop working on your tasks when the timer goes off. Likely though, you will continue working because you finally managed to make headway on a project you've been avoiding. The reward is the ability to check something off your to-do list as complete.
10. Remove your distractions, whatever they are. Often it is the internet, your phone, sleep, or even a good book. No matter what distracts you, set a period of time where you work on projects without them.
11. **Start your day right.** If you work from your home, when you wake up, eat a good breakfast, shower, get dressed, and put on your shoes. Do all the things you would do, every single day, if you were going in to work at the office. This will change your mental perspective; by getting ready and making yourself presentable to the world, you have set yourself up for success. You'll have more confidence because you'll know that you are prepared for anything, and you will therefore be more direct about getting work accomplished and being organized about it.
12. **Write everything down.** Whenever you have an important thought, think of something you do not want to forget, or are reminded of something to do, write it down. This can be done in your planner or in another generalized notebook that you keep with you. Writing down your thoughts will not only remove them from your mind, making room for more thoughts, but also place them in a place that you can return to later.

Sample Journal Entry: I will revisit my journal to schedule other organization projects at least monthly.

Day Thirteen

Organizing Computer Files



Only 8 days left on our 21-day organization challenge. This is day 13 of our challenge. You are doing a great job and you are now in the home stretch and today we will be organizing **computer files**.

This project is difficult to complete in 10 minutes so today we will prepare for a time when we have more time.

1. Open your personal data files and create the following folders
 - a. Personal 20xx
 - b. Family 20xx
 - c. Household 20xx
 - d. Vacations 20xx
 - e. Finances 20xx
 - f. Bills 20xx
 - g. Business (if you have a personal business) 20--
 - h. Photos 20xx
 - i. Miscellaneous 20xx
2. I realize you may have different folders and I also realize each primary category above will have sub-categories, but for this assignment I am getting you started for a project that could actually require a couple of hours to complete. If you have the time to complete the project, by all means finish it today and check it off your to-do list. However, if not, complete the prep work today and enter the complete date in your journal entry for today.
3. Now that you have the primary folders in place, you can give some thought as to how you want to sub-categorize when you return to complete this project at a later date.
4. You can check dates and times on older files and either delete those that are no longer required or archive those that are not relevant at this time but could be of use at a later date
5. Once your new folder system is set up, set up a computer files cleaner. I like CCleaner, but there are several others.
6. After you've run your file cleaner run a defrag on your system. You can find

the defrag under file optimization. I like to run both of these programs monthly. I schedule them to run automatically.

7. You can run your file cleaner and defrag while you go about your business doing other things or even while you sleep.

Note: You should run your file cleaner and defrag at least once a week. If you only spend the required 10 minutes for today's project, you will probably need to go back to this project at a later date to completely organize your files

- * File like files together

- * Organize your files by year for easy tracking and archiving

- * Be sure to back up your computer files. **This is extremely important.** If you have a crash or your computer goes down for any reason, you will have all of your data, pictures, and music files on another device. I use an external hard drive. Some people prefer the cloud.

Today's journal entry –Purchase a new external hard drive, my current one was dropped by hubby and refuses to reboot any longer.

Day Fourteen

Share the Load

This is another of those assignments that is mostly about your mindset. In order for your surroundings to be uncluttered and organized, your mind must first learn to think differently. So today it's all about you. And if today's assignment sounds a bit repetitious, that is intentional because this is an important step.

Do not overwhelm yourself. If you find that your time is short and schedule is full, consider dropping less important things from your daily plans. Is that coffee date with your friend really necessary today? How about your plans to work on your work assignment outside of your work hours? If you are doing too many things at once, you will feel unorganized and anxiety will creep in. Cancel plans when necessary to give your head a little more thinking space. It is okay to say “no.”



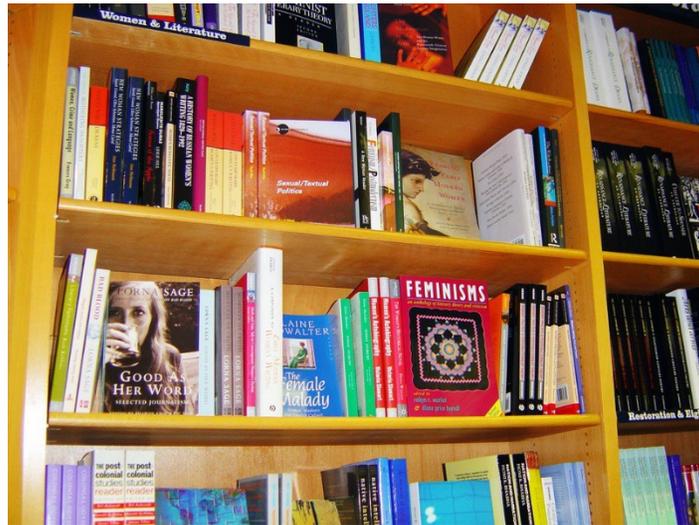
1. Learn to delegate projects to others. If you know you have to go grocery shopping but are much too busy to consider the idea, ask a family member or close friend to run the errand for you. As long as you aren't putting off major tasks or giving things that are important for you personally to do to others, delegating can be healthy.
2. Do not agree to everything you are asked to do if you know you do not have time for it. It is okay to say “No”. Your friends will not hate you, your boss will not think you are slacker, and your significant other will understand if you need your free time to get some personal work and organization done.
3. If you only feel that you have completed a task when it is “perfect,” you will be leaving a lot of tasks unfinished to clutter up your life. On a similar note, if you wait to start tasks until you are in the “perfect” decluttering mindset, you will be waiting a very long time. Perhaps forever.
4. Do not put off projects any longer, and know when a project is adequately finished and can be left alone. When you reach a point where it is “good enough,” let it go and move on to your next project.
5. If you have certain projects that you cannot seem to perfect, try taking a break from them and come back after you have conquered a few other smaller tasks. You will accomplish more in the same amount of time, rather than getting bored and wasting time on a single unperfected task.

Today's journal entry – Remember there is nothing wrong with saying “no.”
You can not help others until you help yourself.

Day Fifteen

Organizing Bookshelves

Many of you have already gone through this painful process and become one with technology. You read your books on your smart device or listen to them during your commute. However; for those of us who still love the feel of a book in our hands; this will be a bit more difficult. So on to the assignment for ole bookworms like me...



Remember to set your timer or alarm on your cell phone so that you do not get involved and spend more than the allotted 10 minutes. We do not want you to get off track.

First step, remove everything from the area (if you have as many books as I have, perhaps you will need to focus this first 10-minute project on one shelf). I do not want to overwhelm you and remember you want to personalize these projects. If you have an afternoon to spare, by all means complete the entire shelving unit and pretty it up while you're at it. However, if you only have the ten minutes, focus on one shelf and record in your journal and schedule in your planner when you will return to complete another shelf, but do keep the entire bookshelf as a priority because remember, one key to organization is completing projects.

1. Make sure you have your donate bin near. All paperback books, that you have read, will go into the donate bin. No exceptions and don't fuss. We can keep some of the hardbacks but paperbacks must go. You have to give a little to gain a lot.
2. Now you should only have hard back books and your decorative items left (all paperback books and other items that were out of place on your book shelf are no longer).
3. Wipe down the shelf and dust the books.
4. Only place books back on the shelf. Leave the decorative items off for a few hours or even an entire day. You'll find things look different when you come back to this project and maybe, just maybe, some of the outdated, older than dirt decorative items will make their way to donate, yard sale or trash bins we set up at the beginning of the challenge. Some of mine did.
5. Final step – If you only had one bookshelf – hurray – you are done. But if you have several other shelves to contend with, that's okay. You have begun the process and you now have a process to follow. Pull out your organization journal and journal when and how you will complete the process. Do not forget to add this project to your calendar as well. Schedule a finish date.

Note: One bookshelf down. Perhaps a few more to go, no problem, with a process in place, and a new excitement for success, you can do this. If you can get through 10 minutes and one shelf, you can get through all of the other shelves as well.

On another note: If you have other book shelves or books stored in other places, you are not done.

Sample Journal Entry: Schedule a time to organize other bookshelves within the next month (assign a completion date so you know what you are working toward).

Day Sixteen

Organizing Your Purse (If you are a man taking this challenge, you can organize your glove compartment in your car)

Remember to set your timer or alarm on your cell phone so that you do not get involved and spend more than the allotted 10 minutes. We do not want you to get off track.

1. First step, empty your bag. Make sure to have your trash receptacle near and toss all the old gum wrappers, paper napkins, empty dental floss containers, etc. Purge all old stuff and things you really do not need to carry in your purse. Your shoulder and/or arm will thank you for lightening the load.
2. Make sure you either have pouches or a purse organizer on hand. I love the purse organizers. I have one that I simply move from purse to purse. It makes changing purses so easy and it keeps all my stuff in place in my purse. You can order one [here](#).
3. If you do not have pouches or a purse organizer, use zip lock bags for now.
4. Put like items together in the same bag. Coupons in one container (I use a small credit card wallet for now but as I get better at couponing, I am realizing I need something larger), makeup in another and, dental floss, hand sanitizer, lotion, etc., in yet another. Once you have your purse organizer, you will not need all of the separate bags.
5. You can store your hair brush in a separate pocket of the purse. I love the handbags with multiple pockets. Don't you?
6. If you still carry your store loyalty cards, on a key ring, ditch it. There is a great app for both Androids and iPhones that allows you to keep all of your loyalty cards on your phone. It is the most convenient way to keep up with them. *You can find the key ring app at the playstore or the appstore.*
7. With everything in a bag or pouch of some sort, you can now place the items you are keeping back in your purse.
8. Business cards (in a business card holder of course) and wallet are the first to go back. They are both things you will always need quick access to. So they should have a prominent place.
9. Once everything is in place, you will feel great! I promise.
10. One last thing...make sure you leave a convenient pocket for your keys and

cell phone. Don't you just hate it when you have to take everything out of your purse just to find your keys? It is annoying...right? My remedy for that is to take the time to place your keys in the same pocket every time that you put them in your purse. I have a key ring that has a hook on the end. I can hook my keys over the end of the purse where the zipper ends. Once the purse is zipped, all you see is the little end of the hook. My keys are safely hanging on the inside of my purse but easily accessible.



Sample Journal Entry: I will gift myself a **purse organizer** this week.

Day Seventeen

Organizing a Linen Closet

Remember to set your timer or alarm on your cell phone so that you do not get involved and spend more than the allotted 10 minutes. We do not want you to get off track.

1. First step, remove everything from the area (whether a shelf or the entire closet, depending on your level of disorganization).
2. Dispose of all old, thread bear, discolored towels or other linens (remember the old towels make excellent cleaning rags but do not keep more than you need and remove them from the linen closet).
3. You can find a great tutorial on how to fold bath towels [here](#).
4. Fold all towels, hand towels, wash clothes the same way for a unified appearance. I also like to organize by color.
5. If your shelf held sheets you will need to fold them in a consistent manner as well. You can find a tutorial to teach you to fold fitted and flat sheets [here](#).
6. Remove all items that should not be in the linen closet. It is not a storage room.
7. Place linen closet items back in the closet or on the shelf. All similar items are folded the same and color coded, if you like that.
8. Final step – stand back and marvel at how good it feels to see that shelf or closet in such an organized state.
9. Just a note from my OCD-ish point of view, once you fold your sheets place them in the coordinating pillow cases. This look increases the level of organization and makes it easy to grab and go when you need to change your linen.



Note: Your linen closet project can continue at a later date, but at least you've begun. Do not be discouraged. Also, this project can be as elaborate or as simple as you wish it to be. Some people add ruffled borders to the shelf edges while others label them (I am a labeler. Some use baskets to hide clutter and to keep similar items in one place. Others use decorative boxes. It's all up to you. Have fun with it.

Sample Journal Entry: If not complete, schedule time to complete the organization and refresh the linen closet within the next month.

Day Eighteen

Organizing a Mail Station

Remember to set your timer or alarm on your cell phone so that you do not get involved and spend more than the allotted 10 minutes. We do not want you to get off track.

1. First step, clear the kitchen counter or desk top (wherever you leave your mail to multiply).
2. Engage the rest of the family in the mail sorting at another time. For today, the goal is to organize or create mail drop space.
3. Create a mail station where you can sort the mail quickly once you enter the house on a daily basis.
4. The space does not have to be elaborate and can be as simple as a cardboard box separated with tabs or as fancy as a professional mail sorter from your office supply store.
5. Choose a location that is near the main entrance your family uses on a daily basis.
6. Separate bills (if you still receive paper) from casual mail to make paying them easier.
7. Separate and place magazines in the space you chose earlier in the challenge.
8. Place a trash receptacle and recycle bin near your designated mail center and toss junk mail immediately.
9. After the initial set-up, it will require less than five minutes per day to maintain this process.
10. Now that the station is set up do some research to enhance it to work for your lifestyle. If you have a busy family, perhaps a calendar of events would be an asset here, as well as a message board.



Sample Journal Entry: Begin the research to enhance the mail/workstation and to make it work for my family.

Day Nineteen

Organizing the Trunk of Your Car

Remember to set your timer or alarm on your cell phone so that you do not get involved and spend more than the allotted 10 minutes. We do not want you to get off track.

1. First step, remove everything from the trunk of the car. Make sure to have a trash receptacle near and toss all things non-related to your car or old items that are no longer useful.
2. If you've been hauling around some things that should be in the house or garage, put them there.
3. Car care items and cleaning supplies should not be rolling around all willy nilly in the trunk. If you have jumper cables, WD40, flares, tire cleaner, etc., in the trunk of your car, these items should be corralled in some sort of container. Mine are in a clear plastic container and I have velcroed it to the floor of the trunk so it does not move around while I am driving. I have since found some awesome trunk organizers and I intend to invest in one that will also hold grocery bags when I shop and keep things from falling over. You can check them out [here](#).
4. Another idea is a wicker basket. Yes a wicker basket in your trunk. It should not move around too much and it's better than having your stuff all over the place.
5. The trunk of your car or the back of your SUV should not be used as an additional storage room. Unfortunately my husband and I have this debate all the time. He keeps his fishing gear in the back of his SUV along with a lot of other stuff. So if we go thrifting or even grocery shopping, we always have to move stuff around to use the area. I say you don't fish every day, why not store the gear until you do. He says, you never know when the mood may strike. With his vehicle, he is winning this debate so far.
6. A quick vacuuming of the trunk of your car would be great as well. When I take my car to be washed I always ask the technicians to vacuum my trunk

when they vacuum the inside.

7. *This was a quick project so you may want to go through your glove compartment and console as well while you're at it. Why not? If you do, this is one task you can mark complete in your journal.*



Note: The only other items that should be in your trunk, especially during the winter is a **winter survival kit**, and especially if you live in an area where winters are severe. You can find a perfect list of items to add to a winter car survival kit [here](#). Or do as I did and make your own. I included dog food and treats in mine because if we are surviving my fur baby has to survive as well. So make it personal.

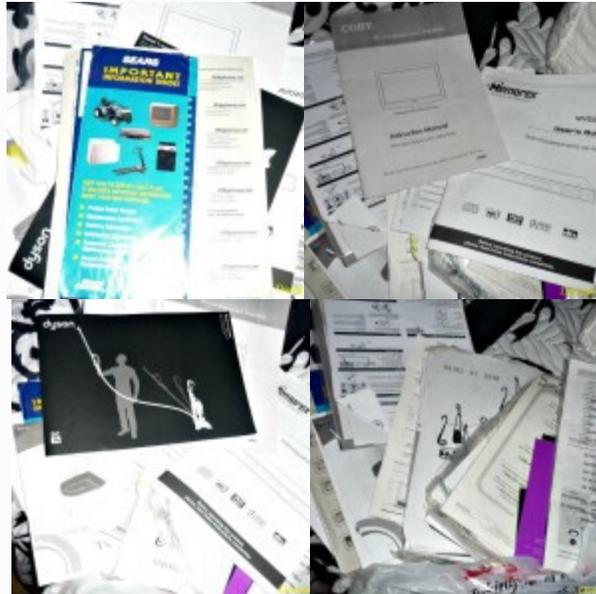
Sample Journal Entry: *Vacuum out the trunk of the car and put together a survival kit for the trunk. Investigate the [trunk organizers](#).*

Day Twenty

Organizing a Household Binder

Since we are close to the finish line, I thought we would tackle a larger project. It will certainly take you more than ten minutes but you could always break it down into small pieces and work on it a little at a time.

How do you manage your household appliance manuals and warranty information? Personally, my system was a total hot mess. Frankly, the system consisted of all of the manuals and warranties stuffed into a grocery store plastic bag.



I decided I could eliminate over half of the ~~stuff~~/manuals in this plastic bag...and I was right. As I purged the old and outdated manuals and warranty information, I found manuals for appliance or gadgets that had long since moved on. What a waste of precious space. The steps and the cost of this project are below.

Supplies:

Large Ring Binder (4in or better)	<i>Free</i>
Document Protectors	\$13.79
Time 1.5 hrs.	<i>Priceless (wait for it)</i>

As always, start with a purge, all of the manuals and warranties that are outdated – must go.

Sort the ones that are left by room

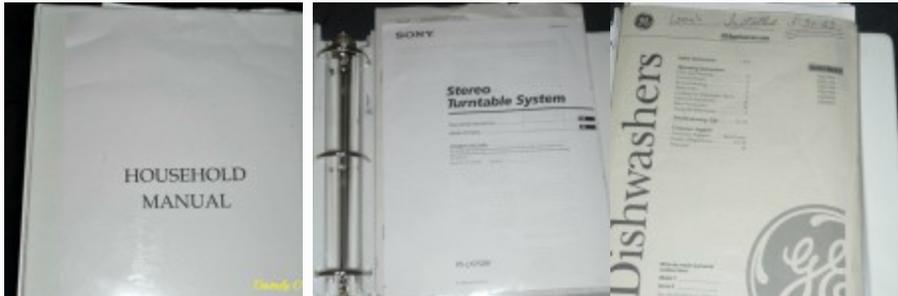
1. Kitchen appliances
2. Entertainment appliances (phones, DVDs, TVs, etc.)
3. Laundry
4. Small Appliances (vacuums, steamers, etc.)

In order to save on space and document protectors, add two per protector back-to-back

Just for fun, I printed a page for the front of the binder. You can get really creative (although mine is very basic).

Result

An organized household binder for appliance manuals and warranties. All are located in the same place and everything in the binder is relevant and up-to-date. I am still using every appliance or tool that is in my binder! That is an accomplishment!



This can also be a viable option for other household important papers such as passports, marriage licenses, birth certificates, etc. Easy to grab and go in an emergency.

The price was wonderful as well. Thirteen dollars and seventy-nine cents for all this peace of mind is not a bad deal.

Sample Journal Entry: Consider a binder for other family important papers.

Day Twenty-One

Organizing Cleaning Supplies



Are you always looking for a way to carry your cleaning supplies from one room to another or from the first floor to the second? Well I think I have found it for you.

I happened upon a tool caddy in Sears one afternoon and it was on sale for \$9.99. And I am all about the bargain but I did not need a tool caddy, but it caught my eye and because of the bargain price...I lingered. The issue was finding a way to put the caddy to good use. Then I had a light bulb moment. Isn't that what we re-designers and organizers do? Of course it is!

This caddy would be perfect for cleaning supplies. How nice it would be to have all of the cleaning supplies in one easy to carry caddy. You can get these in several colors. I have seen them in pink, which I absolutely love; blue, green and black. If you are asking; if you loved the pink why did you buy black. Well, I'll tell you why. Practicality kicked in and I thought of what the pink would look like 6-months down the road, all dirty and gross looking in a dirty pink. Not attractive! While the black will remain close to the original color and not look so dirty over time. So instead of following my heart, I followed my sensibilities.

So take a look at my caddy. It houses everything I use to clean both down and upstairs and I can just pluck it out of the closet and go for what I know in one fail swoop. Rubber gloves, glass cleaner, disinfectants and all of the other necessary cleaners are right here in the "cleaning caddy". So this Craftsman tool caddy is now my Craftsman cleaning caddy. One more example of finding a new way to use an organizational tool.



Well, that is it. We have gone through 21 organizational projects and it did not take you very long at all and I hope the exercise has made you comfortable with organization. You should be very proud of yourself.

One of the most important take-aways from this book is to create an organization journal. It will help you to stay on track and you can continue to develop ways to organize your space by using your notes. Do know that once you stick to something for 21-days, it should now be engrained. But there is a second level of organization and we will discuss that as well. Stay tuned.

Things to remember

1. Find a place for everything - If your house is unorganized, you probably do not have designated places for all your things. Instead of tossing items in a certain room or area, keep track of a very specific location for everything in your home. Do not simply leave something on your nightstand; create a space specifically for that item. Do the same for everything in your home so that things are not left lying around without a place to live. *A Place For Everything...Everything In Its Place.*
2. Keep something like a basket or small stand near the front door where you can place things you need to deal with when you have more time. This might include your mail, items from the store, or things from school and work.
3. Better yet, create a command center. It does not need to be anything elaborate, but it does need to be a space to catch the incoming junk mail, school papers for the kids, forms that need to be returned to the school, bills, etc. Just remember the command center is a temporary landing space because all of the things above should have permanent homes in either the trash or in your office space where there should be a filing system set up (another day).
4. As a long term goal, you should set aside some time to set up the areas where you think things should go permanently. This will become habit if you place things in the same place all the time. Make sure the rest of the family follows your lead.
5. Choose a day during the week when you have most (or all) of your time free. Then, choose a single area in your life that is unorganized and needs attention. This could be rooms in your house, your car, or your office at work. Then work only on throwing out unnecessary items that are taking up space in that section of your life.
6. Invest in organizational storage containers, folders, and boxes, baskets to help your place stay organized. You can purchase them retail, thrift for them or you can make your own using things like cups, shoe boxes, and dishes. Make these organizational pieces a bit more attractive with a coat of paint or a covering with fabric.
7. Get rid of things you do not need. Although you might assume you “need” everything you own, a disorganized house is likely to be overflowing with items you do not need or are no longer useful for your family and lifestyle. Sort through the things that constantly give you clutter and determine how useful it is to you. If you have not used it in a long time, do not use it frequently, do not like it anymore, get rid of it. Think of how some of these items could bless another family and let it go.
8. Keep your emotions separate from the items you are sorting. Sure, your great aunt may have given you that porcelain knickknack, but do you truly want or need it? Get rid of it and do not feel like a bad person for doing so.
9. Separate things you get rid of into piles such as trash, donations, and things to

sell. Then, process each pile accordingly.

10. Hold a garage or yard sale to make extra money on the things you no longer need. Large items, such as furniture or electronics, can be listed on online selling sites like eBay or Craigslist so that you do not have to host a large event in order to make money.
11. Do not defeat the process of organizing your life by bringing in new things that you do not need. One major reason you might do this is bargain shopping. Avoid big sales or bargains, as these will lead to you buy things that you do not need or want simply because you cannot pass up a good deal.
12. When you are shopping, ask yourself where in your home a piece will go. Do you have a specific location for it, where it can stay permanently?
13. When you go to the store, keep a list of the things you are looking for. Then, as you search for items do not stray from your list. You will come back with only what you need, rather than what you thought you needed and impulse buys.
14. Consider the money you save by avoiding sales. Although you may find bargains you could still be spending money on something you may not need.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a disorganized lifestyle without priorities and goals can result in living a life that seems as if it is going nowhere. This can lead to feelings of poor self-worth, and even depression.

No one has to live a disorganized life. You simply need to make up your mind, put your vision of a clean and organized space in your mind and on paper and begin the journey. If you feel overwhelmed, consult with an organizer. A good organizer can guide you through the process and make it less overwhelming.

A consultation can be quick and but can be priceless if it gets you on the right track. And remember to reward yourself for your progress. Treat yourself to a movie with friends when that closet is organized or a weekend get-a-away when the master bedroom and bath are complete. Organizing your life should not be drudgery and I promise it will make your life better. There is a *Place for Everything...And Everything Can Have A Place* in your life.

