

## Clearing Clutter to Create Clarity

by Denise Lee, professional organizer

The process of organizing not only helps you create clear space, it can help you obtain clarity in life. Surprisingly, the process starts at considering one's life's vision rather than one's stacks of clutter.

This vision is the picture of the ideal life. It highlights the values that are important to the person. The passion that is felt when examining one's vision can be inspiring. As Michael Beckwith puts it, "The pain pushes until the vision pulls." Although stacks of clutter may compel one to get organized, it is the vision that will sustain the process.

Goals speak to the present condition as well as one's intentions for the future. The direction and the framework to attain this vision are laid out by setting goals. Goals give shape to what is important for us now.

De-cluttering provides an opportunity to let go of that which is not important now and which does not presently serve those goals. While sorting through the stacks of items, ask key questions about each item: Have I used this recently? Do I love it? Does this item support or distract from my goal?

Would this item be more beneficial to someone else?

By eliminating the items that don't support the goals, we provide the space and the focus for this vision to be realized.

Leslie taught middle school art for 40 years, loved working with the children and was highly regarded for her creative teaching techniques. Now retired, Leslie wanted to shift her studio from creating ideas for young people to creating masterpieces.

Her studio was stuffed with the supplies and materials that she used as a teacher. It was very difficult for Leslie to sort through the items because every item was useful in its own right and every item was a fond reminder of the career Leslie loved.

In our work together, we used Leslie's vision as the yardstick for making decisions. Every item was examined in terms of its ability to contribute to Leslie's ability to create masterpieces. Because 40 years of teaching shaped the person that she is today, she chose a few important items to be displayed as a tribute to that past. With the distractions of the past removed, the studio now nurtures Leslie's creativity.

It is very important to set goals that are truly one's own rather than someone else's. Goals that belong to someone else are the "shoulds." Goals that you should work on are unlikely to be realized; however, goals that you desire are promising. Mindfully creating goals requires examining what is important to you now. It is also important to allow time for the process to develop.

Organizing happens step by step and layer by layer. Each small movement toward our goals energizes our intentions and sharpens our focus. As each distraction is removed, we gain greater clarity. Although organizing puts our environment in order, the greatest benefit may be how it puts our life in order.

Denise Lee appeared recently on KMOV's Great Day April 14, 2010. Visit [clearspaces.org](http://clearspaces.org).

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