

## Organizing Tips...

# Seven golden rules of organizing

- By Lorena Prime -

Recently, I was working with a client who labeled himself as an "accumulator." I love that label! Aren't we all accumulators? We collect papers, emails, clothes, and other goods. The question becomes "How do you organize your accumulation?" If you follow my Golden Rules you can still own things, but it will be more manageable and you might even have room to add a thing or two!

**1. Be open to change.** This is key! Getting organized with your things (or your time) is about making habit changes. You are used to doing something one way and now you will do it a new way. If you don't want to make any changes, then you won't be able to get and stay organized.

**2. Purge.** And purge and purge! We often don't have room for new things because we rarely get rid of the old things. This is the most important step in getting organized (rather than buying organizing products) because we need to get rid of things in order to create the space to arrange what is left. If purging is difficult for you, ask an objective person to help you (see Rule #7). Often they are

able to help you determine which items to let go.

**3. Put things together.** It's difficult to be efficient when the things you use aren't placed near each other. It would be like cooking a meal and having to run to your bedroom every time you need a bottle of cumin or chili powder. (If your spices are in your bedroom, get them back to the kitchen!) For example, if you are responsible for paying bills, then put some envelopes, stamps, check book, pen, calculator, and any other supplies needed in a container that can be stored where you pay the bills. (Make sure you're near your computer as well if you go online.) This way you can pay the bills in one sitting without having to jump up and run to another room every time you need something.

**4. Create homes.** You may have heard the old saying, "A place for everything and everything in its place." It's very hard to put things away if they don't have a home! Take a look around and most likely the things that are lying about either don't have a permanent home or the home is difficult to get to (in the attic around some boxes; in a closet that has something blocking the door, etc...).

Make it easy to get to the things you use frequently.

**5. Do it when it takes less than 2 or 3 minutes.** If you can do the task in just a few minutes, don't bother to write it on your to-do list. It will take you almost as long to write it down as it will to just do it. Besides you'll feel better when it's done!

**6. Maintain it.** The key to maintaining what you've organized is changing your behavior (see Rule #1). You need to develop the habit of returning every thing to its home. For example, every night you could spend 10 minutes tidying up your spaces (not cleaning, but rather returning things to where they belong). You could do this weekly as well - whatever works for you. You need to add this to your routine so that you do it regularly or your organization will begin to deteriorate.

**7. Work with someone.** Sometimes when you're stuck, it is better to have a person by your side asking the tough questions. Such a person is objective, i.e. not emotionally tied to your things, and can give you permission to let things go which can help make the process faster. Whether a friend or a Professional Orga-

nizer, it will make the overall experience more fun and productive.

These Golden Rules will help you get organized and stay organized which will allow you to keep your "accumulation" in manageable shape! If things are really out of whack, then tackle one space, drawer, or shelf at a time. It didn't get messy overnight, so it won't be fixed overnight either, but by taking baby steps, you'll look back in six months and realize how much you've accomplished. **Z**



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