



Neat Freak News

Bimonthly organizational tips for home, work and life.

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The Most Powerful Tool in your Organizational Toolbox: The Word NO

I love fall. I love new school shoes, sharpened No. 2 pencils, candy corn and the crisp morning air. It's also the time of year when activities start back up, paper piles up, and sales gear up (that pesky little financial downturn has made it mighty tempting to hit the mall and take advantage of low prices). All of this newness can make it really easy to say "yes." Yes to activities, yes to volunteering, yes to buying...yes, yes, yes! But it's important to realize that just about every time you say "yes" to one thing, what you're really doing is saying "no" to something else. Remember...space and time are not infinite. Harness the power of the word "no" so you can keep your time and your stuff under control.

Just say "no" to time thieves

You've heard it a million times...there are only 24 hours in a day, so it's up to you to make the most of them. Yet we all find ourselves trying to cram more and more into that finite amount of time. And often what has to give is sleep, exercise, or quality time with loved ones or yourself. Decide now to live your life differently by embracing the power of the word "no." First, you must know what really matters to you. Take 5 minutes and write down the things that mean the most to you in your life. Go ahead...do it right now...I'll wait. Once you've established what goes on this list, it should be easier to say "no" to things that are less important. If you find that saying "no" to a request for your time is difficult, then practice. Look in the mirror and say "No, that just doesn't fit into my schedule right now." (I know this sounds goofy, but you'll thank me when you can say it with authority and stick by it!). Or if that feels too challenging, at least practice saying "Let me think about it and get back to you."

Just say "no" to procrastination

Sometimes, saying "no" to something helps you re-evaluate your goals. If you find you're putting something off, give yourself permission to say "no" to it. Usually, if it's still important to you, your will to achieve it will overcome the "no" and you'll jump right into the task. But maybe your goals have changed and it's no longer important to you. By saying "no" to it, you're giving yourself permission to move on and say "yes" to something else.

Just say "no" to clutter

Saying “no” can also come in handy when managing all of the physical stuff in your life. If you want to stay on top of your clutter, it’s important to adopt a “one in, one out” rule in your household. If your closet is bursting at the seams, you need to recognize that nothing new can go in until something old goes out (and if it’s super full, you may need a “one in, two or three out” rule until it gets under control!). Same goes for books, kitchen equipment, furniture, and other house hold items. If you see something you’re in love with and just have to buy, decide now where it’s going to go in your house and decide what you must say “no” to in order to accommodate it.

Next time you find yourself saying “yes” to something that is going to take up space in your life, just say “no” instead. I think you’ll find that saying “no” to one thing is really saying “yes” to yourself and the things that matter most.

MORE NEAT FREAK

Check out the MojoMom Podcast to hear me and MojoMom Amy Tiemann discuss getting back into the swing of things this school year and how to tame all of the stuff you and your children drag home. Click here to listen: <http://tinyurl.com/qfl4dw>

ASK THE NEAT FREAK

Q: Dear Neat Freak, Please solve the Lego issue! Should we attempt to keep Lego sets intact or mix? We do both kinds of Lego play -- creative and by the book. I have such a love-hate relationship with the darn things!

Signed,
Drowning in Lego

A: Dear Drowning...I have my own Lego-maniacal kid at my house and while I love the creativity they inspire, keeping them organized is no easy task. If your child does enjoy creating Lego masterpieces by the book, then I really think you have no choice but to keep sets together. If that’s the way he/she wants to play, then your child needs to understand that it means keeping the box and instructions together, with the Lego inside, and only pulling out one set of Lego at a time.

If, on the other hand, your child is willing to throw caution to the wind and allow his/her Lego to be mixed, then I think small stacking plastic drawers are the answer. You can sort by color or size or just toss them all in the drawers together. Any child who is old enough to play with Lego is also old enough to clean them up! Sometimes a good threat of the vacuum cleaner sucking up the strays is enough to get my son cleaning them up pretty quickly (did I just reveal a little of my neat-freaky mom meanness??). Works every time at my house. Good luck!

Do you have other Lego or toy organizing solutions? Share it on my blog in the comments section @ <http://neatfreak.wordpress.com>.

