

Organizing Tips... Can You Let It Go?

-By Lorena Prime -

If you have trouble purging things at work or home, it is much harder to get organized and be productive. People often get stuck when sorting through their things. Don't feel too badly about this dilemma, however, because it is normal - reviewing our stuff can bring up memories, both good and bad. Here are some suggestions to make the parting easier:

- ✓ **Recognize when you last used something.** When *did* you last use it? Will you *really* use it again? Would someone else get more use out of it? These are great questions to ask, especially for household goods and clothing. If the item is sentimental, that's okay! These things are harder to let go. If you have the room, then pack these sentimental items away in a labeled container and store them the attic or basement.
- ✓ **Understand (and appreciate) who you are now.** Does the item represent who you are *today*? Many


times an item is based on who you *used* to be, but not who you are *presently*. Donate or recycle items that don't match who you are *now*. (For example, donate clothes that are a size 10 if you are a size 14.)

- ✓ **Take photos.** Don't forget that you can take photos of something and let the original item go. For example, saving all your old Girl Scout or Eagle Scout badges probably doesn't do you any good today, yet you still have trouble letting them go. Place the badges in a decorative manner and take a photo of them. Now you can donate the badges because you have a photo of the memories; after all, it's the *memories* you're cherishing, not the badges themselves.
- ✓ **Identify if it's available somewhere else.** Is that piece of information available somewhere on the internet (or your company's intranet site)? We hold on to too many papers and emails. Do you realize that you only look at 20% of what you file? That's a lot of time spent filing things

you will never look at again. As a general rule, if it's available online, there's no need to store it.

- ✓ **Start organizing the easy areas first.** Sometimes we just start in the wrong place. Don't begin to organize an area where you know you'll have trouble making decisions. Instead, you'll make more progress by working in a space where things are easier to purge. This way you'll gain momentum and confidence in your decisions. By the time you get to the harder areas, you'll have practice making choices and you may even have enough space cleared away so you can keep those things that are a bit tougher with which to part.
- ✓ **Let someone else make the decision.** If you don't want to throw something away, but you know you don't want it, then let someone else make the decision for you. For example, donate all the items to a local thrift store, goodwill, or other organization. Let *that* organization decide whether or not to keep it. *They're*

making the decision to throw something away, not you.

- ✓ **Work with an objective person.** Sometimes when you're stuck, it is better to have someone by your side asking the tough questions. They are objective and can give you permission to let things go and can help make the process faster. This person could be a friend or a Professional Organizer. 



Lorena Prime

Lorena Prime, Owner of Clearly Organized, speaks at companies and organizations on Time Management and other productivity issues. She uses a 5-stage process to help people shorten routine office work and save 1-2 hours every day. What could you do with an extra 1-2 hours? For more information, visit www.ClearlyOrganizedLife.com or call 617-633-2199.