



NEAT FREAK NEWS: August 2007

I hope you've enjoyed a fun-filled, relaxing summer. With school starting up again soon, and cooler temps right around the corner (hopefully!), it's time to pack away the pool toys, dust off the backpacks and gear up for fall!

As a refresher course, I've pulled together my top 10 reasons for getting organized (and trust me, I could probably come up with 100 more). Here are the pay-offs when you pitch, give away, recycle or repurpose the things that fill your home, office, car (and sometimes your head!).

1. Regain lost time --The average person wastes 50 minutes a day looking for stuff (that is often buried under clutter).
2. Make cleaning easier --Your house is easier to clean when there is less stuff lying around (in fact, if you clear off surfaces you'll spend half the time tidying up).
3. Save money -- Organizing your mail and bills will cut down on unnecessary late fees. (Isn't your electric bill already high enough this summer?).
4. Share the love -- Ask yourself "Do I love this, use it regularly, or truly need it?" If you can't answer yes to any of those questions, pass it on to someone who will.
5. Teach your children well -- Your children are watching and learning from your relationship with stuff. Pass along a positive relationship to belongings by teaching them to get rid of toys they no longer play with.
6. Reduce stress -- We all carry around a little unnecessary stuff in our heads as well as our homes. Find a way to empty your head of unwanted mental clutter by writing it down, talking it out, or distracting yourself with something more positive or fun.
7. Get rich quick --You may have valuable possessions sitting around your home collecting dust. If you're not going to use your Great Grandmother's silver, consider selling it on eBay, Craig's List or to an antiques dealer. Then use the cash to take your family on a vacation they'll never forget. Better to have memories to treasure than treasures to trip over!

8. Work less -- Evaluate the clutter in your office so you're not spinning your wheels at work. Increase your efficiency by decluttering your work space (and your computer desktop) so you can clock out at 5pm and enjoy more quality time with the ones you love.
9. Drive happy -- Perhaps you feel as if you live out of your car, but really, should it look (and smell!) like you do? Lighten up drive time by decluttering your car of snack wrappers, receipts from the 90's, random CD cases, and anything else that keeps your time on the road from being safe and peaceful.
10. Save your life -- Do you want to end up like the Bronx, New York, man who, in 2003, was trapped in his home under an avalanche of books and newspapers for two days before being rescued? Don't get stuck all your stuff!

FREAKIE FREEBIES

It won't be long before school calendars, sports schedules, club contact lists and more are cluttering your kitchen countertops. Rather than cramming them all in the junk drawer and hoping to unearth them when you need them, create a Family/Home Binder for storing all relevant information. First, purchase a 3-ring binder and a pack of binder dividers (any office supply store will have numerous options, or just repurpose one you already have). Then, create sections that are meaningful for your home or family (e.g. School Contacts, Activities, Schedules, Babysitters, Medical Contacts). You can also add several sheets of business card holders in the back to store all of those random cards you collect for lawn services, cleaning companies, professional services, and more. Voila! Your own personal family manager available at the tip of your fingers!